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Examining the Collaborative Structure in Full Day Kindergarten Educator Teams

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Examining the Collaborative Structure in Full Day Kindergarten Educator Teams

By

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Examining the Collaborative Structure in Full Day Kindergarten Educator Teams

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ABSTRACT

This research study explores the development of a co-teaching relationship in the setting of the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. Ontario is presently implementing Full Day Kindergarten programming across the province following a five year implementation plan, with the goal of full implementation by 2015-16.

The Full Day Kindergarten model in Ontario, based on recommendations from Charles Pascal utilizes educator teams, comprised of a kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator, working together throughout the day in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. Integrating outside personnel into elementary schools to create educator teams can create challenges (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). The purpose of this study is to describe the development of a co-teaching relationship in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. How does the Kindergarten Teacher and the Early Childhood Educator perceive a successful co-teaching relationship? What do Kindergarten Teachers and Early Childhood Educators believe facilitate a successful co-teaching relationship? Does the concept of self-efficacy affect the development, implementation and sustainment of a successful co-teaching relationship? This study will provide insight into the development of successful collaborative educator teams in Full Day Kindergarten classrooms.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband John; his continued love, support, constant encouragement and his selfless dedication to our family have made it possible for me to complete this work.

In addition, I would like to thank our children, Johnathon, Kathleen and Benjamin, for their patience and understanding as I spent countless hours at the computer. I hope that they now have instilled in them a desire to be life-long learners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

A historical milestone was marked in September 2010 in the province of Ontario as the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten began. Not since 1944 has such a bold change affecting the young children of the province been introduced with the initial implementation of junior kindergarten. The importance of early years programming was recognized over 60 years ago and provided the rationale for educational programs serving young children. This same rationale creates the basis of the Ontario Early Learning Program.

As early as 1944 the Ministry of Education noted the importance of the first seven years of life for children and their brain development (Cantalini-Williams&Tefler,2010). The evidence is conclusive that effective early learning programs contribute to the quality of life and positive outcomes for young students later in life and economic benefits for society. The detailed research presented in the Early Years Study: Part 2 in 2007 supports this finding, stating that "focused public spending on young children provides returns that outstrip any other type of human capital investment" (Early Years Study: Part 2, 2007, p. 135). In 2009 Charles Pascal released a report entitled With Our Best Future in Mind, Implementing Early Learning in Ontario (Pascal, 2009). This report outlines a comprehensive plan of action for the implementation of the provincial government's early learning program. Pascal's summary presents compelling research from both Canadian and international sources to support the belief that early childhood development

establishes the foundation for life-long learning and academic success. This report resulted in the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act in 2010 which gives school boards the legal responsibility to implement full day learning for four and five year olds (Ministry of Education, Backgrounder April 23, 2010). Bill 242, *Full-Day Learning Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* also outlines the duties and responsibilities of Early Childhood Educators in these classrooms and the partnership between the teacher and Early Childhood Educator (ECE), as each Full Day Kindergarten classroom will be staffed with a Kindergarten teacher and Early Childhood Educator.

The establishment of educator teams in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom is a new concept in Ontario schools. This framework places two educators into a collaborative structure, with very distinct differences in their training. Early Childhood Educators working in Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) classrooms must be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. They must have completed at least a two year college diploma in Early Childhood Education; however many hold bachelor's degrees in child study, psychology and other fields in the area of child development. Early Childhood Educators or ECEs are regulated by the Early Childhood Educators Act. Kindergarten Teachers are registered with the Ontario College of Teachers. Primary/Junior qualifications enable teachers to teach grades from junior kindergarten to grade six. All teachers must have a minimum of a three year university degree and a bachelor of education obtained from completing one year of study in a faculty of education. Teachers are governed under the Education Act. The teacher structure created with the placement of ECEs and classroom teachers together in one classroom is unique to the Full Day Kindergarten program.

According to the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Reference Guide for Educators, each educator is expected to bring his or her unique skills and training to the program in a "collaborative and complementary" partnership (Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Reference Guide for Educators, p. 10). Joint responsibility for the delivery of daily activities, extending children's learning, organizing the learning environment, monitoring and assessing children and working with parents is outlined in the document. Differentiated roles are described in the Full Day Kindergarten curriculum document:

Recognizing their unique qualifications and experiences, teachers are responsible for elements of the learning-teaching process that they have under *The Education Act* and related regulations. Through their pre-service and in-service education, teachers possess a unique knowledge set related to the broader elementary program context, curriculum, assessment, and evaluation and reporting, and child development. Teachers are also responsible for student learning, effective instruction, formative assessment (assessment for learning) and evaluation of the learning of the children enrolled in their classes, the management of early learning kindergarten classes and formal reporting and communication with families about the progress of their children. Teachers evaluate student learning and report to parents based on the early learning professional team's assessments of children's progress within the context of the Full-Day Early Learning—Kindergarten Program.

Based on their unique qualifications and experiences, early childhood educators bring their knowledge of early childhood development, observation and assessment. ECEs bring a focus on age-appropriate

program planning to facilitate experiences that promote each child's

physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social and creative development

and well-being, providing opportunities for them to contribute to

formative assessment (assessment for learning) and evaluation of

the children's learning. Early childhood educators will also use their

knowledge base and abilities as they implement the integrated

extended day.

(The Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program Draft Version, p. 8)

One must consider that this team approach to instruction has special considerations as

integrating outside personnel into the school system can pose challenges (Gibson &

Pelletier, 2010). In their recent study Gibson and Pelletier indicate several points that can

pose difficulties for these educator partners. There can be challenges in defining

professional turf. Determining parameters around sharing physical classroom space and

resources can also be a challenge. Issues of defining professional identity and

understanding the roles of other professionals working within integrated staff teams can

be a source of tension. The principal of the school has an impact on the development of

the collaborative team and this can differ between schools. Gibson and Pelletier indicate

that there is a need for further examination of the integration of the FDK educator team

into Ontario schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study will delve deeply into the implementation of the educator team in FDK classrooms in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, with the goal of deepening understanding around the complexities of the educator team collaborative partnership. With this task comes the acknowledgement of the differences of the educator partners. Both childcare and kindergarten teachers have reported that their professions are characterized by many differences: salary, working conditions, education, prestige (Johnson & Mathien, 1998). Because of these distinct differences in the two disciplines, there is the potential for one team member, the one with better pay and more prestige, to dominate the other in a hierarchical nature (Calander, 2000; Corter, 2007). Gibson and Pelletier also identify that more research is needed in the area of the professional identity of early childhood educators working within FDK classrooms, working in an environment where teachers are "advantaged in terms of their education, level of pay and familiarity within a school environment compared to early childhood educators (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010, p.3)

Therefore as research on collaboration in educator teams indicates working together harmoniously is no easy task (Calander, 2000). Practicing and modeling collaboration is becoming increasingly important at all levels of education (Friend & Cook, 2007). Collaboration involves direct interaction between at least two equal partners voluntarily engaged in a shared decision making as they work toward a common goal (Friend & Cook, 2007). Research in the area of collaboration indicates that there are key prerequisites that can impact the success of the team experience within the

collaborative structure. These include establishment of a supportive environment, perceptions of efficacy, and leadership (Press, Sumison & Wong, 2010).

This research will examine the collaborative structure which frames the educator partnership in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. The partnership in the Full Day Kindergarten classrooms ideally is a co-teaching relationship. Co-teaching is defined based on the level of collaboration involved in the teaching partnership (Chiasson, Yearwood & Olsen, 2006). The twenty-first century notion of co-teaching places it within the context of some of the most innovative practices in education. When defined, co-teaching is "two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom" (Villa, Thousand & Nevin, 2008, p. 5). It involves the distribution of responsibility for planning, instruction and assessment (Friend and Cook, 2007), which aligns to the description provided by the Ministry of Education regarding the educator partnership in the Full Day Kindergarten classrooms. This collaborative structure involves shared beliefs, parity, cooperation and common goals (Brandt, 1987). Literature highlights effective collaborative structure in the school setting and the evolution of a co-teaching relationship in situations whereby there are two educators working in one classroom. Integration is multilayered and multidimensional.

Significance of the Study

The Full Day Kindergarten classroom is an integrated model, whereby the classroom is infused with professional practices from diverse backgrounds (the teacher and early childhood educator). This research is essential as it will identify the benefits of

collaborative joint work of co-teaching, the challenges of this framework, the nature of this joint work and the link between these constructs.

Theoretical Framework

This study will examine the elements of the collaborative framework through the lens of collective efficacy. Connecting efficacy to the development of collaborative structure is a credible link (Ross, 1994). Research (Allinder, 1994; McKeiver, Hogaboam-Gray, 1997; Ross, 1994) reveals a connection between experience, efficacy and performance in the classroom, and the mediating effects of teacher efficacy on the educator partnership. Therefore it is important to consider the importance of efficacy in the formation of the collaborative structure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the development of a co-teaching relationship between the early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. The objectives of this study are:

1) To describe how a co-teaching relationship develops

2) To describe how the classroom teacher and ECE construct efficacy beliefs that affect the development, implementation and sustaining of a successful co-teaching relationship

3) To describe benefits of collaborative co-teaching relationships and challenges in order to make recommendations as to what elements are required to enhance teacher/ECE collaboration

4) To identify the impact of collaborative work on the students in the classroom

It is the hope that this research will support the development of effective educator teams in the FDK classrooms, and identify clear recommendations for the establishment of collaborative educator teams.

Research Questions:

1. How do classroom teachers and early childhood educators perceive a successful collaborative co-teaching relationship?

2. What do classroom teachers and early childhood educators believe facilitates a successful co-teaching relationship and what does research say?

3. How does the perception of efficacy affect the collaborative relationship?

4. What are the benefits of successful collaborative educator co-teaching teams? What are the barriers?

5. What is the role of the school principal in establishing a collaborative co-teaching environment?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

With the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten in Ontario is a philosophical shift that moves childcare into the world of education. The program includes an integrated teaching team comprised of a kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator working together to support a play-based learning environment that incorporates the expertise of both professionals. Research in the science of early child development has emphasized the critical role that early childhood educators play in shaping learning (Barnett, 2008; McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007; Shonkoff, 2009). The aim of the Full Day Kindergarten strategy in Ontario is to maximize the efficiency of the educator team by infusing the knowledge and skills of the early childhood educator into the kindergarten classroom. Quality programs are delivered by a diverse, knowledgeable and skilled workforce (Ackermann & Barnett, 2006), and therefore the educator team can boost the quality of instruction in the full day kindergarten classroom.

Pascal (2009) outlined the policy recommendations for the full day programs and stated "fundamental to the full day learning program are educators with child development knowledge and skills (2009, p. 32). Pascal's framework for staffing includes the amalgamation of the Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators which creates a more streamlined early learning professional designation, and signals an important shift in the legislative history of care and education in Canada. In addition, the Ontario Education Act was amended and outlines the shared responsibilities of the teacher and ECE and a duty to cooperate and coordinate in the planning and

delivery of the Full Day Kindergarten program: the assessment and observation of children; communicating with families; and maintaining a healthy social, emotional and learning environment. The ECE is described as an equal partner with the kindergarten teacher and a professional with early education expertise in the early learning classroom, one who can offer meaningful expertise in early learning instructional strategies and practice. Speir (2010, p. 4) points out that

> structures will need to be in place to support the two educators
> and help them develop a collaborative learning process, ensuring
> that each voice and opinion is heard and respected. There is much
> more to the successful implementation of this process that simply
> putting two educators in one room.

What are the elements needed to ensure success when implementing educator teams in full day kindergarten classrooms? This thesis will establish collaborative structure is the key component, which includes many elements. One must consider the collaborative structure itself.

What are the characteristics of an effective collaborative structure?

Secondly, one must consider the educators themselves and what they contribute to the formation of the collaborative structure. This includes the individual educator's perception of their own role and that of their partner. In addition one must consider the educator's sense of efficacy and how this relates to their perceptions of roles and the reciprocity of the relationship.

Thirdly, consideration must be given to the environment of the collaborative structure.

Respect, trust, communication all impact the organizational culture of the collaborative

structure.

Likewise the leader in the organization has an impact on the collaborative structure.

Finally, it is important to examine caveats of the collaborative structure. One must

identify barriers and investigate possible solutions to strengthen the framework of

collaboration.

Defining Collaboration

As the educator teams enter the Full Day Kindergarten classrooms, one must

consider the importance of developing the team as a collaborative structure: "Staff team

pathways are the critical and interwoven design strands we need to focus on at the very

beginning of implementation" (Corter, et al., 2009). Collaboration is an essential

component of the educator team in the full day kindergarten classrooms.

Because numerous school reforms seek to ensure systematic, valuable instruction

for all students, collaboration has been a popular buzzword in schools. Friend (2000)

shares that there are many myths about collaboration and includes the misconception that

collaboration is always occurring every time two or more individuals interact. Yet the

requirements for collaboration are more than engagement among individuals of the group

(Murawski, 2010). Collaboration is more than interaction. Collaboration is a very

specific relationship, and is more than merely interaction. Collaboration refers to "a style

for direct interaction between at least two equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared

decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend & Cook, 2007, p.4).

Collaboration can refer to almost any context where people are interacting; however it is

important to clarify that it may *not* be occurring , as often schools label their programs collaborative without having " the elements in place to guarantee that authentic partnerships exist" (Murawski, W. 2010, p. 9). Murawski defines collaboration as a "style for interaction, which includes dialogue, planning, shared and creative decision making, and follow-up between at least two coequal professionals with diverse expertise, in which the goal of the interaction is to provide appropriate services for students (Murawksi, 2010, p. 9).

Odegart (2006) defines collaboration as an active and ongoing partnership often between people from diverse backgrounds who work together to solve problems or provide services. This definition can be connected to the partnership in the full day kindergarten classrooms. Odegart also underlines the importance of defining collaboration, as it has many meanings. Her study investigated how professionals perceive collaboration, which can be quite different depending on the person and his or her experiences. Karyn Callaghan (2002) describes how collaboration goes beyond mere friendliness; it requires explicit understanding, deliberate effort and intent.

Judith Warren Little (1990) clarifies the concept of collaboration and identifies four phases of collaboration. Storytelling is the first phase; in this phase teachers gain information and assurance in the quick exchange of stories. This is a casual camaraderie and does not permeate the professional aspect of the classroom. The second phase describes collaborative encounters that are about the ready availability of mutual aid, where there is an expectation that colleagues will give one another help or advice when asked. The third phase is sharing of methods, ideas or opinions, but this does not extend to direct commentary on curriculum, learning and instruction. The fourth phase is joint

work; "encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching" (Little, 1990).

The educational research literature cites numerous benefits as to why teachers need to collaborate. Why is collaboration so valued in schools today? Why do teachers tend to maintain past practice, with closed doors and isolation? Society has become more collaborative and interactive. Social networking is key in most jobs in the world today, and certainly requires strong collaboration skills. Any time there is a need to shift an organizational paradigm, as we are seeing with the Full Day Kindergarten in Ontario, collaboration is a necessary component of success (Villa, Thousand, Nevin & Malgeri, 1996). Hughes and Murawski (2001) and Pugach & Wesson (1995) reported that collaboration helped achieve more complex goals, improve social interactions and increase creativity. Therein lies the adage "two heads are better than one".

Collaborative Structure: Co-teaching

There are many benefits of teacher collaboration which aligns with the old adage "two heads are better than one." Placing two educators in a classroom presents a unique collaborative situation. "Having another teacher in the classroom may provide pedagogical support and camaraderie that single teacher classrooms do not offer" (McGinty, Justice & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008, p. 361). Traditionally when two teachers were placed in a room they worked within a hierarchical structure, with one educator acting as the lead teacher and the other acting as an assistant. This is not the goal of the Full Day Kindergarten program, where the partnership is defined as "collaborative and complementary" (Full Day Kindergarten Reference Book, 2010).

There are different structures that require collaboration, for example, consultation, teaming and co-teaching (Murawski, 2010). Co-teaching is the collaborative model of focus for this study. Co-teaching is cited as one of the most common service delivery approaches gaining in use for students with disabilities (Fennick & Liddy, 2001; Weiss, M.P. & Lloyd, J.W., 2002). There has been much research in this area, exploring the partnership between special education teacher and classroom teacher as schools move to an inclusive model of programming for special needs students (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000; Gately& Gately, 2001;). With the policy intent of shared responsibility between the early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher in the Full Day Kindergarten program to plan and implement curriculum together, this collaborative relationship in its ideal model fits the definition of co-teaching.

Co-teaching is also referred to as collaborative teaching team teaching or cooperative teaching. Regardless of which term is used, the situation involves two professionals who deliver quality instruction to students (Friend & Cook, 2007). Furthermore, co-teaching is also referred to as the key for bringing people with diverse backgrounds and interests together to share knowledge and skills as they individualize learning for students (Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2006). This definition aligns with the partnership between the classroom teacher and early childhood educator, who come to work together, bringing different background knowledge and experiences.   The first definition for co-teaching was shared by Bauwens, Hourcade and Friend in 1998, stating that co-teaching is" an educational approach in which two teachers work in a coactive and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in an integrated setting" (p. 18). Murawski (2003) defines co-teaching

as co-planning, co-instructing and co-assessing a group of students with diverse needs in the same classroom. This is the definition that will be used for the purpose of this study.

Co-teaching Structure

There are several elements of co-teaching that establish a definition of the term (Villa et al., 2008). Co-teachers coordinate their work to achieve common goals. They share a belief system that supports the idea that each of the co-teaching members has unique and needed experience. Mutual respect is a starting point for addressing tensions that could arise from the differences in professional beliefs. This also connects to the perception of roles; each partner needs to understand his/her role and the role of his/her partner. Edwards refers to distributed expertise which enables practitioners "to look beyond their own professional boundaries to recognize both different expertise and priorities but also common values" (Edwards, 2009, p. 41). According to the FDEL-K Reference Guide for Educators each educator is expected to bring his/her own unique strengths and professional training to program in a collaborative and complementary partnership" (p. 10). Therefore educators need to clearly understand the roles and value each role.

> Expertise in inter-professional practice entails, amongst other capacities, the ability to look beyond the boundaries of one's own discipline, recognize common values, appreciate different practices based on discipline specific knowledge and skills and negotiate differences in priorities. (Press et al., 2010)

The disciplines need to coexist, work alongside one another (Colmer, 2008). Co-teachers demonstrate parity and reciprocity; they perceive that their unique contributions are valued on the team. Respect is a key element of parity. They maintain a distributive theory of leadership and use a cooperative process. Co-teaching is a dynamic collaborative structure in which complex work is accomplished (Villa et al, 2008).

There are three categories of co-teaching models. The complementary models find one teacher in the lead and the other teacher adding value in a variety of supportive ways. Side-by-side coaching offers opportunities for both teachers to be more actively engaged in the teaching process by using various student groupings. Teaming involves each educator actively involved in all aspects of the instructional design and implementation of instruction.

Each model of co-teaching has benefits and challenges. Complementary variations of co-teaching are an excellent place for partners to begin (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011). It is a way to begin shared practice. Experienced teachers can use complementary strategies to increase engagement of the educator partner. One challenge of this model is the perception of one educator being in charge. In a true co-teaching partnership there is a balance of power.   In side-by-side co-teaching partners contribute more intensely to decisions about curriculum and instruction. In this model partners is able to work with students in both a primary and supportive role. This model allows for differentiation and also intensive interaction with students. Teaming has the advantage of both partners sharing all responsibilities for planning and teaching, with interchanging roles. As teachers become more comfortable and trusting in their roles as team teachers, they will

exhibit more flexibility in their roles on the team. Trust is the key component of the teaming model. Each partner must trust the competency of their partner. Another key element of successful teaming is communication, talking intentionally about the students and the work. This communication enhances the collaboration (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011).

The Developmental Nature of Co-teaching

Knowing that people in co-teaching relationships go through specific stages is essential in facilitating effective partnerships. There are four stages that are involved in this development: the forming stage, the functioning stage, the formulating stage and the fermenting stage (Villa et al., 2008). In the beginning of a partnership, the goal is to build a mutual and reciprocal relationship. This involves building trust, setting norms, and establishing goals. During the functioning stage, co-teachers determine how they will work together and specify roles and responsibilities. In the formulating stage, helpful collaboration skills develop including decision making and creative problem solving. These skills are essentially communication strategies. In the formulating stage helpful collaboration skills are practiced and communication skills continue to develop. Finally in the fermenting stage the team cohesiveness reaches its greatest potential. Gately and Gately (2001) identify similar predictable stages in the development of a co-teaching partnership, and articulate that each individual will progress through these phases at different rates. At each of the developmental stages in the co-teaching process, educators demonstrate varying degrees of interaction and collaboration. Co-teaching pairs move through the developmental process at different rates depending on the interpersonal relationship and communication style of the co-teachers (Gately & Gately, 1993).

Although some co-teacher pairs click, others may struggle and progress through the process more slowly. This indicates the need for administrator support and understanding that the development of an effective partnership may take time.

Benefits of Co-teaching Collaborative Teaching Structure

There is ample evidence of the benefits of co-teaching, both for students and for educators. Research proves that there is increased student engagement (Boudah, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1997). Co-teaching provides more individualized attention and increased student interaction with teachers (Murawski, 2006). Benefits of co-teaching for educators include the opportunity to share varied perspectives and share responsibilities (Chiasson, Yearwood, & Olsen, G., 2006). Teachers in co-teacher structures share decision making and may be more empowered to develop collaborative relationships that enhance teacher-child interactions (Malaguzzi, 1998; McNairy, 1988; McCormick et al., 2001).

Quality teaching cannot occur unless educators are constantly planning, constantly interacting with students and determining the most effective ways to do so, and constantly assessing how the instruction or strategy impacts students, academically, behaviorally, socially or emotionally; co-teachers need to engage in these activities equally (Murawski, 2010). Despite the policy intent of shared responsibility between the ECE and classroom teacher in the FDK classrooms, the limit placed on this collaborative structure with the phrase "duty to cooperate" (Education Act Section 264.1(2)) seems to confirm the lead role of the teacher in the classroom with respect to instruction, assessment and classroom management (Grieve, 2010, p. 5). This places the ECE in a

precarious position in the classroom, negotiating responsibilities and roles with his/her teaching partner in an attempt to cooperate.

In the establishment of a collaborative structure it is essential to examine the elements of hierarchy which could impede the formation of a collaborative framework. There is the potential for one professional to dominate the other in a partnership, especially when respective fields have differences in pay, working conditions, education and prestige. Results of the Pelletier Study (2010) reported Kindergarten teachers feeling that they had more responsibilities in the classroom than the early childhood educators. Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) felt they had less of an influence on decisions relative to the classroom teachers. Many ECEs expressed concerns about feeling unequal.

The concern of hierarchy within the collaborative structure was also raised in the Toronto First Duty Project (Janmohamed, Pelletier, & Corter, 2011). This study explained that staff hierarchy developed, as the ECE was viewed subordinate to the classroom teacher. This study suggested that this was largely due to a lack of awareness by the teaching partners of each other's work. This was identified as a pressing challenge in the phase one implementation of the integrated setting with teachers and early childhood educators working together.

Traditionally when two teachers have been placed in a room to work together, the role of lead teacher and assistant emerged (Shim, Hestenes, & Cassidy, 2004) Research has supported the evolution of the collaborative structure into a co-teaching relationship (Shim, et al., 2011).

This image of co-teaching envisions educators who consider themselves as equal partners in providing a conducive learning environment. Shim, Hestenes & Cassidy discovered that the co-teacher structure is the ideal collaborative structure, as it is associated with the highest childcare quality. This finding corresponds with an increasing body of literature supporting the importance of co-teaching structures in early childhood education (Cutler, 2000; Kostelink, 1992; Malaguzzi, 1998; McNairy, 1998; Shim et al, 2004).

Shim et al. (2004) indicate that a co-teaching structure is associated with higher quality childcare and more positive teacher behaviours. In this study (Shim et al., 2004) it was determined that it was not that the co-teachers were better teachers than lead teachers in a hierarchical teaching partnership, but rather the collaborative structure put in place with co-teachers is what makes for an effective learning environment. Classrooms that had a co-teacher were associated with the highest quality of student care and better classroom activities and materials (Shim et al., 2004).

While authors have described the value of a co-teacher or team-teaching relationship from their experience, personal belief, or educational philosophy, empirical work is limited in early childhood education. However, a study of co-teacher relationships in inclusive child care settings suggests that the quality of classroom environment is positively associated with a harmonious co-teacher relationship, as indicated by their perceived resemblance in their beliefs and approaches in teaching, and their personal or professional characteristics (McCormick, Noonan, Ogata, & Heck, 2001). The strength of this model comes from the fact two teachers with complementary skills and abilities and a pool their respective talents to meet instructional and social

needs of *all* students in a shared classroom. They are partners, sharing responsibility for planning, daily instruction, and decision making.

The Collaborative Environment: Efficacy

Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) have connected the collaborative structure of co-teaching to the concept of efficacy. In social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is ''beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments''(Bandura, 1997,p. 2). Self-efficacy influences behavior through cognitive processes (especially goal setting), motivational processes (especially attributions for success and failure), affective processes (especially control of negative feelings), and selection processes (Bandura, 1993). Individuals who feel that they will be successful on a given task are more likely to be so because they adopt challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite setbacks, and develop coping mechanisms for managing their emotional states.

The perceptions teachers have of themselves and the organization in which they work influences their actions. Collaboration among teachers can be seen as related to greater teacher sense of efficacy. Teacher collaboration might influence efficacy beliefs by creating a climate that legitimates help seeking, joint problem solving and instructional experimentation (Tshannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Collaboration among teachers promotes individual teacher efficacy (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Ross, 1992). High levels of teacher collaboration contribute to teacher efficacy (Ross, McKeiver, Hogaboan-Gray, 1997; Ross, 1992). In a longitudinal study of fluctuations in teacher efficacy during a period of high stress, Ross, McKeiver, and Hogaboam-Gray (1997)

found that collaboration contributed to teachers' knowledge of their classroom effectiveness through the collective identification of indicators of students' cognitive and affective performance. This process made it easier for teachers to recognize when they were successful. Mastery is both an individual and a social construction in which achievements by students are interpreted as evidence of teacher success and failure, thereby contributing to individual and collective teacher efficacy. In addition, interaction among teachers provides opportunities to observe the contribution of the collective to individual success. Teacher collaboration could create a climate that legitimates help seeking, joint problem solving and instructional experimentation. Through collaborative interaction teachers acquire teaching strategies that could enhance their effectiveness and thereby increasing perceptions of their individual and collective success (Ross et al., 1997). In the Full Day Kindergarten classrooms, the collaborative structure enables educators to work together collaboratively on a day-to-day basis. Research indicates that this structure could provide an environment which enhances the development of teacher efficacy.

The Collaborative Environment: Conditions

Therefore research supports the idea that co-teaching is effective in the classroom. It is reasonable to assume as such; a classroom with two teachers is superior to a classroom with one. In fact, this may not be the case at all if the educators are not able to relate to one another in a positive and constructive manner. One study considered the possible association between how teachers relate to one another in a co-teaching relationship and what occurs in social and instructional environments (McCormick et al.,

2001). This study found a significant relationship between co-teacher relationship and program quality measures. There is a growing body of qualitative and anecdotal data suggesting the relationship between co-teachers influences what they do in the classroom and, in fact, the extent of collaboration. The process of assuming new roles, as in the Full Day Kindergarten model with ECE and classroom teacher, requires staff members to collaborate in new ways (Lieber et al., 1997). Educators who are used to working independently are required to become co-teachers.

Sindelar (1995) noted there are many different ways to collaborate. What contributes to successful co-teaching and the establishment of a collaborative learning environment? There is research to support strategies that can be used to cultivate strong and effective co-teaching relationships. "Co-teachers can take steps to help relationship flourish" (Cramer & Nevin, 2006). Communication is a common element. Co-teachers need to acknowledge problems early. Co-teachers need to clarify expectations and share the responsibility of assessment. In addition, providing feedback is crucial. Effective communication will support the construction of a professional relationship built on respect and trust.

Philosophical beliefs are another element in the creation of a co-teaching relationship. Members of a successful co-teaching team share several common beliefs that constitute a philosophy or system of principles that guide their practice (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). A study by Vaughn, Shumm and Arguelles (1997) found shared beliefs are a very important component of a successful co-teaching relationship. Successful co-teachers believe they have responsibility for all students in the classroom (Friend and

Pope, 2005). Thus, in a collaborative co-teaching structure, where educators share norms and values related to learning, teachers are more likely to collaborate.

A collaborative co-teaching relationship does not just happen. Gately and Gately (2001) describe predictable stages in the development of a co-teaching partnership. Interpersonal communication is a key element of co-teaching relationships (Gately & Gately, 2001). In one study Karge, McClure and Patton (1995) concluded that strong communication skills are a prerequisite for co-teachers. In the early stages of co-teaching, communication is not as open as the educators begin to learn how to interpret each other's' verbal and non-verbal cues. As the co-teaching partnership evolves, educators exchange ideas more willingly and develop respect for differences. At the collaboration stage, partners can listen to each other, offer suggestions and compromise (Gately & Gately, 2001).

Cook and Friend (1995) identified some key pieces that are important in the development of a co-teaching relationship. Educators must share responsibility in all areas of the education process (Cooke & Friend, 1995). In 1997 Bouck concluded that co-teaching partners collectively assessed students, developed learning goals and determined teaching strategies. This occurred within an environment of parity, where both members of the educator team were viewed as equal (Cooke & Friend, 1995). Parity is another element necessary for the evolution of effective educator teams (Friend & Cook, 2007). The members of the team need to feel as equal partners and therefore gestures such as ensuring that both educators' names are on the classroom door and all

communication, a designated work space for each educator, and shared responsibilities all contribute to the establishment of the perception of parity.

When the co-teaching concept was in its initial stages, Cook and Friend described five variations of the model (1996): 1) one teach one assist in which one educator is instructional leader and the other assists students as needed; 2) station teaching, where students receive different components of the curriculum from each educator; 3) parallel teaching, where teachers plan together and the class is divided into two groups, each partner taking one group for instruction; 4) alternative teaching, in which students are organized into a large group and a smaller one and teachers determine who will work with each group; and 5) team teaching where both teachers lead instruction. Researchers have indicated that the team teaching model as being the optimum model for collaborative teaching (Dieker & Murrawski, 2003). Yet the one-to-one is more prevalent in co-teaching classrooms (Scruggs, Matropieri & Mcduffie, 2007).

Each educator in the co-teaching relationship should develop his or her understanding of the individual elements but more importantly the co-teaching partnership must also come to a shared understanding of each component is truly blended into a shared practice (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011). Co-teaching partnerships must determine how they can provide the most effective and efficient support for students and in doing so add value to the teaching and learning process. As each co-teaching partnership develops, shared understanding is critical to success.

Trust is another essential ingredient for a successful co-teaching relationship. Participation grounded in trusting relationships provides a potential basis for the

development of partnerships between team members (Aylward & O'Neil, 2009; Edwards, 2009). Katz, Earl and Jaafar (2009) identify trust as being a strong facilitator of working together. The conception of trust is more than just goodwill and friendship, although this is important. It extends to include respect for each other's dignity and ideas, belief in each other's competence and confidence in each other's integrity (Katz et al., 2009). Trust does not build itself; it is developed through working and reflecting together.

Communication is another environmental condition of the collaborative structure. There are several components that have been identified through studies to impact collaboration. Opportunities for communication are crucial (Janmohamed et al., 2011) Structures need to be in place to support two educators and help them develop a collaborative learning process, ensuring that each voice and opinion is heard and respected (Janmohanmed et al., 2011). Conversely, lack of communication can influence the co-teaching structure in a negative way (McNairy, 1998).

The Collaborative Environment: Leadership

In an effective co-teaching classroom a relationship between two teachers is essential and often takes time to develop. It can be nurtured by clear expectations from administrators, fostered through the mutual exploration of individual and partnership belief systems (Gately & Gately, 2001). Structures will need to be in place to support the two educators and help them develop a collaborative learning process, ensuring that each voice and opinion is heard and respected. Effective governance is critical to ensure staff integration.

Leadership is critical in engaging staff in an improved way of working together (Sirag-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). Commitment to collaboration is a positive leadership quality. One of the challenges of leadership in the situation of Full Day Kindergarten is to create unity and shared understandings across the varied disciplines of classroom teacher and ECE (Toronto First Duty, 2008, p.5). Colmer (2008) highlights the importance of the leader providing emotional support for staff and the creation of an environment of trust in which exploration and questioning is encouraged. Leadership has a role in nurturing the shared understandings within the collaborative framework, by creating the conditions in which the team members can give their best in a climate of commitment and challenge, mutual trust and open communication (Bennet, 2003).

It is crucial to establish a shared sense of professionalism on the team in throughout the school. This implies mutual recognition and provides a basis for working towards professional interdependence. Professional interdependence requires an appreciation of complementary strengths of different disciplines to enable professionals (ECE and teacher) to work collaboratively (Edwards, 2009). This professionalism must be supported by the principal. Cantalini-Williams and Tefler (2010) state that it is imperative for the principal to honour and nurture the various strengths the members of the Full Day Kindergarten educator team bring to the partnership. The principal, teacher and early childhood educator must recognize their common purpose as the optimal development of children in their classroom and build mutual respect and understanding (Cantalini-Williams & Tefler, 2010). Since the construct of teacher efficacy was introduced nearly 25 years ago, researchers have found certain school environmental

factors are related to efficacy beliefs of teachers, and the principal leadership is one of these key factors (Raudenbush, Rowen, & Cheong, 1992).

Current Connections

The co-teaching model in full day kindergarten is a new model and there is little research available directly connected to this approach. Most research in the area of co-teaching is focused on the partnership between special education teachers and classroom teachers. However, in 2010 Gibson & Pelletier conducted a study and identified preliminary findings from an examination of ECE and teacher dynamics in full day kindergarten (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). This study explored the teaching structure taken by early childhood educators and teachers in full day kindergarten classrooms to examine the collaborative relationship between the two educators in the classrooms.

This study examined the potential of hierarchy developing in the co-teaching structure. The research questions focused on how early childhood educators and classroom teachers felt about their responsibilities in the classroom, and also the level of support each educator felt within the school community. This study used surveys to gather data from the educators that participated in the study, accessing approximately 60 educators from seven schools in their first year of the full day kindergarten program.

Results from this study indicated that early childhood educators felt supported in the school setting. There were differences in perceptions of responsibilities in the classroom; early childhood educators felt that the division of responsibilities was equal, yet teachers identified themselves as having more responsibility in the classroom. There

was some indication of the need to clarify the role of the ECE in the school community, to ensure that there is a distinction between the ECE role and an educational assistant role in the school. ECEs identified they felt they had less influence on decisions in the classroom. ECEs expressed they did not feel that they had ample opportunity to discuss changes before implementing them in the classroom; yet teachers felt there was. Early childhood educators did not feel they had more authority than the classroom teacher; more teachers felt that they did have increased authority in the classroom. Therefore this is another area of disconnect associated with the hierarchy in the classroom. Over one quarter of the classroom teachers stated they delegated tasks to their partner; no ECEs stated they delegated tasks to their teaching partner.

The Gibson and Pelletier Study (2010) indicates differences in the perceptions of classroom teachers and early childhood educators in full day kindergarten, and the potential presence of elements of hierarchy in the educator partnership. The study suggests a need for further research in this area. New insight from teams that have worked together for varying periods of time into the collaborative structure of Full Day Kindergarten is provided by this study.

The Gibson and Pelletier Study (2010) also revealed interest in the role of the principal in the development of the co-teaching structure. It referenced research that links effective school leadership's importance when integrating staff teams, and suggested a need for deeper understanding of how integration is occurring in Full Day Kindergarten classrooms. The researcher of this study considered this aspect when framing the questions and areas of focus, as the researcher is interested in the integration of the two

roles into the collaborative structure. The Gibson and Pelletier (2010) study did not however make direct connections between leadership and the co-teaching structure, which is another area of interest of the researcher.

The Collaborative Structure: Caveats

There are always challenges when implementing a new structure. There are certainly key issues when examining the integration of ECE positions into the school setting. Common barriers to co-teaching, according to the literature, include lack of joint professional development, lack of planning time and lack of administrative support (Murawski, 2010). Gibson and Pelletier (2010) identified 35 % of the early childhood educators in the study reporting as acting as an assistant to their teaching partner, and that results suggested one quarter to one third of Full Day Kindergarten classrooms are hierarchical in teaching structure. Over half of the early childhood educators felt that they had less of an influence on program decisions relative to their teaching partner, and over half of the classroom teachers in this study felt they had more authority than their teaching partners (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). Research in the Toronto First Duty schools and in Sweden also underline the challenges of establishing co-teaching structures and the prevalence of hierarchical relationships (Corter et al., 2007; Calander, 2000). It is clear that the presence of two educators in one classroom does not ensure the development of a collaborative co-teaching structure.

Conclusion

The review of literature suggests that although the government decision to place Early Childhood Educators into Full Day Kindergarten classrooms to work collaboratively with the classroom teachers is a sound decision and supportive of quality early childhood education programming, it is not a simple task. The literature outlines the necessary components for a successful collaborative structure and the rationale that explains the purpose of these components. Efficacy is a thread that connects these components together: if one believes in oneself and feels valued and can contribute thoughts and ideas to a partnership, this can then feed the need for parity, communication, respect and trust. If partners feel that collectively they can be successful, this collective efficacy can support a collaborative structure that embraces professional learning and growth, and move beyond the friendliness and collegiality of collaboration to the level of meaningful reflective practice. The literature also indicated that this collaborative structure is on a developmental continuum; it does not happen immediately and requires a supportive environment and leader to foster its growth. Research supports strategies that can be used to cultivate co-teaching partnerships. Collaboration is work. It requires effort and intent, understanding and commitment. Yet research reveals that classrooms with co-teaching structures provide stronger learning environments (Shim et al., 2004). The Full Day Kindergarten Program is giving educators the opportunity to share respective expertise by working as co-teachers, and a rich and rewarding experience can emerge. The joint work, the joint experience of learning together has tremendous possibilities, if nurtured appropriately.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explains the theoretical framework, research design and methodology of this study. The context in which the research was conducted will be discussed. The position of the researcher is defined and the research participants are described.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis is set within the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory. This theory states human functioning is explained by the way behaviour, cognition and other personal factors interact with environmental events. Social cognitive theory aligns with constructivist philosophy as this theory posits people are not motivated solely by inner forces or external stimuli but in fact it is the interaction between the person interpreting the world and the world itself that shapes behavior and cognition. A person's actions are effected by many elements: actions, cognitive, affective and other personal factors and environmental effects, all which operate as interacting determinants.   In application to the school environment, this theory supports the importance of educators' perceptions of themselves and the organization where they work and that these perceptions influence the actions they take as teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Over thirty years ago Albert Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy perceptions or "beliefs in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action

required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). Research subsequently

demonstrated the power of efficacy judgments in human learning, performance and

motivation, in many areas, including education.

Agency and Efficacy

Agency and efficacy are two related constructs within social cognitive theory that

are related to collaborative co-teaching situations (Goddard, 2001). The term *agency*

refers to the ability to intentionally influence one's life based on one's actions. Human

agency is characterized by a number of core features that include intentionality and

forethought, self-regulation and self-reflectiveness about one's capabilities (Bandura,

2006). Personal agency operates within a broad network of social influences and social

cognitive theory distinguishes three modes of agency: direct personal agency, proxy

agency that relies on others to influence one's actions to secure desired outcomes and

collective agency exercised through socially and interdependent efforts (Bandura, 2006).

One element of agency is intentionality. Intentionality refers to a person's action

plans and strategies to implement these plans. Collective intentionality refers to a

commitment to an intention shared by a group of people, who also collaborate to create a

group action plan to realize the intention (Bandura, 2006). Structures within an

organization can impact collective agency and intentionality, such as people or events.

Participants who exhibit collective agency have a similar intention and coordinate actions

to make this intention become a reality. However there could be barriers within the

organization that impede this collective agency that also need to be considered. Social

cognitive theory extends the conception of human agency to collective agency (Bandura

1989). People's shared belief in their collective power to produce

desired results is a key ingredient of collective agency. The concept of agency applies to this research as it will have a role in the development of the collaboration between the teacher and early childhood educator within the school setting.

Efficacy is the second element to consider when connecting collaborative co-teaching situations to social cognitive theory. Bandura defines efficacy as an individual's belief that he or she can determine actions and carry through the plan to achieve an intentional goal. One's perception of self-efficacy can influence goals a person sets and the amount of effort exerted to complete a task. It impacts perseverance, as a person decides how hard to try to achieve a goal, and also stress levels, as when a person feels that they cannot complete a task stress may develop as they attempt to cope with environmental demands (Bandura, 1989). Thus, people's perceived efficacy is not an assessment of their skill set but rather a belief about what they can or cannot accomplish under various circumstances given the skills they do possess.

However, because people do not exist in isolation, social cognitive theory extends to include the perceptions of collective efficacy (Bandura, 1989), which defines the shared sense of capability within a group. Collective efficacy is a shared belief that working together a group can achieve success and produce desired results (Bandura, 1989). It is a concept of collective power. In the school setting, collective efficacy is therefore the shared philosophy within a group of educators that they can collaboratively plan and perform actions to positively impact student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2004). In this study, this refers to the shared belief between the classroom teacher and early childhood educator.

Collective Efficacy

Because the collective performance of a social system involves transactional dynamics, perceived collective efficacy is an emergent, not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individual members (Bandura, 2000). In education, collective efficacy is the collective belief of teachers within a school that they can make a positive difference for the students at the school, regardless of demographic factors (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Bandura affirms the connection between attitudes and actions with efficacy, as the sense of collective efficacy has an impact on the way teachers think, act and their level of motivation (Bandura, 2000). Perceived collective efficacy is powerful: the effect of perceived collective efficacy on student achievement has been determined as a greater link than the link between socio-economic status and achievement (Bandura, 1993). Studies by Goddard et al. confirm the positive impact of perceived collective efficacy on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000). Evidence from diverse lines of research attests to the impact of perceived collective efficacy on group functioning (Bandura 2000). Studies conclude that the stronger the perceived collective efficacy, the higher the groups' aspirations and motivational investment in their undertakings, the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments and setbacks, the higher their morale and resilience to stressors, and the greater their performance accomplishments (Bandura, 2000). According to social cognitive theory, the control individuals and groups exert over their lives is influenced by their sense of efficacy (Goddard, 2001).

The sense of collective efficacy in a school has an effect on instruction, behavioural management and the motivational atmosphere. Schools with high collective teacher efficacy have common characteristics: challenging benchmarks, which means

high expectations, delivery of instruction for mastery learning, and the belief that all children can reach academic goals regardless of their socioeconomic status, home environment or lack of ability (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Perceived collective efficacy resides in the minds of group members as the belief they have in common regarding their group's capability (Bandura, 2006). Teachers' efficacy beliefs have also been linked to trust, openness and job satisfaction (Goddard et al., 2004; Ross, 1992; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

The developments of information from past experiences form collective efficacy beliefs: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social experience and affective states (Bandura, 2000). From these experiences, mastery experience is the strongest influence on collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997). When teachers experience success, they can refer to this experience which will have a positive impact on future endeavors. Mastery experience is real evidence that proves success can be attained and goals can be achieved. Bandura also underlines the importance of mastery efficacy developing over time in order to build resiliency; if success is too quick and too easy to attain, failure can be immediately discouraging (Bandura, 1989).

Vicarious experience is another way to build collective efficacy. Individuals and groups learn to develop efficacy from witnessing efficacy; schools and teachers that see successful schools want to replicate the results. This vicarious experience is another way to build efficacy. Success breeds success. A vicarious experience is one in which the skill in question is modeled by someone else. When a model with whom the observer identifies performs well, the efficacy beliefs of the observer are most likely enhanced.

When the model performs poorly, the efficacy beliefs of the observer tend to decrease (Godddard, Hoy&Wollfolk-Hoy, 2004).

Thirdly, Bandura describes social persuasion as a factor of collective efficacy. Effective organizers or leaders often persuade group members of their collective efficacy. If influential people encourage others and believe that they can attain a goal, and express this belief to the individual, the individual is more likely to be successful. In this study, social persuasion involves the teaching partner (teacher or early childhood educator) and also could include the principal of the school, as potential elements of social persuasion. Social persuasion cannot work independently; with successful models and positive mastery experiences social persuasion can influence the level of collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2000).

Finally, affective states may also influence collective efficacy. For example, high levels of distress may debilitate group performance and diminish confidence (Goddard, 2001). Schools with high levels of collective efficacy handle stressors more effectively (Goddard et al., 2004).

Teacher efficacy to educate students successfully has been the subject of considerable inquiry. Thus it is sufficient to state that teacher efficacy is positively associated with several productive teacher behaviours (Goddard, 2001) including organized and planful teacher, use of activity based learning, use of student-centred learning and the use of probing questions. (Allinder, 1994; Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al., 2004). Social cognitive theory is employed to explain the choices teachers make, the ways in which they exercise personal agency, and are strongly influenced by collective efficacy beliefs. Although empirically related, teacher and collective efficacy perceptions

are theoretically distinct constructs, each having unique effects on educational decisions and student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004). Perceptions of self-efficacy is distinct from other perceptions of self, such as self-concept, self-worth and self-esteem, in that self-efficacy is specific to a particular task; "efficacy is a judgment about task capability that is not inherently evaluative" (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 185). Therefore a person could experience a low sense of efficacy for a particular task without suffering with dimished self-esteem if that person has not invested self-work in doing the activity well. Conversely, high achievers may be very skilled, yet evaluate themselves negatively because they have personal standards that are difficult to attain, resulting in questioning self-worth despite being very competent. If a person does not feel others value his or her accomplisments, or do not feel as valued members of the group, one's perception of self-efficacy can be negatively impacted (Goddard et al., 2004). It is therefore important to consider the distinction between perception of competence and actual competence. This has tremendous connections to the research of this study, and the impact of self-efficacy on the development of a collaborative partnership between the teacher and early childhood educator.

This research in this study explored this area through the examination of the partnership between the classroom teacher and early childhood educator. Collective efficacy was the lens through which the collaborative structure of the educator team was examined. This research explored the relationship of self-efficacy and collective efficacy to the development of a collaborative co-teaching team in a Full Day Kindergarten classroom setting. This research also considered the collective efficacy of the larger staff at the school and the connection to the educator team's level of collective efficacy.

Research also indicates predicators of efficacy, which aligns with elements of the collaborative structure. Reflective dialogue, deprivatized practice, collaboration and shared norms are identified as positive predictors of efficacy (Louis & Kruse, 1995). These elements are present in the collaborative structure of full day kindergarten.

Research Design

A qualitative , multiple case study design was used to investigate and interpret how a co-teaching relationship develops between a classroom Kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator in a full day kindergarten classroom. A case study used empirical inquiry to study a modern-day phenomenon in the context of real life where boundaries between the phenomenon and the real life context are unclear (Yin, 2003). Yin defines the central tendency among all case study types as an attempt to "illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result" (Yin, 2003, p. 12). Merriam states case studies are "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19) such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention or community. Merriam concludes the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of the study, the case. This method permits the researcher to see the case as a single entity; the subject of the study can be "fenced in" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). Merriam (1998) indicates that case studies are prevalent throughout the field of education. Therefore this method of qualitative research is appropriate for this thesis study.

This study is a particularistic case study as it focused on a particular situation - educator partnership in Full Day Kindergarten. In this way the case study concentrates

attention on the way the particular group of people (classroom teacher and ECE) confront the situation of co-teaching in a full day kindergarten classroom (Merriam, 1998). This study also encompasses several aspects of the descriptive nature of case study, as it illustrates the complexities of this situation and shows the influence of personalities on the situation. In addition, this study includes vivid material: quotations and interviews.

This study involved exploring more than one case, hence a multiple case study. Yin maintains the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore considered more robust (Yin, 2003). This research will utilize an embedded design, whereby each individual case study includes the collection and analysis of data. The research will adopt flexible design to allow for modifications as new information is discovered.

Using a qualitative case study research design for this study allows for the conduct of research within a real-life context in order to describe the experiences of Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators in the Full Day Kindergarten setting. Their rich descriptions and the researcher's observations of these experiences provided a way to develop a deep understanding of characteristics that allow the co-teaching partnership to develop. Narrowing the study to include only educators at three schools within the St. Clair Catholic District School Board provides a single, bounded system with a finite amount of data collection.

This research involves qualitative design to piece together a complex vision of the co-teaching partnership within the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. A qualitative inquiry based on in-depth interviews enlightened the researcher about the perspectives of

the early childhood educator (ECE) and classroom teacher. In-depth interviews allow for gathering rich data and elicited deeper understandings behind the partnership in the classroom, and the elements that shape this partnership.

The in-depth interview involves asking questions, actively listening and expressing interest. Yin (2003) states that the interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. This case study interview was of an open-ended nature, in which key respondents were asked about the facts and opinions. This type of interview can be defined as a conversation (Merriam, 1998), but a conversation with a purpose, the purpose being to find out what is in and on someone else's mind (Merriam, 1998). Interviewing is the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals (Merriam, 1998). The interview process created a comfortable setting for the participants, enabling the participants to express themselves in a safe environment, as though engaged in a friendly conversation (Yin, 2003).

This study also included a direct observation piece. By making a field visit to the case study sites the researcher was able to create the opportunity for direct observations. Relevant behaviours and environmental conditions are available for observation and provided another source of evidence for the case study. Direct observation data was very helpful for understanding the context, based on an accumulation of information. As well, observation enhanced the researcher's insight into interpersonal behaviours and motivations and build relationships (Anderson, 1998).

The researcher's questions were focused through the lens of efficacy and how this perception of self is connected to other aspects of the co-teaching relationship. Through

observing the classroom environment and the interaction of the classroom teacher and ECE and having a conversation one-on-one with each educator the researcher was able to clarify the components that create a co-teaching relationship in the classroom.

Emergent design flexibility was embedded into this study research design. "In a qualitative study the process of making meaning is emergent" (Anderson, 1998, p. 122). The researcher conformed to the fieldwork as proposed but was able react to unexpected discoveries that emerged during the research process. In this study research was initiated through individual interviews, focus group session and observations. Data collected from each interview and the focus group was analyzed individually and responses were compared. An emergent design enabled the researcher to have the option to ask new questions related to these findings, allowing the researcher to search for deeper meaning of the influence of relationships on successful co-teaching.

Data Collection Methods

As qualitative case study design was used to determine data collection methods that permitted participants to share their personal accounts as to how their co-teaching relationship developed and its impact. Using multiple data sources enabled the researcher to triangulate collected data and validate findings as related to the co-teaching partnership (Anderson, 1998). "Triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity"(Merriam, 1998, p. 207). Additional data may be collected utilizing an emergent design. Multiple visits occurred to gather additional data or to check interpretation of responses.

Interviews

The researcher conducted face- to -face interviews with seven participants (four teachers and three early childhood educators). The interviews took place over a two week period in June, 2012. Each interview was a focused interview (Yin, 2003) lasting approximately one hour and was recorded using a digital recorder and then transcribed verbatim with participants' consent. Interview questions were designed to allow participants to respond in their own words, as "the purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (Merriam, p. 72). A semi-structured interview process was selected for this research which provided freedom for the researcher to explore beyond the questions and guide conversations spontaneously; this format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand (Merriam, p. 74). Interview questions are found in Appendix A.

Focus groups

 "A focus group is a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion where one person's ideas bounce off another's creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue" (Anderson, 1998, p. 200). It is an "organized discussion" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 152). This type of interview places importance on the group interaction between the participants, which may trigger thoughts and ideas among the participants that do not emerge during an individual interview (Lichtman, 2010).

This study followed the semi-structured or guided focus group format. As with individual qualitative interviews, focus groups can rely on a semi-structured approach (Lichtman, 2010). The researcher accessed a question list (see Appendix B). Two focus

group sessions were completed for this research, from two sites in the school board. The included schools were selected due to the number of educators in these schools involved in Full Day Kindergarten. Both schools have multiple Full Day Kindergarten classrooms, which provided a larger group of participants for each focus group. Focus Group One included three teachers and two early childhood educators. Focus Group Two included two teachers, two early childhood educators and one principal. Data was collected in this social context for the purpose of eliciting views on co-teaching relationships and searching for common threads as well as differences in opinion. This focus group interaction also provided the opportunity to educators to reflect on how collective efficacy may or may not play a role in the development of successful partnerships. The focus group interaction occurred in a non-threatening environment at the school site. The participants had a degree of trust in the researcher and in each other. A digital voice recorder was used to obtain verbatim transcripts for later analysis.

Observations

Observation is "a technique of data collection in which the researcher observes the interaction of individuals in the natural setting" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 245). Observation is a tool for collecting data and this study included observation to help understand the context of the co-teaching relationships at the research sites. In addition, observation provided the opportunity to note the educators' engagement with each other in the classroom. Observations triangulated emerging findings, in conjunction with interviews and focus group discussion. In addition, observation enabled the researcher to see firsthand the educator partnership in action and use her personal knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed, rather than relying upon accounts attained through

interviews (Merriam, 1998). Observation makes it possible to record behavior as it is happening. Lastly, observation provided some knowledge of context to be used as reference points for subsequent interviews.

Observations occurred over a two week period and were approximately one hour in length. Observation data was recorded using field notes, and included written descriptions of setting, people, and activities in the personal words of the researcher, direct quotations when applicable and comments about the observations made by the researcher.

Sampling

This research study utilized nonprobability sampling. Merriam (1998) justifies this choice, as she states that nonprobability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research. Purposeful sampling was the selected sampling strategy, which is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain valuable insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). Patton argues that the power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study (Merriam, 1998). Convenience sampling strategy is used whereby the sample is selected based on time, location and availability of sites determines the sites included in this research. One Full Day Kindergarten classroom was selected from the Sarnia cluster of schools, one from the Chatham schools and one in Wallaceburg, which provided a convenience sample reflective of the sites at St. Clair Catholic District School Board. One could consider this sampling also a typical sample as it reflects the average person, situation or instance of the "phenomenon of interest"

(Merriam, 1998, p. 62), which in this research includes Full Day Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators.

Data Analysis

"Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 154). Analysis begins with the first interview, or the first observation. Emerging insights direct the next phase of data collection which leads to the reformulation of questions. The constant comparative method of data analysis will be used, which is "widely used in all kinds of qualitative studies" (Merriam, 1998, p. 18). This method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension, or category. The overall object of this analysis is to seek patterns in the data. The researcher examined information from interviews, focus group discussion and observations and make comparisons. These comparisons will lead to possible categories that are then compared to each other (Merriam, 1998).

Data analysis following the constant comparative method is also referred to as grounded theory (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). "Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Grounded theory is based on concepts that are generated directly from the data that are collected in a research study. It is inductively derived. The researcher determined that this method aligned with this study, as Full Day Kindergarten is a new context in Ontario schools and there is presently limited research completed in this area. Therefore through the grounded theory method

of analysis, the area of study selected by the researcher is examined, data are collected

and analyzed and what is relevant to this area was allowed to emerge. Grounded theory

data analysis employs a coding method, including open, axial and selective coding. The

researcher utilized the three stages of coding to analyze the data.

Open coding was the initial method of analysis. Open coding creates labels and

concepts within the data and then these concepts are applied to the data collected.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined open coding as studying data in order to compare,

conceptualize and place data into categories. Through open coding the researcher

identified patterns that formed categories. Through the open coding process, the

researcher read and reread the verbatim transcripts from the interviews and focus group

sessions, and identified concepts that emerged from the data. These concepts were then

organized into an initial coding matrix, and included 14 concepts.   The researcher

recorded an explanation for each concept and assigned a coding symbol. This matrix was

then used to complete the initial coding of the data.

Upon completion of the initial open coding, axial coding was then used to

further analyze the data. During axial coding, the researcher develops concepts into

categories (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The researcher re-examines the open coded

data and looked to see what kinds of things the participants mentioned many times, and

how these ideas relate to one another. The researcher's main goal of axial coding is to

identify more abstract concepts that are linked to "how the phenomenon operates"

(Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 414). In this study, the phenomenon examined is the

collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten. Axial coding provides the researcher a

process to determine how the phenomenon operates, is manifested, key features of the

phenomenon, conditions required to establish the phenomenon, and strategies participants use to deal with this phenomenon, and finally the consequences of these strategies. The researcher examined the data and emerging concepts and identified themes or categories. The researcher then identified subgroups in these initial categories to further break down the data. Connections were made between the categories.   The open and axial coding methods used in this study were examined in relationship to the theoretical framework of the study to determine proper category placement.

Lastly, selective coding was used to determine the grounded theory that emerged from the research study. The researcher reflected on the data and the results of the open and axial coding. The researcher also referred to published literature throughout this phase of data analysis for additional ideas to consider in developing the theory and understanding its significance.   After thorough analysis of the data and the emergent themes, a summary of the findings was written.

This data analysis process follows the grounded theory model. The most widely accepted definition of grounded theory appears to be that given by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Grounded theory is "…theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). Strauss and Corbin (1998) clarify that this stance guides the researcher to begin a research project without a pre-conceived notion in mind. With the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten being a new structure, the researcher selected the grounded theory philosophy to guide the coding process.

Validity and Reliability

Conclusions drawn from the data interpretation must be confirmed to assure that they are accurate representations of the realities of the educators in the study. To verify the data, the researcher retraced the coding and analytic process that lead to these conclusions. The advisor of the researcher verified coding schemes to ensure that the essential pieces were captured from the data. In addition to data verification, the researcher documented each step taken to assemble the data and make interpretations and decisions throughout the research process. This allows the entire research process to be replicated by another researcher. This is known as an audit trail (Anderson, 1998).

Internal Validity

Internal validity is the strength of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). In this type of research it is important to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) list four factors that lend support to the claim of high internal validity (Merriam, 1998). These include researcher's relationship with the participants, participant observation, interviews and analysis that incorporate researcher reflection, introspection and self-monitoring; Erickson identifies this as disciplined subjectivity (Merriam, 1998). This researcher addressed these components. Merriam (1998) identifies strategies that can enhance internal validity, which were also addressed by the researcher: triangulation, using multiple sources of data; member checks, taking tentative interpretations back to the people from whom them were derived and asking them if the results are plausible;

peer examination, asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge and researcher's bias, or clarifying the researcher's assumptions and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Merriam, 1998). Human behaviour is never static, therefore this is challenging in qualitative studies. The connection between reliability and internal validity rests on the assumption that a study is more valid if it can be replicated and produce the same results (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) states that replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results, because of the emergent design of a qualitative case study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest thinking about dependability or consistency (Merriam, 1998) of the results obtained from the data. That is, rather than demanding that outsiders achieve the same results, a researcher would wish that an outsider would concur that, given the collected data, the results make sense; the results are consistent and dependable (Merriam, 1998).

This researcher used several techniques to ensure the dependability of results. Firstly, the researcher stated the assumptions and theory behind the study and the basis for selecting the participants and a description of them. Secondly, triangulation strengthened reliability as well as internal validity. Lastly, and audit trial authenticated the finding.

External Validity

External validity refers to the generalizability of the obtained results (Anderson, 1998). From this perspective, generalizing from a case study makes no sense at all (Merriam, 1988). The case study approach is selected for the purpose of understanding in depth, not because one wishes to know what is true of the many. Generalization must be reframed to reflect the assumptions of qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1988). With this conceptualization of generalization, this researcher adopted Stake' (1978) notion of naturalistic generalization, and searched for patterns that explained her own experience and the experiences of the participants in the study, by "recognizing similarities in and out of context and by sensing the natural co-variations of happenings" (Merriam, 1988, p. 176). Merriam also indicates that to enhance the possibility of generalizing the results of a case study, the researcher must provide a detailed description of the study's context, which was included in this study. In addition, the researcher included multisite design, whereby several sites (cases) were used which allowed the results to be applied to a greater range of other situations, and was achieved through purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998).

Triangulation

Triangulation can be defined as "the systematic comparison of findings on the same research topic generated by different research methods" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 170). Multiple sources bring more credibility to an investigation (Lichtman, 2010). Yin (2003) states that a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. This study utilized interviews, focus group

discussions and observations, therefore meeting the requirements for triangulation of data sources.

Member Checks and Peer Examination

Researchers know that they influence the research and the results. This researcher attempted to reduce the subjectivity of the qualitative researcher through the use of member checks (Lichtman, 2010). This researcher verified interpretations by having the participants examine the interpretations and also through peer examination whereby a peer will review data and interpretations.

Researcher Bias

The researcher plays a pivotal role in the qualitative research process (Lichtman, 2010). How they interpret, organize and report the data is critical. All information is influenced by the experience, knowledge, skill and background of the researcher. Researchers know they influence research and results and therefore qualitative research rejects the idea that one can be objective and neutral in research (Willis, 2007).

This research is grounded in the belief system of the researcher, who has worked in the education field for the past 24 years as a teacher, consultant and principal, both at the school and the system level. Two philosophical beliefs held by the researcher may impact the qualitative inquiry. Firstly, the researcher believes that educators are the most important variable regarding student success at school; teachers make a difference. Secondly, teachers working collaboratively are more powerful than teachers working in isolation. The researcher has worked in several different school settings, in both elementary and secondary panels, and based on these experiences the researcher has

witnessed the power of collaboration, and in the presence of strong collective efficacy, that collaboration is even more productive and impacts student achievement. Collaboration breeds efficacy. The researcher also has experience with co-teaching, as principal with teachers, and has observed the positive influence this has on teachers and students. The researcher was also principal at a school with Full Day Kindergarten and was involved in its implementation in the building. The researcher has participated in additional training for implementation of this program at the Ministry level. The researcher frequently observed the classroom and interacted with the teacher, early childhood educator and students in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. As a principal, the researcher witnessed the development of a co-teaching relationship.

Merriam (1998) states that in qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, the researcher. Therefore the perspective of the researcher is embedded within the context of the research. This provides a challenge for the researcher. The researcher therefore made every attempt to separate personal experience from the observations taken and stories shared. Data will be based on direct observation and interactions and reflection retrieved from these interactions. The researcher sought to understand each participant's response, through direct interaction and observation.

Limitations

Many critics of the case study method argue that it lacks reliability and that another researcher might come to a different conclusion (Anderson, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Willis, 2007). The extent to which generalizability or external validity is possible

will relate to the extent to which a case study is typical. Selecting three schools for cases across the school board attempted to address this concept of typical phenomena. The goal was to select participants who reflected the wide range of educator partnerships in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. Using a limited number of cases in this research could also be a limitation to the study.

The reliability of the participants' information can be another area of concern (Anderson, 1998). The participant's personality and relationship to the researcher all tend to colour the interpretation of data. To ameliorate this situation, the researcher triangulated the data, developed levels of confidence in the participants and treated information accordingly.

The quality of research is highly connected to the skills of the researcher. The researcher is the data collection instrument and the quality of the product is directly related to the quality of the researcher's skill. Support from the thesis advisor and peer support to review information will greatly support this budding researcher to offset any experience-related limitations. Personal bias can be a limitation; this researcher has stated any bias and has made known the theoretical and conceptual perspectives on which the study is based (Anderson, 1998).

Internal validity has been addressed through keeping meticulous records of all sources of information used, using detailed transcripts and taking field notes of all communications and reflective thinking activities during the research process. This audit trail (Anderson, 1998) provides a chain of evidence and demonstrates how the links and conclusions between the data and analysis were derived.

   In addition, researchers studying any qualitative area may unconsciously appeal to their own personal bias. This researcher has tried not to impose her own understandings and beliefs when conducting the interviews, facilitating the focus group discussions or undertaking observations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This research used a qualitative design to examine the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten classrooms. In the process the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the importance of the relationship between the classroom teacher and Early Childhood educator. A qualitative inquiry based on interviews, focus groups and observations was necessary in studying how this collaborative structure develops within the educator team. Interviews, focus groups, and observations facilitated the collection of rich data, eliciting deeper understandings behind the formation of the educator partnerships.

The interviews and focus group sessions involved asking questions, actively listening and expressing interest in the responses shared. The participants revealed insights and personal experiences as elicited by the interviewer. In addition, the interviewer made every attempt to ensure that each participant was comfortable and felt as though she was engaging in a friendly conversation, free of judgment or evaluation.

Consistency, Verification and Credibility

The researcher conducted all interviews and focus group sessions and therefore there is evidence of consistency. Every effort was made to create a comfortable environment for the participants, and to encourage open and free responses and discussion from all participants. The personal views and assumptions of the researcher

were not imposed on the participants. Ideas were not judged by the researcher. The researcher actively and attentively listened to all responses. Interest was shown by the researcher through attentive listening through attentive listening throughout the entire interview and focus group process so all participants felt valued. Finally the member-check tested and confirmed the credibility of the interpretations.

Observations were also a part of the research process. The researcher observed educator teams at two different sites in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. These sites were selected based on convenience and availability for classroom visits. During these observations, the researcher examined the roles of the educators through their interactions with the students in the classroom and with each other. These observations also established a context for the researcher to connect to the information shared at focus group and interview sessions.

Throughout the interview, focus group and observation process, the researcher sought to answer particular questions related to the partnership of the early childhood educator and classroom teacher. Through observation and examination of the individual responses and behaviours, the researcher was able to understand the attitudes, perceptions and roles of the educators in the Full Day Kindergarten classrooms.

Chapter 4 gives the results of the data collection process which included one-on-one interviews with seven educators, two focus group sessions, with groups of five in each session, and a series of observations in two classrooms. The researcher analyzed, interpreted and described the data that emerged. A common concern when doing qualitative research is the degree to which the researcher can assure that the findings

reported are credible interpretations of what the participants said throughout the interviews/focus group sessions. To ensure the credibility of these findings, the interviews were transcribed verbatim.. In addition, the structured analysis and verification technique utilized by the researcher as employed to limit misrepresentations and boost the credibility of the findings. The interviews and focus group sessions were conducted such that the participants felt comfortable speaking with the researcher about their experiences, which also assisted in ensuring credibility.

Data Analysis: Open Coding

Data analysis was initiated through an open coding process. Open coding "is based on the concept of data being cracked open as a means of identifying relevant categories" (Lichtman, 2010. p. 73).The interview data read several times by the researcher and coded with initial codes . These initial codes emerged from patterns in the interview and focus group responses. Concepts in the data were identified through the identification of patterns in research examined and the elements of the social cognitive theory, which was the theoretical framework for this study. The process of analysis was iterative: transcript was read, thoughts from the researcher added in informal writing, followed by a second examination to move the raw data to meaningful concepts. The constant comparative analysis method provided the way to construct meaning, both between and within each of the categories that emerged through open coding. These categories included collaboration, communication, cooperation, shared beliefs, flexibility, trust, time, confidence, anxiety, co-teaching participation, decision making, consistency, and perceptions of roles. Initial categories emphasized the many complexities of the co-teaching relationship between the teacher and early childhood educator. These initial

codes were assembled into an initial open coding matrix, and transcripts were reviewed and coded using the symbols from the matrix.

After coding all of the responses in the open coding process from each transcript, the researcher re-examined the transcripts and created sub-groups in the initial categories to break down the data further. For example, under the category co-teaching, many elements of co-teaching emerged, such as shared expertise, shared practice, and shared responsibility. Each initial concept was broken down into multiple sub-categories and interview data were coded and recoded until the researcher was confident the data had been coded completely.

Table 1:

Initial Open Coding Matrix

Coding Concepts	Explanation	Symbol
Co-teaching participation	-elements of co-teaching- co-planning, co-assessing, -instructional roles	0
Collaboration	-working as partners, working as a part of a team -use of the pronoun "we" vs "I"	1
Sense of being a valued member of the educational team, with ideas to offer and knowledge to share	-describes occasions/opportunities to share ideas with teaching partner; educator feels that ideas are considered and valued by the partner -sense of acceptance felt -sense of valuing the partner educator -respect/mutual respect/respect for partner	2
Communication	-open lines of communication -ability to share opinion/ feelings honestly -discussion- listening to each other	3
Decision Making	-able to make decisions within the partnership -sense of equity of power when determining curricular decisions, planning, assessment	4
Reflection	-metacognition -reflect on practice -feedback/next steps	5
Flexibility	-ability to see things in a new way, try new ideas -open to doing things in a new way based on ideas/input of partner- open mind -meeting diverse needs of students	6
Consistency	-consistency of expectations- academic and behaviour -consistency with communication to parents	7
Beliefs	-pedagogy, behaviour -personality traits	8
Perception of role	-parent perceptions -student perceptions -staff perceptions -educator team perceptions -self-perceptions	9
Time	-planning -conversation/dialogue -prep time- differences	10
Confidence	-feeling of having something to offer and in doing so	11
Anxiety	-working with a partner/new role- acceptance in setting (ECE)	12
Trust	-relationship with teaching partner- develops over time	13

Conversations were coded into meaningful chunks. The iterative process continued, as the researcher referred back to previously coded transcripts to compare and contrast comments and coded patterns. While doing this initial coding, the researcher recorded thoughts and ideas in the margins of the coding document, and summarized concepts at the bottom of the page to refer to later. These researcher notes assisted the researcher to identify the emergence of recurring themes throughout the transcripts which supported the axial coding process.

Data Analysis: Axial Coding Process

The researcher continued the coding process with axial coding, which is a process used "when categories are in an advanced stage of development" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 73). As open coded data were reviewed by the researcher, the initial concepts were developed into categories. The researcher closely examined the transcripts and determined common responses, common ideas and items that were mentioned repeatedly by various participants.   The researcher continued to examine the data in search of possible relationships in the data. Through this process, the researcher determined several key concepts: interpersonal factors, shared practice and reflective practice. Comments were lifted verbatim from the interview and focus group transcripts and were then coded under each concept. Each response was identified with the transcript number and the role of the participant. Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate this process of developing categories from the open codes. The initial coding concepts are written in italics to show the connections between the open coding process and the axial coding processes. During the axial coding analysis some categories emerged that were related to the initial concepts but developed into a separate category. For example, the initial concepts of value, respect, trust and communication were clustered into the category of Accepting Attitude.

Adaptability

Flexibility

Interpersonal

Factors

Accepting Attitude

Value, respect, trust, communication

Confidence

Decision making
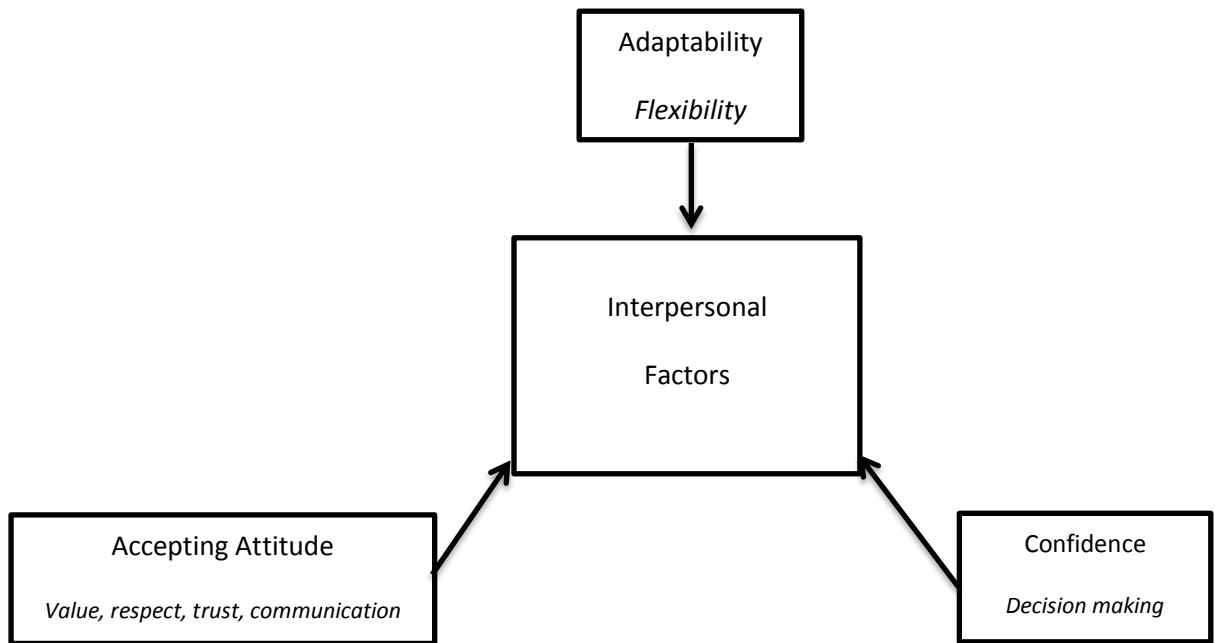
Figure 1. Interpersonal Factors
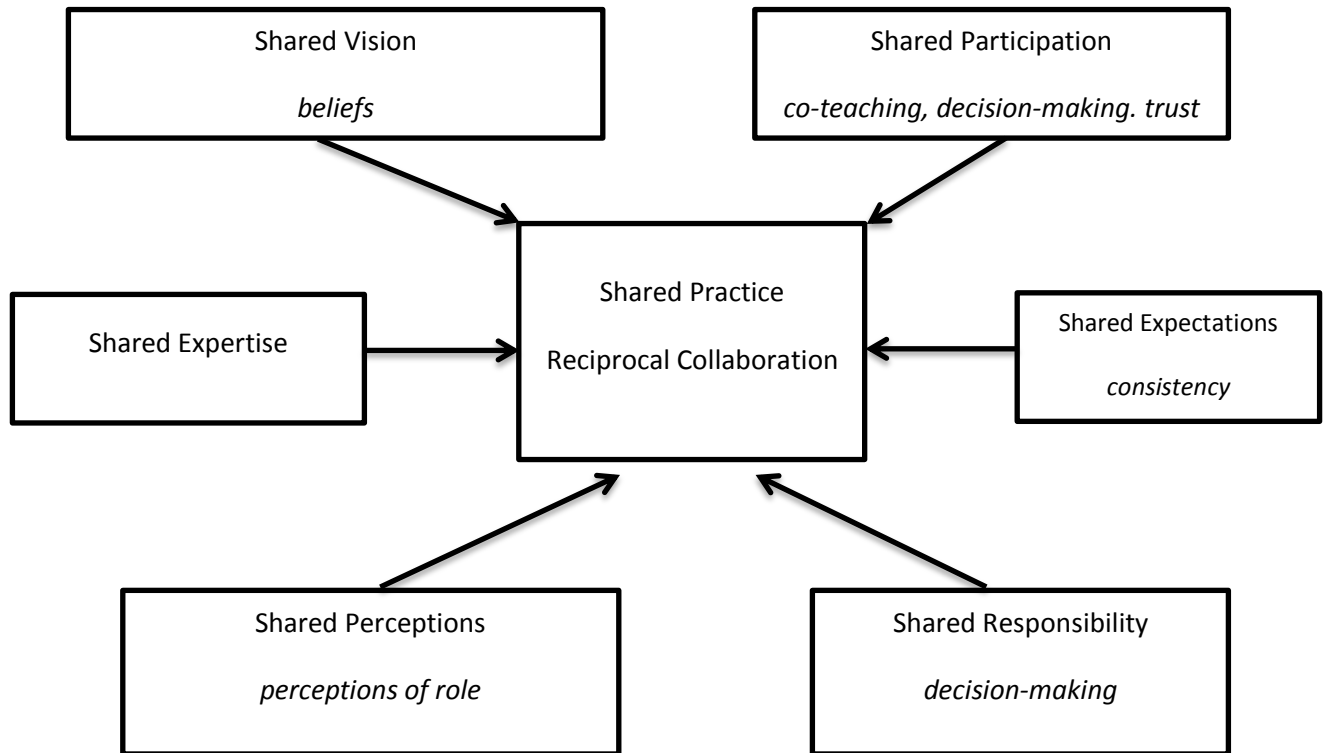
Figure 2. Shared Practice
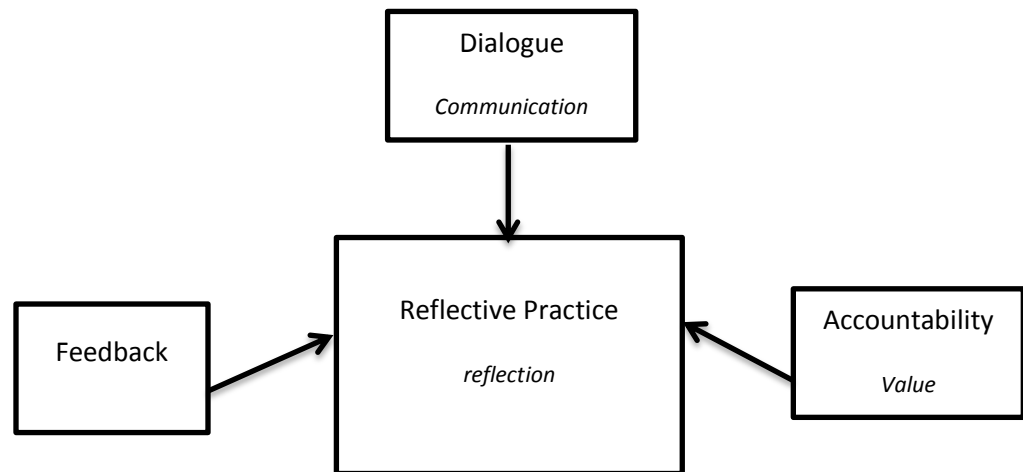
Figure 3. Reflective Practice

Data Analysis: Selective Coding

In the final process of coding, the selective coding process, once again data and coding were examined and published literature was explored in relation to the relationships that emerged between the axial categories. Through the selective coding process, categories were reorganized to fit into the components of grounded theory: the causal conditions, the context, the phenomenon, the strategies and the consequences or outcomes of these strategies. The emergent themes emphasized the complexities existing in the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten that are influenced by the theoretical framework of this study.

The research questions of this study were considered throughout the three phases of the coding process:

1. How do the classroom teacher and early childhood educator perceive a successful co-teaching relationship?

2. What facilitates a successful co-teaching relationship?

3. How does the perception of efficacy affect the collaborative relationship?

4. What are the benefits of successful collaborative educator co-teaching teams? What are the barriers?

5. What is the role of the school principal in establishing a collaborative co-teaching environment?

These questions provided the foundation for the researcher when dissecting the data in search of emerging themes. In the selective coding process, it became apparent that the first question addresses the concepts of the actual framework of the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten- what does it look like? The second question connects

to the conditions necessary for an effective collaborative structure to develop. How is this partnership achieved? What conditions are necessary to support the development of this educator partnership? This relates to the causal conditions of the phenomenon of the collaborative structure, which includes interpersonal factors and as well as the intervening conditions which impact the collaborative structure, such as the environment of trust, and the knowledge and skills each educator brings to the partnership. The third question is one that threads through the theory in several ways. Efficacy is one of the interpersonal factors that affects the development of the collaborative structure, and is also further developed through the strategies that emerge in the structure. The fourth question is also connected to the other three questions, as in discussing perceptions and supports for a co-teaching relationship, benefits of the relationship and barriers to the relationship also surface. The fifth research question was not truly answered in the data of this study. The researcher will discuss this question in relationship to research and to recommendations.

The selective coding processes lead the researcher to determine the outcomes of the collaborative structure, which is the development of a community of practice. Figure 4 illustrates the conceptualization of the core category resulting from the coding process.
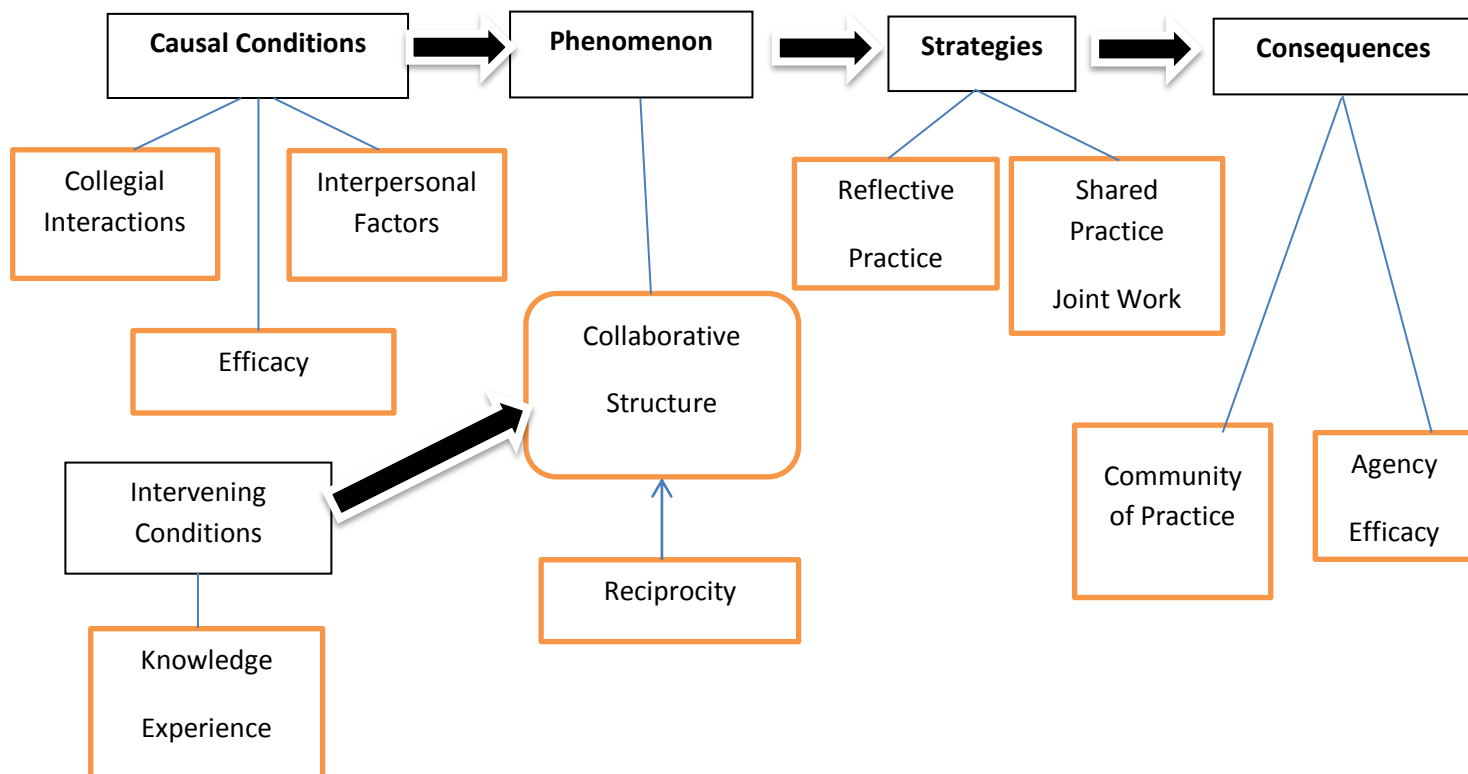
Figure 4. The Collaborative Structure- Development and Consequences

The process of data analysis followed in this study adheres to the fundamental principles of grounded theory; in particular it adheres to the verification of data through an exhaustion of commentary from the participants.

Context

This research on the collaborative structure of Full Day Kindergarten was conducted at three schools in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. The student

enrolment at St. Clair was 9 442 in the 2011-2012 school year, with 6 490 elementary students. There are 26 elementary schools and three secondary schools in this school board, in a geographic area of 5 539 square kilometres. The average family income according to the 2006 census data is $78 377.00.   Seventy four per cent of families with children are dual parent families. This research involved three schools in the school board and included one larger site (population over 400 students), one school with a population of approximately 250 students and one with a population just over one hundred students. These three sites also represented a variety of geographic areas in the region: one in the Sarnia area, one in the Wallaceburg area and one in Chatham.

Observations

The researcher observed the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten in two classrooms in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. These observations were executed to create a context for the researcher when coding the responses, as the researcher gained an awareness of what the collaborative structure looks like in action, the roles the educators play within the structure, and the interactions between these partners within the collaborative structure framework.

The researcher reviewed the observation notes to determine connections to the data provided in the interviews and focus group sessions in order to further validate categories emerging through the coding process. These observations were then coded using the categories identified during the axial coding process. Observation notes were made by the researcher and coded with the categories and subcategories. Data were examined to make connections to the research and the theoretical framework supporting

this study. Social cognitive theory posits human development is a result of the reciprocal interaction of behaviour, cognition and influence of the environment (Bandura, 1989). The observations were relevant as they provided the opportunity for the researcher to witness the behaviour of each educator on an interpersonal level and gave insight to the researcher with regard to the cognitive experience of each educator and how this applies to the experience in the collaborative structure in the classroom. Lastly, the observation experience permitted the researcher to see the environment of the classroom collaborative structure.

Observations: The Co-teaching Model

The educators observed in this research had distinct differences. In Classroom 1, the Early Childhood Educator had just begun working in the classroom with the classroom teacher and therefore this was a newer relationship. The second classroom observed involved an educator team that had worked together for the entire year. These differences provided the researcher with examples of the situation with a new team, and the situation that exists in a more established relationship. Observations focused on the initial learning block of the day, and the time slot following lunch time, in approximately one hour blocks. Each classroom was visited three times, and selected times were mutually convenient to both the researcher and the teams involved. These observations occurred during a two-week block in the last two weeks of June, 2012.

The observations indicated that these educator teams are working within various areas of the co-teaching framework at various points in the day. There is a mixture of variations of the co-teaching model, as described by Cook and Friend (1996). The

researcher observed elements of one teach, one assist, station teaching, alternative teaching and finally some indication of team teaching.

One teach one assist variation of the co-teaching model, in which one educator is the instructional leader and the other assists students as needed was observed during the literacy block of the classroom. In one classroom, the classroom teacher led the class through a shared reading lesson and the early childhood educator participated by assisting students, scaffolding their responses and ensuring that the students were attentively listening to the shared reading selection through prompting. A similar one teach, one assist was observed with the early childhood educator leading the shared reading lesson, and the classroom teacher assuming the role of assisting students as needed and providing cues and prompts. These cues and prompts in both cases were largely linked to behaviour, and less connected to extending the learning or student-thinking experiences.

One teach, one assist was not a visible model in one of the observed classrooms. In this classroom, the teacher led the whole class through a read-aloud lesson while the early childhood educator prepared the centre activities which would follow the read-aloud portion of the day. In this case, the early childhood educator was not involved in the whole class lesson.

A second model of co-teaching, station teaching, was also observed. During centre time, the classroom teacher positioned herself at the guided reading table and worked with small groups of students while the early childhood educator was working with groups of children on the carpet who was involved with block/construction play.   In

another observation, the classroom teacher worked with a small group of students with a writing activity and the early childhood educator facilitated a graphing activity on the carpet with another small group of children. Station teaching was evident during an observation as the researcher noted the classroom teacher working with a small group at the dramatic play centre to scaffold learning with numeracy connections (anchors to five) while the early childhood educator was involved with groups of children at a different learning centre in the classroom. Station teaching appears to be utilized consistently in the observed rooms during the play block of the day.

Parallel teaching, which involves two educators who divide the class into two groups was not observed. However, alternative teaching was observed. During the observation of alternative teaching, each educator worked with a portion of the class in the math block. The researcher noted that the class was not divided in half; the early childhood educator was working with a small group of students and the classroom teacher worked with a larger group of students. The groups were both working using the three part problem solving approach; the early childhood educator worked with the group of students who needed more support. In the Classroom 2, alternative teaching was not observed during any observation block. Team teaching, where both educators lead instruction, was not observed in either Full Day Kindergarten classroom.

Observations: Social Cognitive Theory

The observations of Full Day Kindergarten educators provided the opportunity to the researcher to connect the aspects of social cognitive theory, behaviour, cognition and the

environment to the interactions within the collaborative structure in these classrooms.

Field notes were taken at each observation to connect these aspects of social cognitive

theory to the observation experiences. These aspects of observation were used by the

researcher to formulate the causal conditions in the selected coding analysis.

Summary

This researcher determined that the constant comparative method of data analysis,

or grounded theory, was the acceptable model for the data analysis of this study. This

supported an emergent approach to the research, and was an iterative process of data

analysis. The researcher gathered data through interviews, focus groups and

observations. The researcher attempted to continually learn by observing and listening to

the participants and by examining and thinking about the data. Three distinct, yet

overlapping processes of analysis were involved in coding: open coding, axial coding and

selective coding. Following transcriptions, the researcher engaged in coding, and

theoretical propositions emerged. Information was labeled, classified and named and

categories developed. Links were made between the categories and a core category

surfaced. Emergent themes were identified, interpreted, compared and refined. The

researcher generated a tentative theory to explain aspects of the collaborative structure in

Full Day Kindergarten as related to the research questions of the study, and the study's

theoretical framework. This will be explained in Chapter 5 of this study, Discussion.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter describes the findings as revealed through the analysis of the data collected. Collected data were analyzed by the researcher using open, axial and selective coding. The nature of the research was highly interpretive and therefore the researcher conducted all coding. The coding process enabled the researcher to cluster several concepts into one category: Interpersonal Factors. This category explains the causal conditions of the phenomenon of the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten: what do the educators bring to the partnership? Which factors impact the development of this structure? In addition, data analysis revealed intervening conditions which also have a role in the development of the collaborative structure, such as educational background, experiences and the length of time the partners have been working together. All of these factors contribute to the collaborative teaching structure.

In addition to the category Interpersonal Factors, data analysis enabled the researcher to connect further concepts from the open coding process into the categories of Shared Practice and Reflective Practice. The categories align with strategies that became apparent in the axial coding analysis and the development of the grounded theory. These strategies provided the environment for a community of practice to become apparent. Within this community of practice, the educators learn together and from each other, as this community is based on the foundational philosophy of collaborative reciprocity, develop a sense of agency, and as well develop efficacy. These elements of the community of practice create the environment for improved pedagogical practice.

Research Questions

The research questions will be explored in this section in alignment to Figure 4, The Collaborative Structure, Development and Consequences. The grounded theory which emerged in this study provides a framework for examination of the research questions. As previously stated, question 5 was not answered through the collected data, and will be addressed in the recommendations section of this chapter.

The first research question, which asks "How do classroom teachers and early childhood educators perceive a successful collaborative co-teaching relationship?" connects to the category Interpersonal Factors as this category identifies the behaviours displayed by classroom teachers and early childhood educators. Aspects of interpersonal factors, such as adaptability, communication skills, confidence and trust, and beliefs will be discussed. In addition, intervening conditions as related to the causal condition of interpersonal factors will be reviewed.

The second question, "what do classroom teachers and early childhood educators believe facilitates a successful co-teaching relationship?" is considered through the dissection of the phenomenon of the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten. This structure, rooted in reciprocity, facilitates many strategies including reflective practice and shared practice, between the teacher and early childhood educator. Components of shared practice, such as shared expertise, shared responsibility, shared participation and shared perceptions, are strategies which become apparent in the collaborative structure. Elements of reflective practice, including dialogue, feedback,

accountability and professional learning, are also strategies emanating from the collaborative structure.

The third question frames the concept of the perception of efficacy and how this affects the collaborative structure. This perception relates to the interpersonal factors brought to the collaborative structure by the teacher and early childhood educator, but is also a result of the strategies that emerge from this collaborative structure.

The fourth question inquires about benefits and barriers of the collaborative structure. This will be included in the findings throughout this section. The data in this study revealed many insights into the strengths of the collaborative structure, as well as elements that deter the effective development of this partnership.

Lastly the fifth question regarding the connection of leadership to the collaborative structure will be discussed. Elements of leadership emerge in the discussion of shared perceptions, and barriers to these perceptions. Subsequently, the researcher addresses implications of leadership as a suggested area of continued research, as there is evidence in previous studies of the importance of the role of the principal in creating the environment in which collaborative structures can be actualized.

The data analyses of this study led the researcher to determine connections between the emerging categories in the selective coding process. The researcher initiated this study with the research questions previously identified as the focus. Through the data collection and data analysis processes, the researcher has discovered that the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten is a complex structure, with many factors influencing the development of the structure. However, this study has also

revealed implications of this structure, indicating the strategies emerging from the collaborative structure gave rise to another dimension of the collaborative structure - a community of practice. This environment of a community of practice sets the stage for deepened professional learning, increased agency, and stronger efficacy on the personal and collective levels, and improved practice. This concept of a community of practice extends the co-teaching relationship to a new level - where two educators not only work together collaboratively, but learn collaboratively and together improve pedagogically.

Perceptions of a Successful Co-teaching Relationship: Interpersonal Factors

The first research question, "How do classroom teachers and early childhood educators perceive a successful collaborative co-teaching relationship?" was explored in several ways. The researcher observed co-teaching in action over several observation blocks in two different Full Day Kindergarten classrooms. These observations supported the understanding of the context of the collaborative structure: what does it actually look like? These observations provided background knowledge for the researcher when engaging in the interview and focus group process, as the researcher witnessed many elements discussed by the participants.

Through the data collection it was determined that there are connections between educators' beliefs, values and practice and their practical knowledge. In the co-teaching classroom, educators are uniquely placed in an environment to combine formal educational knowledge with practical knowledge emerging from day to day experience (Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012). Therefore the interpersonal elements that each partner brings to the collaborative structure play a role in the development of the partnership.

One emerging theme from the observation data is the visible signs of the relationship that develops between the two educators in the collaborative structure. Individuals bring certain personal characteristics to the collaborative structure and these characteristics enable them to work effectively with another adult (Friend, 2008). In both classrooms, the educators appeared collegial and friendly toward one another. Collegiality is evident in the observed rooms. The educators in both classrooms appeared to be comfortable working together. In both cases there was spontaneous communication occurring throughout the observation block between the classroom teacher and early childhood educator. The educators had positive dispositions; they smiled and spoke kindly and respectfully to each other.

During individual interviews, comments from educators reinforced this positive, collegial relationship witnessed in both observed classrooms. Interview Respondent 7 stated "We work together awesome; we get along so well" and "it's nice- it doesn't feel like work". Interview Respondent 6 shared "I want to stay in FDK with my partner". Interview Respondent 4 identified that: "we (meaning her and her teaching partner) have the utmost respect for one another." Interview Respondent 3 commented: "we work together very well." Interview Respondent 2 shared that she and her partner have "respect for each other, respect for each other's' ideas; we listen to each other." When asked if there were benefits to working on a team, Interview Respondent 1 replied: "the benefits are spectacular". Therefore, it is clear that the relationship between the classroom teacher and early childhood educator among the participants of this study is a positive one.

This concept of collegiality emerged in other areas of the data. Focus Group Sessions also identified this collegial relationship that is present in the participants' classroom environments. Participants indicated the importance of the relationship between the teacher and early childhood educator, and suggested that if this is lacking, the collaborative structure may falter. Interview Respondent 2 suggested: "you have to work together". During Focus Group 1 discussion, Classroom Teacher 1 shared that she: "felt comfortable from the beginning- our personalities are so similar"; Early Childhood Educator 2 added: "we all get along- and that makes a huge difference." A positive interprofessional climate provides an environment in which to develop positive relationships, which is necessary to be able to work together effectively.

Having similar personalities was shared in Focus Group 2 discussion as an important element for co-teaching. Interview Respondent 7 identified that working with a co-teacher "feels like you have a relationship. You have to learn to get along". Evidence of collegiality as observed in the classroom context connects to the concept of interpersonal factors. These factors are identified through a list of traits recognized as desirable when creating a collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten educator teams. These traits include adaptability, accepting attitude, focus, confidence, collaborative and open communicator. It appears that the presence of these traits in educators facilitates the development of a collegial relationship, and an effective co-teaching partnership. These traits emerged through the open coding analysis of data.

Bandura had noted that people can be brought together via fortuitous circumstances, such as a teacher and early childhood educator, yet it is the attributes, skills and interests of the people that will determine the positive growth

of this relationship (Bandura, 1989). Bandura indicates that people will grow closer if they have similar attributes, interests and skills. This personality concept is embedded within social cognitive theory, and also connects to the observations and discussions with the participants in this study. Therefore, educators involved in the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten need to enter the partnership with an awareness of these characteristics that support a successful educator partnership within this structure.

Adaptability, Openness and Trust

Adaptability is one aspect of interpersonal factors identified by participants in this research as relevant to the development of a successful collaborative co-teaching relationship. Keefe, Moore and Duff (2004) identify the personal qualities of the successful co-teacher and identify adaptability as one necessary trait. This study related the concept of flexibility to one of openness and acceptance; educators need to be open to new ideas, accepting of others' opinions and being willing to listen. This concept was also linked to the concept of value, and in one's flexibility and openness valuing the ideas and opinions of colleagues. Respect is an additional concept that links to adaptability; an open attitude hinges on respecting the educator partner on the collaborative team. True collaboration only occurs if rooted in a relationship that is respectful and open. Fisher and Frey (2001) underline the importance of the professional relationship built on trust and respect. If one is adaptable, one can consider other points of view in a respectful way, one can value these perspectives and make compromises, or changes to one's way of doing things. Participants shared comments that connect to this interpretation of adaptability and its importance in the collaborative structure. One participant shared that

her partner was always "open to all my questions". This indicates openness and an element of trust, as this educator felt comfortable to take the risk and ask her partner questions. One participant explained that her partner "was open to try new things". It was stated by another participant that there is a "need to be accepting- you can be different, but you need to appreciate these differences." It was also shared that "everyone needs to feel accepted." These comments connect with the idea that an accepting attitude has an element of accepting others' ideas and a willingness to share these ideas. One early childhood educator responded that the classroom teacher she worked with demonstrated an "openness to accept ideas and ask for ideas" and that this quality was an indicator that "you value each other." This was affirmed by an ECE with the statement: "what you have to say is important- and my partner values this."

This adaptive, flexible attitude emphasized through responses in this study is connected to trust. Murawki and Dieker (2004) specify the importance of trust when constructing a professional relationship. One participant ECE described in the collaborative structure the educators' need "to be willing to not be offended if you are not seeing everything in the same way". "Accepting mistakes" was another element of adaptability that was shared; if one is adapatable, and trying things in new ways, mistakes will happen; a relationship built on trust by two adaptable, flexible educators will permit these mistakes, "in a non-judgmental way", as presented by another participant in this study. Possible barriers to a successful collaborative relationship were identified in relation to adaptability; one participant stated that if "someone was too rigid" this could be a barrier to a positive relationship, or "if you don't accept other ways of teaching",

inferring that it is imperative to be open to different instructional approaches. Adaptability was identified as a key quality of an educator in the collaborative structure.

Adaptability connects to the concept of being open to new ideas, open to listen, open to share, and open to try new strategies within the classroom. An early childhood educator recounted that her partner's "openness to accept ideas and ask for ideas" made her feel valued in the relationship: "you value each other." This concept of openness also reflects being open with one's ideas, being an open communicator. Many responses in this study underlined the importance of educators within this collaborative structure to have an ability to listen and to share one's point of view in a respectful way. "Communication is the key" summarizes this concept. The collaborative structure provides a forum for sharing ideas through communication:

"two ways of seeing things"; "nice to have someone to bounce ideas off of"; "another opinion on student achievement, observations". There is a relationship between interpersonal skills, communication and instructional practice, which will be elaborated in more detail in a subsequent section of this paper.

Communication Skills

With the concept of communication there are several components. The frequency of communication is important. Many participants shared that ongoing open

communication is crucial: "we are always talking". Participants acknowledged the necessity for ongoing communication in the collaborative structure.

A second aspect of communication indicated through this study is the actual language selected when communicating. The word choice used can encourage a collaborative partnership and ensure educators feel valued and respected. It was noted that many participants utilized the word "we" when answering questions. The use of this personal pronoun infers a collaborative structure. During one focus group discussion, one of the participants supported this notion; the classroom teacher stated that it is important to "select words like 'what do you think', to communicate without 'I' as no one is superior", and continued this thought and shared that communication is about "framing your thoughts- 'I wonder if… what if we tried.." and concluded "the language we use to communicate is huge." In order to maintain a sense of value for one's partner within the collaborative structure and to build trust, the words chosen when communicating are key as the choice of words can encourage collaboration or discourage it.

Communication connected to the personal domain: "it would be difficult if a partner did not want to share on a personal level". In order to develop trust, partners need to communicate on a personal level as well as a professional level. This takes time. Educators build the trust needed to openly communicate over the course of the year, as they work together daily within the collaborative structure: "As months progress, you get to know each other- this helps you open up and let yourself be more vulnerable." It can be an anxious situation in the initial days of working together: "at the beginning, we are more anxious- what if my partner doesn't like me?" It takes time within the collaborative structure to feel comfortable, and ongoing, open communication facilitates this.

Communication, therefore, connects many aspects of adaptability. Educators communicate ideas, personal opinions, and suggested ways of doing things throughout each day in the collaborative structure. The way these thoughts are communicated is very important, as is allowing time to develop the trust needed to feel comfortable to be open and honest in conversations. A sense of "we-ness" develops; it is necessary to "change from I to we", not only in intent but also in actual words stated. Through open communication, a sense of being valued and appreciated develops and with this a greater sense of trust.

Collaboration

The term 'collaboration' has many meanings. It can be defined "as an active and ongoing partnership" (Odegarde, 2006, p. 10). Odegarde (2006) identifies the importance of "interprofessional climate" (Odegarde, 2006, p. 8), which describes the need to have positive relationships if educators are going to work together effectively, which includes positive attitude and respect. The collaborative structure hinges on a collaborative attitude. This is the essential element of co-teaching. Participants in the study emphasized the importance of a collaborative attitude: "Collaboration means standing together." This clearly connects to the concepts of adaptability and openness; in a collaborative co-teaching partnership, the educators work together in all aspects of the collaborative structure. "Everything I do I make sure it is ok with the ECE working in this room"; " We are always talking together; last year it was just me and now it is always 'we'".

This collaboration has an effect on the physical environment of the classroom as well as the relationship between the two educators. "It is not my classroom; it is our classroom- and space needs to reflect that." It is imperative that the collaborative stance permeates all aspects of the collaborative framework to ensure a successful partnership. The classroom space must align with this collaborative attitude:

> It is not my classroom, it is our classroom, and space needs to reflect that. Initially when I started getting organized I was deciding where to put all of my stuff. Then I thought, no, it is our stuff, so I need to open that up… different framework… be prepared to walk in unison, like a marriage (classroom teacher, 2012).

Like a marriage, both partners need to have a sense of belonging, and ownership in the collaborative space. Gately and Gately (2001) identify components of the co-teaching classroom that contribute to the development of a collaborative learning environment, one being physical environment. A collaborative approach to establishing the physical space of the collaborative structure supports increased feelings of worth within the partnership (Gately & Gately, 2001).

One goal of the collaborative structure is parity (Cook & Friend, 1995). To achieve and maintain this parity, educators can arrange visual, verbal and instructional signals to convey equality in the classroom environment. For example, both educators' names are displayed on the classroom door and on any correspondence that goes to parents. They can arrange for a work space within the classroom for each educator. These are all examples of parity signals for the classroom environment. Corter et al.

(2007) support this concept of parity in the classroom space, as integrating outside personnel into elementary schools can create challenges in defining professional space (Corter et al., 2007) , and also in the physical sharing of classroom space and resources (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). A collaborative approach can be considered a shared professionalism (Edwards, 2009). Edwards posits that shared professionalism, with its implied mutual recognition or sense of value, provides a basis for working towards professional interdependence. In order to achieve professional interdependence, which is true collaboration, there is a requirement of an appreciation of complementary strengths of different disciplines, in this case, teacher and early childhood educator. Professional interdependence implies mutual respect. Participants in this study shared similar insights: "We determine things together"; "we are both educators: putting it on that level makes it more like a partnership." This collaborative structure, grounded in trusting relationships provides the basis for the development of a partnership between team members (Edwards, 2009). In fact, Aylward and O'Neil (2009) claim that building trusting relationships is empowering; this implies that educators in a trusting relationship would have confidence.

The sense of trust in the collaborative structure is therefore a foundational component that emerges with an adaptive attitude, open communication and a respectful presence, valuing the partner in the structure. These are all indicators of a collaborative partnership. Supportive collaboration helps educators build confidence and positively enhances risk-taking at work (Leat, Lofthouse & Taverner, 2006).

Confidence and trust

Bandura's emphasis on efficacy is connected to the concept of confidence as a desirable interpersonal factor in the collaborative structure. Bandura (2000) explains that humans need to believe they can do something in order to be able to do so. In his work, Bandura stresses the importance of collaboration in promoting a professional community, or in this case, the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten. He also discusses how the power of collegial interactions enhances collaboration as self-consciousness decreases, and confidence increases (Bandura, 2000). Therefore, trust is the environmental condition that is needed for the development of confidence; and confidence is needed to have a truly collaborative structure as both educators in the partnership must feel not only valued, but that they have something worthwhile to contribute to the partnership, and be motivated to do so.

Participants in this study realized the relevance of acknowledging one's talents and skills, and those of one's partner and the need for confidence in approaching the partnership: "we both bring our strengths to the table"; the need to "have confidence in yourself so I don't feel like I don't have something to bring to the table". This confidence can then cause "motivation to learn new things". Confidence in one's abilities is a primary principle for the collaborative structure.

Confidence also has a determining factor with the roles of the educators in the partnership. With confidence, educators feel they can go forward and "try new things"; the collaborative structure "forces you to think outside the box and try something different." As the trusting environment develops, educators learn to "not be so self-

conscious, it is like I am on a stage with always someone watching; with a partner you throw yourself out there and try". Because one feels confident one is able to feel that success is a possibility, and with this comes the propensity to attempt something new. Confident educators act and do not wait for directions or prompts: "they just know; my partner is already doing stuff… I don't say to her " oh, you can do that'… my partner is not waiting for a prompt or cue." In a collaborative structure, each partner develops self-direction through confidence.

But this confidence does not develop instantly. Gately and Gately (2001) identify predictable stages of the development of a collaborative structure. In the beginning stage, communication between the partners is guarded and careful. In the compromising stage, there is more of a give-and-take element to the relationship, and eventually in the collaborating stage open communication and interaction, and mutual admiration is evident. Participants in this study stressed the essence of time; "you need time to get to know the other person, to let yourself be vulnerable"; "I had to learn to trust". This infers the partner needs time to develop a truly collaborative relationship, that "you need to give each other the benefit of the doubt" as you construct this new partnership. Sharing this information may help partners set goals that will help progression through these developmental levels.

It is important to note that educators need to be supported to develop this collaborative structure, and ensure that each voice and opinion is heard and respected. There is much more to the successful implementation of this process than simply putting two educators together in one classroom (Speir, 2010). The researcher noticed in the responses that early childhood educators are feeling in a new world, distinctly different

from that of early childhood education, where they need to justify their own knowledge and skills to fit into the new educational setting of the kindergarten classroom. "I have always been on a team, but this is different"; "I have to follow stricter guidelines"; "it is more strict here"; "I have learned a lot" "I need some guidance" "I am more familiar with the ELECT document and with communication I am seeing how this all fits together". With trust, adaptability and communication, confidence of both partners in the collaborative structure can develop. This structure requires the ability to look beyond the boundaries of one's own discipline, to recognize commonalities between the teacher and early childhood educator worlds appreciate these differences and negotiate. Valuing and cultivating interprofessional expertise also requires the ability to articulate one's own disciplinary- specific knowledge base and skills (Robinson, Atkinson & Dowing, 2008), recognizing "there are two ways of seeing things."

Beliefs

With these differences brought to the partnership, it is clear that there is also a necessary requirement for members working in the collaborative structure to share fundamental beliefs that guide their practice. Press, Sumison and Wong (2010) refer to this as ethos- a particular aspect of an organization that is grounded in philosophical beliefs. In essence, ethos can be viewed as a collective embracing of a shared view of the right thing to do. Murawki and Dieker (2006) indicate that members of a successful co-teaching team share several common beliefs that constitute a system of principles that guide their practice. Teachers' shared beliefs about teaching and learning are fundamental to a successful co-teaching relationship (Friend & Cook, 1995). If co-teaching partners do not agree on their beliefs about children they are likely to encounter

difficulties when they share a classroom. Further, because educators' instructional beliefs guide their practice, they could encounter disagreement on the general atmosphere of the classroom.

Data from this study reinforce the importance of common beliefs within the collaborative structure. Participants had a common philosophy regarding children and indicated that the principle guiding their practice was rooted in the child, the individual needs of the child, and the idea that every child can be successful: "the type of instruction must reflect the needs of the child"; "the child always comes first"; "it is our job to pull out the strengths in every child"; "every child has their own strengths, and it is our job to find out what they are capable of." The individual interviews clarified the philosophies of the educators, and all had the focus on the individual needs of the child at the forefront. During focus group sessions, educators connected their beliefs to the classroom; educators need to be "on the same page"; "we have the same philosophies"; "our beliefs are similar so it has made it less challenging". Educators realize that having common beliefs is a key component of a successful collaborative relationship. This reflects Bandura's (2000) stance that what people believe and feel affects behaviour.

Intervening Conditions

There are intervening conditions to identify in connection to the interpersonal factors that impact the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten. The educators of the Full Day Kindergarten partnership come to the partnership with varied experiences and differences in education. Furthermore, classroom teachers have the experience of working in isolation in the classroom, whereas early childhood educators generally have

worked on some type of team in the day care settings. As well, these learning environments have some distinct differences. These conditions are worth noting as they do impact the development of the collaborative structure.

The difference in education between the early childhood educator and classroom teacher requires some discussion. With the partnership striving for parity, it is an added challenge when there are distinct differences in the educational background of the partners who are working together. This difference can produce a slight discomfort as the classroom teacher becomes aware of what knowledge and skills the early childhood educator brings to the partnership, and the early childhood educator learns how her skills align with the Full Day Kindergarten curriculum. Early childhood educators and classroom teachers in this study noted that the partners provided "two ways of seeing things". Comments such as "if you don't accept another way of teaching" imply some uncertainty on the part of the early childhood educator as she enters the partnership and is building the collaborative structure with her partner: "we do things differently". It was identified that it is important to "appreciate each other's differences". Early childhood educators described the need to learn in this new environment to ensure the knowledge they have can be applied effectively to this new setting: " how you learn as an ECE is through communication; if I am not sure, we talk"; "I am learning how this all fits together". There were more comments shared by early childhood educators than classroom teachers in regard to learning how to apply their knowledge and skills to the Full Day Kindergarten program, which could indicate that this is a stronger issue for early childhood educators. Early childhood educators shared in this study comment reflecting these challenges: "I have learned a lot"; one participant emphasized the

guidance provided by the classroom teacher, stating that the classroom teacher "guided

me in places that I thought I had it all going on". The early childhood educators are the

partners entering a new and different learning environment. They have much to share, but

need guidance to ensure that the knowledge brought to the collaborative structure fits the

Full Day Kindergarten curriculum. Gibson and Pelletier (2010) discovered through an

examination of teaching/early childhood educator partnerships that early childhood

educators expressed frustration due to an inability to transfer their knowledge and skills

from the child care sector to the educational context of school. Early childhood educators

suggested the culture of the school focused intensely on academic outcomes and it was

challenging to fit their knowledge of child development into this context. This

uncertainty expressed by early childhood educators could impede their participation in

the classroom, as their behaviour is impacted by this condition (Bandura, 2000). It also

can create tension in the collaborative structure:

> Sometimes there is a difference in knowledge - teaching partner does
>
> not have the same training as you and therefore does not always
>
> understand the philosophy/reasoning behind lesson planning and
>
> instruction--- This can create some tension and/or takes time to explain
>
> reasoning/teach partner these ideas. This is difficult when time to
>
> collaborate is already limited—It may also seem "bossy" to partner
>
> (classroom teacher, June, 2012).

Equally important is the difference between teachers and early childhood

educators in their classroom experiences. Classroom teachers work independently for the

most part in the school setting. Kindergarten teachers have held the responsibility for

planning, instruction, observation, assessment and evaluation. Early childhood educators, on the other hand, come to the school setting with extensive experience in working on a team in the child care setting. In this collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten, the partnership must ensure both educators share their knowledge and learning strategies and have a voice in the decision-making process. Each educator has vital knowledge about skills and instruction. It is imperative that the educators entering the collaborative structure have the interpersonal skills, such as adaptability, openness and the ability to communicate, in order to be able to work collaboratively with another educator in the classroom and narrow the gap that differentiates their experiences.

Correspondingly, both early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers are characterized by differences in pay and working conditions (Johnson & Mathien, 1998). It has been noted that when professionals from different disciplines collaborate, there is the potential for the professional with greater access to symbolic resources, such as pay and prestige, to dominate the other (Calander, 2000). For example, in Sweden when child care professionals were integrated into primary classrooms, these professionals ended up taking on the role of teaching assistant (Calander, 2000). Furthermore, in Toronto First Duty, concerns regarding a hierarchy were shared by early childhood educators working with Kindergarten teachers (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). In this study, the participants emphasized the positive aspects of the relationships between the classroom teachers and early childhood educators. However, the researcher noted that teacher responses indicated that the teachers' role included more elements of planning than the early childhood educators' responses. Although the classroom teachers all spoke

of the collaborative nature of the partnership, comments did infer the teacher did feel

somewhat in control of the key instructional and evaluative experiences in the classroom:

> I do most of the planning; then we discuss the plans… I ask
>
> for input from my teaching partner. We discuss student achievement.
>
> I give suggestions of what to do with particular students. (classroom
>
> teacher, June 2012)

> I do most of the planning- then we discuss the plans, decide
>
> how the plans will be carried out and ask for input from my
>
> teaching partner. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

> Well, um, when we are doing whole group activities it tended to
>
> be a lot more me doing the focused instruction.
>
> (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

The difference in education and training that is brought to the collaborative structure

needs consideration by the educators in the partnership to determine the most effective

method of co-teaching, and to ensure that the role the instructor plays is connected to the

knowledge, skills and experience of the educator.

In discussing differences between the teacher and early childhood educators, it is

important to discuss differences in preparation time. Teachers receive over 200 minutes a

week of preparation time for preparing learning activities; early childhood educators do

not receive preparation time:

Time to plan is a barrier- no prep time for ECEs and I get

prep time- but we   can't prep together…There is some

inconsistency in regards to   responsibilities---Teaching

partner feels that most should be completed by teacher-

teacher has prep—no prep for ECE—and there is a difference

in pay (hourly vs. salary), therefore teacher should do much

more after school/at home. If equal time is required then

should be equal pay.

(classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Prep time- I feel like I am taking over- I will ask for her input.

It would be so nice to have prep time together. We do work as well

as we can but would work even better if we had time together.

(classroom teacher, June, 2012)

With these comments in mind, a lack of joint planning time may also contribute to the

ECE taking on an assistant role, given that the kindergarten teacher may plan classroom

activities without the consultation of the ECE.

Strategies of the Collaborative Structure: Shared Practice

As illustrated in Figure 4, the collaborative structure is impacted by causal

conditions (interpersonal factors) and intervening factors (education, experience). It is a

structure built on a foundation of parity and reciprocity, as this new classroom

environment is formed by collaborative educators. Parity develops through shared

practice: educators working together, interacting and creating shared knowledge. Collaboration is essential for ideas to become more than mere ideas. This reciprocal collaboration is a process whereby two educators can create and share experiences, which form the basis for further knowledge construction. The collaborative structure equates to a repository of shared knowledge. This collaborative structure is essential for this shared practice, as the joint meaning- making and knowledge construction hinges on a strong feeling of equality and trust, allowing both educators to feel as active participants in the collaborative process, sharing the practice (Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009).

Shared practice is the second category that emerged through the axial coding process of data analysis in this study. This category links to the initial concepts of co-teaching, collaboration, communication, decision making, time and perception of role. These initial codes were further examined and revised through methodic examination of the data. There are several subcategories included in the category of shared practice. Shared expertise connects to the concepts of value and respect, as each educator has knowledge and skills to share in the partnership. Shared responsibility reflects elements of decision making, confidence, value and respect and trust. Shared participation clarifies concepts of co-teaching, collaboration, time, and confidence. Shared perceptions identify aspects of the initial concept of perception of role. Finally, shared professional learning and shared accountability are aspects of shared practice to be considered as strategies of the collaborative structure.

Shared Expertise

Shared expertise is a strategy that refers to partners within the collaborative structure recognizing the knowledge they have and determining effective ways to share this knowledge with each other. To share expertise, partners need to feel comfortable, feel the collaborative structure is one of trust, and feel they are valued and respected, and have the confidence to share ideas and opinions, as previously discussed in the section Interpersonal Factors. As educators share from different disciplines, they become jointly accountable for shared goals (Colmer, 2008). The collaborative structure in turn becomes a network of expertise (Edwards, 2009). Sharing expertise supports educators to "look beyond their own professional boundaries to recognize different expertise and priorities, but also common values" (Edwards, 2009, p. 41). According to the Full Day Kindergarten Early Learning Reference Guide for Educators, each educator is expected to bring his or her strengths and professional training to the program "in a collaborative and complementary partnership" (Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 10). Lacking awareness of each other's expertise can be a challenge to the collaborative structure (Janmohamed, et al., 2011).

Participants in this study reinforce the essential nature of shared expertise:

Working with another educator that has different backgrounds,

different ideas to offer- a great necessity for yourself- so you can

use her   skills and blossom your own skills.

(early childhood educator, June, 2012)

Participants responded: "you learn so much from each other"; participants referred to "sharing ideas" which implies both educators have expertise to share. Participants described an environment where two educators shared their expertise, learning from each other:

> I know that she has learned from me because she has told
>
> me   - we have taken a lot from each other.
>
> (early childhood educator, June, 2012)

Another participant commented:

> FDK different from daycare – things I didn't necessarily
>
> know before I moved into this setting- you learn from each
>
> other. (early childhood educator, June, 2012)

Shared expertise also connects directly to the difference in educational background and experience the educators bring to the partnership. Learning from one another is a positive aspect of the collaborative structure; however, it is important to also ensure that the instructional role played by each partner aligns with the expertise of the educator as well

Shared Responsibility

In the collaborative structure, a second strategy that develops is shared responsibility within the partnership. This relates to the idea of parity. Co-teaching partnerships that evolve from a hierarchical relationship in which there is unequal power

over educational decisions and responsibilities do not share responsibility,

(Thorton,1990) meaning, responsibility for making decisions, solving problems, a sense

of authority and ownership in the collaborative structure. The structure itself does not

guarantee a successful partnership (McNairy, 1998). Teachers in a collaborative

structure develop strategies to share the power of making decisions, and may be more

empowered to develop collaborative relationships (Thorton, 1990).

      The participants in this study described aspects of shared responsibility, and how

the educators in the partnership intentionally determined ways to share responsibility in

the classroom: "we share all the rules, responsibilities, we both take ownership and

responsibility of the children." An early childhood educator explained "My

responsibilities in the role are like a teacher." A classroom teacher responded "I am not

the boss- we are a team working together." The main strategy used by the educators to

support shared responsibility is open communication. The partners related their

intentional dialogue focused on planning and instruction:

> I make sure she is involved in the teaching- if I am teaching,
>
> she is doing anecdotals or pulling a small group. We are always
>
> talking together. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

One classroom teacher emphasized the importance of this dialogue, and the result of lack
of open communication:

> In hindsite, it needs to be raised from the beginning that we
>
> need to plan together- I take responsibility - I did not speak up…
>
> I just modeled as much as I could with literacy and numeracy
>
> and a whole lot of explaining - this is why I do this, this is why

I do that… this year she really just managed behaviours.

(classroom teacher, June, 2012)

This quotation implies that lack of communication makes shared responsibility a challenge. Educators need to talk about what is happening in the classroom, establish next steps together, and share planning when possible. If this does not happen, a co-teaching relationship is difficult to maintain. Shared responsibility is shared ownership: the educators must feel equally accountable. "Collective ownership generates a sense of strength, professional agency and effectiveness" (Aylward & O'Neill, 2009).

Shared Participation

Educators working within the collaborative structure are placed into a co-teaching environment, where both partners play many roles in the classroom. Little (1982) outlines various types of collaborative activities that appear crucial for the development of a collaborative co-teaching partnership, and describes how shared planning, designing, researching, evaluating, and preparing learning materials are a strategic activity for developing collaboration. Little discusses classroom practice; shared efforts to design and prepare curriculum, and shared participation in instruction as key elements of a collaborative structure.

Observations in Full Day Kindergarten classrooms in this study indicated there are varied roles played by both partners in the co-teaching relationship. The researcher observed that early childhood educators and classroom teachers participated in whole class and small group activities. Both partners worked with children in different

situations during play-based activities. Both partners interacted with students, asked questions, and prompted thinking. Both partners documented student learning.

Observations in the classrooms also indicated connections between the types of prompts and questions delivered to the children and the position of the educator. For example, during an observed math block, the teacher prompts were more targeted and connected to effective developmental math curriculum " How do you know that is 5?"; the early childhood educator working in the classroom asked questions more connected to the child identifying the answer and not how the child determined the answer. It appears there is some disconnect due to the difference in educational backgrounds in training in the early childhood educators, when participating in all areas of the curriculum, as early childhood educators do not have the same numeracy training as classroom teachers. This discrepancy will be discussed further in the recommendations section of this paper.

Observations during play activities also indicated shared participation by the co-teaching teams. Both educators interacted with students and entered the play in different groupings. The classroom teacher was observed entering the dramatic play area and extending the thinking of a small group of children who were role-playing a store situation; the classroom teacher asked the student to give her five cents back and then prompted the student to explain how he knew it was five. This was an example of pulling math out of the play, extending the thinking. The early childhood educator also worked in small groups within the play block; the early childhood educator was observed interacting with a group of students playing with blocks and animals and supported the development of the story of Noah's ark with the group of children. In another classroom, the early childhood educator was situated at a word-building centre; she interacted with the

children, but there was an absence of prompting to extend the children's thinking. The classroom teacher in this class was working with a small group of children at guided reading, and delivered precise instruction and precise questions to the group to push their thinking.

In one classroom it appeared that the early childhood educator was more involved in procedural types of tasks, while the classroom teacher seemed to facilitate more of the whole class instruction components. This classroom could be an example of a partnership that is in the early phase of the continuum of collaboration development, as these partners had not been working together for very long.

In contrast, in another Full Day Kindergarten classroom, the teacher and early childhood educator both participated in whole class instruction and in procedural tasks. One day the early childhood educator facilitated the shared reading while the classroom teacher prepared learning stations, and the next day it was the reverse. This partnership was more established and these educators had been working together for a year; the co-teaching partnership was established and it was true shared participation.

Discussion with the participants indicated early childhood educators and classroom teachers share many aspects of participation in the classroom:

> …great team approach- do things together, and we do thing separate…
> we both take care of the kids, we both do programming, we both
> teach, do shared lessons, we do read alouds, we do math,
> language… (early childhood educator, June, 2012)

One participating classroom teacher shared the following:

In regards to planning and assessment, there are two sets of eyes

watching, which means that twice as many observations can be

made regarding student interests and needs. This is beneficial for

instruction and planning. It is difficult to observe everything when

only one person is in the room. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Educators participate in observations, assessment, instructional facilitation and planning. The educators understand the collaborative structure is a co-teaching structure, and intentional choices ensure the participation of both educators in the classroom: "Last year it was just "me", and now it is always "we".

The researcher observed the educators in the classroom and witnessed shared participation. As previously stated, there were many forms of co-teaching apparent in these collaborative classrooms. There was evidence of the developmental nature of the co-teaching structure when discussing shared participation. The observed classrooms provided examples of this to the researcher, as one partnership was newly formed (less than two months) and the second partnership had evolved over the course of the entire school year (10 months). Research indicates that there are stages in the development of the co-teaching relationship; this also relates to the shared participation in the classroom. In the initial stages, co-teachers determine how they will work together and attempt to specify roles and responsibilities (Villa et al., 2008). In the classroom with the new partnership, the early childhood educator seemed to be engaged in more procedural tasks, while the teacher handled the whole group class instructional components. Both educators shared facilitation during the play block; however, the classroom teacher

utilized precise prompts and extended thinking when engaged with the children; the early childhood educator hovered and did interact with the children, but did not use prompts to extend thinking in the students. In the second observed classroom, the partners had worked together the entire year, and in this room the participation was more equally shared. Teacher and early childhood educators shared many roles in this classroom, including small group and whole group instructional sessions.

The researcher noticed differences as well in the actual co-teaching models accessed in these two classrooms. The classroom with the newer partnership followed the one teach, one assist model, in which one educator led instruction while the other assisted students as needed. This classroom also followed the station teaching, where each of the educators took a group for instruction. The classroom with the established partnership accessed some aspects of one teach, one assist model and the station teaching model. However, this educator team also embraced the alternative teaching model, where students were organized into a large group and smaller group and each educator worked with a group, and also team teaching where both instructors led instruction, as seen during a review of previous knowledge session using the SMART board with the whole class.

Shared practice is connected to a continuum of co-teaching; it takes time to develop a co-teaching partnership and truly share the practice in the classroom. The progression to a shared practice is one which varies dependent with the educators involved, and is greatly linked to the interpersonal skills identified as causal conditions. This stated, as Full Day Kindergarten continues to expand into more Ontario schools, it is imperative that educators entering the collaborative structure understand the co-

teaching continuum, and take the time necessary to develop shared practice together. This will ensure that each educator is accessing the knowledge and skills he or she carries when determining how the practice will be shared, and as expertise is shared within the collaborative structure, the shared practice can evolve.

Shared perceptions

The educators' perceptions of themselves and each other, and the perceptions of others working in the schools are essential to the collaborative structure. These perceptions are also linked to the educators' sense of efficacy and the reciprocity of the relationship.

Each educator in the collaborative structure needs to perceive their roles as distinctly different, yet equally important. Differences in the knowledge, skills and experience have been discussed. These differences should be embraced by the educators and this occurs when both educators feel valued respected and trust develops within the co-teaching partnership. It has been determined that sometimes there is a lack of awareness of each other's work in the co-teaching partnership, between the teacher and early childhood educator (Janmohamed, et.al., 2011). Therefore understanding what each educator brings to the partnership is relevant.

Gibson and Pelletier (2010) discovered that many early childhood educators working in the kindergarten setting felt they had less of an influence on the outcome of decisions, relative to the kindergarten classroom teachers. These early childhood educators perceived their role to have less influence than that of the classroom teacher; many felt unequal and misunderstood (Gibson & Pelletier, 2010). Working together

collaboratively within the co-teaching structure and aligning responsibilities with knowledge and skills will support the early childhood educator's perception of their importance in the classroom. As stated by an early childhood educator, educators need to "make sure we see each other as an equal in the classroom" (June, 2012).

Another facet of perception is how others perceive the educators in the collaborative structure. Student and parent perception is paramount; students and parents need to understand that the teacher and early childhood educator are a co-teaching team. Participants in this study feel parent perception is very significant: "You need to model for the students and the parents that you are a team"(classroom teacher, June, 2012); "my thing is more the parents- how they see us" (early childhood educator, June, 2012). The concern about parent and student perceptions was more connected to the perception of the early childhood educator, as this is the new role in the collaborative structure. Teachers did not express any concern around the idea of perceptions of parents and students; these concerns were expressed by the early childhood educators. Early childhood educators shared that it is difficult to feel parity in this collaborative structure if parents and students do not perceive the two educators in the classroom as equals:

> They come to both of us equally. *(the early childhood educator is referring to the students in this comment)* Parents will send in notes to the classroom teacher- they think she is the only teacher. (early childhood educator, June, 2012).

Simply referring to the teacher and early childhood educator as educators is a step in the right direction; one early childhood educator recommended that the school should "refer

to educators, not teachers." Another added "we are both educators- putting it on that level makes it seem more like a partnership."

Bandura distinguishes the connection between perceptions and efficacy. One's perception of value can have a negative impact on the development of efficacy (Goddard et. al., 2004). Therefore, if an educator feels that others do not value his/her role in the school as an educator, efficacy is not fostered.

Every early childhood educator in this study commented on the challenge of parent perceptions. This must be corrected; communication with the parents clarifying the roles is essential, even before the children begin the Full Day Kindergarten program. Initial conversations, parent meetings and orientations need to explain the role of the childhood educator in the program and clarify that the Full Day Kindergarten students are taught by an educator team.

Student perceptions did not seem to be as much of a challenge in the collaborative structure. Educators agreed students seem to understand that two educators work collaboratively in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom:

> The students see us get along so well- see the teamwork-
> kids know that we are a team. They see us talking and see that we
> all work together. Two educators- so they can go to either
> one of us- not one boss in the room. (early childhood educator, June,
> 2012)

The child has a better opportunity to approach either teaching

staff that he\she feels would better address the issue at hand. (early

childhood educator, June, 2012)

It is important that parents perceive the educators in the collaborative structure as a team:

"I think with parents, it is how we sell it- need to tell them we are equal and both

educators." Simple tasks, such as ensuring both educator names are on all

correspondence, can alleviate the development of misconceptions:

The package that went out for the JKs had both of our names on it-

that made me feel better. I don't want to be looked on as just a helper.

(early childhood educator, June, 2012)

Parent perceptions can be supported by the educator team:

We have to educate the parents- always address the teacher- need

to address both- need to ask to speak to either, not just the teacher.

(early childhood educator, June, 2012)

It is critical to inform parents of this partnership: "we need to explain the roles to parents"

(early childhood educator, June, 2012).

Perceptions of the staff within the Full Day Kindergarten schools are another

point of interest. One early childhood educator stated: "And the other teachers- they

don't know what I actually do". Early childhood educators expressed the pressing need

to identify the early childhood educator role for the staff in the school. It is very

important to consider "educating the public- they are used to teachers"(early childhood educator, June, 2012).

> As the program evolves we need to educate itinerants, supply
>
> teachers other teachers- they don't understand the ECE role
>
> and think they are there to manage behaviour.
>
> (early childhood educator)

One participant felt "the partnership has to be explained- as we educate these different people it will be clearer. Even little things, such as notification from the office addressing both educators in the classroom, as one early childhood educator shared "you can get a little of this from the office"; the office staff has paged the classroom and only named the classroom teacher; as stated by one early childhood educator "we are sensitive to it". As worded by one early childhood educator, "there is work to do with other people in the building."

Leadership in the school can support shared perceptions in the building. Principals are faced with the challenge of creating unity and shared understandings of the educator roles within the collaborative structure, to the educators involved and other personnel in the school (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). The principal has a role in nurturing shared understandings. This researcher submits that strong leadership is a key component of shared perceptions as it is the principal who is critical in engaging staff to work together, facilitating communication and encouraging a commitment to change. In the Toronto First Duty Project (2008), leadership was seen as the "make or break

variable" (Toronto First Duty, 2008, p. 5) in the interdisciplinary integration of early childhood educators and classroom teachers.

Strategies of the Collaborative Structure: Reflective Practice

The third category that linked initial concepts was the category of Reflective Practice. This category connects to the initial code of communication. In addition, the researcher discovered the importance of feedback and accountability as threads in the category of reflective practice. Professional learning is another dimension of reflective practice. Data were re-examined, transcripts read and coded into these categories.

Reflective practice involves personal and professional qualities and attributes, as the educator assumes ownership and develops a sense of responsibility for the outcomes of children as an individual and as a part of the collaborative structure. Reflective practice is a process applied and developed and applied in collaboration with others. Moss (2008) defines reflective practice as a process of meaning-making through dialogue and listening. Reflective practice occurs in an environment where individuals are actively listening and responding to the thoughts and experiences of others. This is evident in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom.

Educators sharing thoughts and experiences support the process of making what one knows and understands explicit to others and ourselves: "When they come and ask questions it forces me to think about what I am doing" (classroom teacher).

Reflective practice involves thinking critically about one's practice:

> If I have been doing something for years and then I am asked
>
> what the purpose of that… it forces me to think, it makes me
>
> reflect as to what I am doing, and why I am doing it (classroom teacher,
>
> June, 2012).

Reflective practice also involves a sense of exploration, learning through action. The educators in this study shared that within the collaborative structure they feel open to trying new pedagogical strategies.

The collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten is rooted in reciprocity of collaboration. This structure is affected by interpersonal factors, such as flexibility, openness and efficacy. In addition, collegial interactions facilitate the development of this collaborative structure. Indicators of success of this collaborative structure hinge on the level of reciprocal collaboration that occurs in the partnership, the frequency and focus of shared practice and the practice that emerges from the professional learning.

Reflective practice connects to shared practice. Collegial interactions lead to shared instructional responsibility, or shared practice, which facilitates talk about students and instruction, which in turn causes educators to reflect about alternative methods of instructing, evaluating, and supporting students, or, in fact, affirm use of current successful methods (Meirink, Meijer & Verloop, 2007). Little refers to this as "learning on the job" (Little, 1982, p. 328). Reflective practice therefore includes several components: dialogue, accountability and professional learning; all components rooted in reciprocity- these are reciprocal actions, and involved an equality of effort on the part of the educators in the collaborative structure. With reciprocity there is a sense of equal

humility, which refers to the attitude of the educator in the face of the complexity of the task and the limits of one's understanding (Little, 1982). Crucially, reciprocity means deference, a manner of acting and speaking which demonstrates an understanding that an evaluation of one's practice is very near to an evaluation of one's competence; this indicates a need for great care to distinguish between the two and focus on the first (Little, 1982). Reciprocal collaborative structures create an environment that supports reflective practice, as it places value on interdependent work.

Dialogue

Dialogue is an essential component of reflective practice. Reflection is defined as "a form of discourse with oneself, an exploration or analysis of possible reasons for engaging in a particular activity" (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Dialogic reflection involves stepping back from the event and engaging in discourse to explore the experience. Precise talk, frequent talk about teaching practice builds a shared language (Little, 1982) and therefore a concrete language for discussing instructional practice. Little (1982) identifies frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching as an integral part of a collaborative structure, which the author also sees as one element of successful collaborative practice. Dialogic reflection (Munthe, 2003) involves exchanging ideas, conceptions and opinions; this type of talk can generate knowledge which could not have been generated by one individual working in isolation. The collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten places two educators in a partnership which is the setting required for meaningful professional dialogue, and a powerful learning environment for professional development (Meirink et al., 2007).

The participants consistently identified communication as a determining factor for the success of a co-teaching partnership. Participants commented upon the need for communication and how this is directly connected to reflecting upon their practice: "another person to reflect your day on, feed your ideas on and get ideas from"; "nice to have another person to say, 'oh, that doesn't work out so well, or how should I try that next time'". Educators acknowledged that working with a partner creates an environment in which one can reflect: "…to bounce ideas off of one another- someone else in a non-judgmental way, saying, well maybe we should try it this way" (early childhood educator, June, 2012). A classroom teacher added: "Reflecting on what- on instruction, the content, the way it is delivered, the timing, the materials". The educators value the opportunity to have a partner for conversations and for "open communication- we talk about things throughout the day"; "we are always talking- communication is the key".

Feedback

The concept of feedback emerged in these data; working with a partner in a collaborative structure provides educators with the opportunity for feedback, immediate feedback. Although feedback can be delivered in written comments, it is more powerful when used interactively in interpersonal dialogue. This is the ultimate in promoting reflection via feedback (Hatton & Smith, 1995). In this supportive, collaborative environment educators can give each other meaningful feedback: "feedback- you don't have to wait for it"; "I ask her for feedback". The participants valued time together to "determine what the next day will look like" and "what changes should be made". The collaborative structure provides educators the ability to "take an idea and make it even better". This ensures that "only the best ideas are implemented". Reflection through

dialogue opens up discussion to examine an instructional strategy and determine how best to implement.

The collaborative structure, through dialogue also pushes educators to consider their own practice and reflect:

> Working with a team member- positive impact as working as a
> team- it keeps you on your game more, but you are constantly
> aware of what you are doing… you don't just keep doing what
> you always did- constantly thinking about why I am doing what
> I am doing- because there is someone with you, you want to push
> yourself further. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

This quotation connects the concept of reflective practice to improved practice. Educators learnfrom each other through reflection (Park et al., 2007). Informal learning opportunities intermingled in practice and ongoing dialogue provides an environment that nurtures a will to learn (Park et al., 2007).

Accountability

Accountability is another facet of reflective practice. Partners in the collaborative structure develop a strong sense of accountability as there is always another educator in the classroom observing the instructional practice. Little (1982) identifies the power of observation of practice; when educators are observed and provided useful critiques on their teaching (feedback), teaching practice is impacted. This collaborative activity is crucial for continued professional learning in the collaborative structure. Mutual

observation and discussion of classroom practice are pieces of reflective practice that contribute to the collaborative structure in a positive way. As one educator stated,

> If I have been doing something for years and then I am
>
> asked what the purpose of that… it forces me to think,
>
> it makes me reflect as to what I am doing, and why I am doing it.
>
> (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Participants revealed that the collaborative structure ensures one is feels accountable to consistently put forth one's best effort: "you need to be very organized at all times or your partner does not know what is going on." Educators consider their choices, their actions, their instructional strategies:

> You are forced to communicate - where before, I was on my own,
>
> not held accountable, didn't question anything I do.   The ECE
>
> will ask me well, how come you do that- forces me to question myself.
>
> (classroom teacher, June, 2012).

Participants explained that the collaborative structure forces them to question, to rethink, "reflect upon what I am doing and why I am doing it". The participants also shared that working with a partner, and having open professional dialogue, enables professional conversations to occur frequently; an educator will ask a partner for clarification of an instructional choice, and this enables the educator to think about why indeed he or she has selected this strategy, and if indeed it was the best option: "having a co-teacher brings it up another notch"; it "forces you to stay fresh, try something new and maybe go outside your box and try something new".

Professional Learning

Reflective practice is additionally connected to new learning. The collaborative structure supports the process of professional learning and shared knowledge construction. The educators apply their own knowledge and create new knowledge together. In this collaborative context, educators take knowledge and apply it in a practical context; ideas become more than mere ideas, as partners create and share experiences. These experiences form the basis for further knowledge construction. Through its implementation, an idea becomes a shared experience which can be examined and developed further. Joint meaning- making and knowledge construction requires a strong feeling of equality and trust, with both partners serving as active participants in the collaborative process.

Educators in the field describe the professional learning experience that is a part of this collaborative structure:

> Working with another educator that has different
>
> backgrounds, different ideas, and ideas to offer- a great
>
> necessity for yourself- so you can use her skills
>
> and blossom your own skills.
>
> (early childhood educator, June, 2012)

This new learning is effective because of the opportunity to reflect with a colleague:

> Yes, it is always great to learn with and from someone
>
> else. Helps you rethink some of your practice. Makes you
>
> think about your practice and makes you more well- rounded

- attentively watching and listening that other person-and what

they are doing in their role, and what I can learn from them

and they can learn from me. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Little (1982) identifies the concept of teachers teaching each other about the practice of

teaching as a fundamental collaborative activity connected to professional learning.

Professional learning is most effective when the learning opportunities are sustained,

longer in duration, and allow teachers to practise and reflect. Professional learning

embedded in ongoing teaching activities is the second aspect of effective professional

learning (Meirink et al., 2007). The collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten

accommodates these criteria, and provides the opportunity for joint professional learning

(Goddard et al., 2007).

Consequences of the Collaborative Structure

The strategies of shared practice and reflective practice create a community of

practice, as indicated in Figure 4. A community of practice is described by Wenger

(1998) as a group of people mutually engaged in a joint enterprise who share a common

repertoire for engaging in their work. Wenger states that a community of practice

develops over time and that it creates an environment that fosters professional learning.

Wenger describes the community of practice as a community of practitioners who share

practice. A community of practice emerges through a variety of activities, including

problem solving, requesting information, and seeking experience, which in turn, creates a

link between learning and performance.

In a community of practice, learning is an active process, and is rooted in relationships. Traditionally, learning is associated with what goes on inside one's head; in a community of practice, learning is what goes on between people:

> Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and
>
> organize a point of contact that allows for a particular piece
>
> of information to take on relevance. Learning does not belong
>
> to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which
>
> they are part (Smith, 2009,).

There is an intimate connection between learning and activity. Teachers' reflective thinking and engagement in a supportive community with shared visions, knowledge and commitment is seen as central to the learning process (Schulman & Schulman, 2004).

Wenger contends that three dimensions characterize communities of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement involves deep involvement in activities that are significant components of daily work. Joint enterprise is the community's definition of, and response to, its shared situation. Finally, a shared repertoire of practice refers to the ways of doing things and ways of thinking developed in interactions within the community. These components are apparent in the collaborative structure of Full Day Kindergarten.

The sociocultural perspective of community of practice connects the individual learner to the learning environment. This differs from the social cognitive framework, which links learner efficacy to the development of the learner, separated from the environment. This sociocultural perspective views the individual and her environment as

mutually constitutive, whereby a person both composes and is composed by the social surrounding. The community of practice framework provides a connection between the two perspectives, considering the sociocultural perspective on the development of efficacy beliefs. In the collaborative structure of Full Day Kindergarten, which could be viewed as a community of practice, educators co-construct efficacy beliefs through shared and reflective practice. Educator efficacy beliefs, belief in one's capability to enact particular pedagogical practices, and belief that these practices will impact student learning in a positive way, are supported in a community of practice.

Perceptions of Efficacy

The third research question of this study explores the perception of efficacy and the impact of these perceptions on the collaborative relationship. There has been substantive research on the connection of teachers' efficacy beliefs and their pedagogical decisions (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Hoy & Davis, 2006). One must consider what shapes these efficacy beliefs, and also how they may be enhanced. Bandura suggests one's social context, one's beliefs and behaviours influence each other; however individual cognition forms individual beliefs (Bandura, 1989). Bandura describes the process of efficacy development as a process in which the individual assesses one's own capabilities, the difficulty of the task and the environment to determine efficacy beliefs. Bandura stresses the importance of the educator's individual cognitive processes on the development of efficacy.

The social cognitive framework connected to the conversation about teachers' efficacy beliefs relates to cognitive psychology, which represents one of two major

strands ofthinking about how people in organizations develop beliefs and understandings, in other words, how people learn. The social cognitive model rests upon a conceptualization of individuals as separated from the environment, and presents a view of learning as internalizing or acquiring knowledge. There are aspects of learning that are not accommodated in this model, such as co-construction of knowledge in an environment of shared practice. This shifts the focus from the individual being the centre of meaning-making to an active participation in constructing meaning in a collaborative structure. This reflects the sociocultural perspective.

The sociocultural perspective recognizes the relationship between the individual and the social surroundings. Sociocultural theories frame the environment as an inextricable part of the individual and the individual's understanding, and not as a separate context. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) articulate this theory and construct the concept of community of practice. This theory aligns with this study, as it attends to learning that occurs in shared practice among a community of practitioners. Communities of practice theory draw connections between shared practice, and how participation in shared activities may connect to efficacy beliefs. Wenger (1998) explains that learning is the process of individuals interacting with each other and their environment, negotiating meaning through active participation in the learning community. This theory is particularly relevant to this study given the focus on the co-teaching partnership in Full Day Kindergarten, which is a new collaborative structure in education. Every day in the classroom provides experience in participation in shared practice, and also requires the educator teams to negotiate the meaning of many new elements of practice, a new curriculum and a new emphasis on play-based learning. In

this study, both the roles of the educators within the collaborative structure, and many instructional elements may be given meaning in a process of participation and reification. Community of practice theory illuminates the potential of social context to play a key role in teacher efficacy formation. Efficacy beliefs are composed of educators' understandings of their own capabilities and their perception of responsibility for student learning. How educators see themselves can be aspects of how they enact their identities as educators. In other words, efficacy beliefs could be a part of educators' practice that are built through shared practice.

In this study, educators' efficacy beliefs connect to formation of the collaborative structure through the strategies of shared practice and reflective practice. In the early stages of the study, the cognitive approach to learning, retrieving, processing and acquiring new information for new knowledge was considered. Participants indicated that the collaborative co-teaching structure provided multiple opportunities for learning in this way. Through data analysis, the consequence of the formation of a community of practice surfaced, and this aspect of the collaborative structure became relevant in exploring individual and collective efficacy beliefs.

The findings illuminate the relevance of a community of practice perspective in making sense of how teachers' participation in their social surroundings may shape their efficacy beliefs. The classroom teachers and early childhood educators working in these collaborative co-teaching partnerships are constantly constructing meaning together as they determine how to blend the two diverse backgrounds of knowledge and skills together within the collaborative structure.

While the social cognitive perspective on efficacy beliefs provides

a dominant and influential model of how efficacy develops, it is essential to recognize the importance of the role of the collaborative structure in efficacy development. As the educators in this study work together, and are empowered through the co-teaching relationship, they gain confidence and efficacy. Evidence of efficacy development is revealed in the belief of the educators that the educator team makes a difference in the learning experience of the students. Educators stated that the co-teaching structure has many benefits for the students: "it has had a positive impact"; the students can now benefit from the knowledge and strengths of two people instead of just one"; "the structure of the educator team has had a positive impact on the child." Educators stressed that two educators provided increased opportunities for the children:

> So having two people in the room, two different personalities, two
>
> different ways of getting the point across as well- my partner
>
> might teach something in a different way and children respond
>
> to this way- two different educators are very positive. (classroom teacher,
>
> June, 2012)

Both classroom teachers and educators felt they made a difference:

> …getting to children, quicker, faster, getting to their
>
> needs, trying to practice with them more, listen to them
>
> more; find the answers to their questions, always better
>
> to have two people there. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Therefore this study indicates the potential of communities of practice to enable educators to negotiate and co-construct efficacy beliefs.

In communities of practice, learning is conceptualized through an ongoing negotiation of meaning in interactions, as individuals engage with each other and respond to changing conditions within the environment. Negotiation of meaning is depicted as a major force for learning and potentially altering practice. Wenger ascertains a community of practice enables educators to reflect upon and shift professional practice. The community of practice, or collaborative structure, provides the appropriate environment in which learning may unfold. Alfonso and Goldsberry (1982) concur, stating that collaborative networks among teachers can provide teachers a potentially powerful vehicle of instructional improvement.

Agency

In addition, collaboration promotes agency. Through shared practice in a community of practice educators can be actively engaged in the process of professional learning. Educators in this study stressed the multiple opportunities for personal growth and professional learning. In defining agency one also must include the making of choices and monitoring of actions and their effects. Due to the shared and reflective practice in this community of practice, educators develop efficacy, which is the core element of agency. Unless people feel they can produce desired effects they have minimal incentive to act (Bandura, 1989). The fact that these educator teams develop shared beliefs in a collaborative environment, collective agency develops. Educators are empowered to lead work that impacts teaching and learning (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Collaboration promotes agency, as individuals "believe they can achieve desired changes through their collective voice" (Bandura, 2000, p. 78). This study reinforces the power of collaboration. Repeatedly, participants shared their experiences in the collaborative

structure as learning experiences, experiences where they shared their skills and learned new ones, experiences that they felt made a difference for student learning, and their own personal learning.

Summary: Implications

This study began as an exploration of the collaborative structure in Full Day Kindergarten, examining the co-teaching relationship in this structure between the teacher and early childhood educator. In examining this collaborative structure, the study aimed to determine what elements are working well, and what barriers may develop within this structure in order to provide insight as to how to best support the development of effective co-teaching partnerships. By discussing the partnership with educators involved in the initial stages of the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten, it was hoped that deeper meanings could be constructed regarding the phenomenon of the collaborative structure, the emerging strategies accessed through this collaborative structure, and the community of practice emerging from this structure. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated:

> … one should deliberately cultivate such reflections on personal
> experiences. Generally we suppress them, or give them the status
> of mere opinions… rather than looking at them as springboards
> to systematic theorizing. (p. 252)

The personal experiences of the participants were collected in their own words and analyzed with the objective of determining hypotheses grounded in both the behaviour and the perceptions of the learner. It was hoped that the development of a grounded

model would be a starting point that would lead to a systematic approach to further research.

The following illustrates the elements of a conceptual model grounded in the data obtained in this study. Critical to this grounded theory is the collaborative structure in the Full Day Kindergarten classroom. This partnership is a new structure in education in Ontario and it is affected by interpersonal factors and also the knowledge and experience of each educator in the partnership. The data supported that this collaborative structure needs to be rooted in reciprocity, as it is the reciprocal collaboration between the teacher and early childhood educator that strengthens this partnership. Emerging from the structure are strategies made possible because of this partnership. Educators develop shared and reflective practice through this collaborative structure. These strategies lead to the evolution of a community of practice, which in turn enhances the sense of efficacy and agency in the educators. Therefore the collaborative structure evolves into a community of practice, a community of learning through participation.

This model postulates that this occurs because the educators working in this community trust one another, respect one another, and develop efficacy which empowers them to participate fully within the community. This model also acknowledges that the development of the community of practice takes time; collaborative activities build the partnership to allow the educators to share thoughts, experiences, and expertise, and in turn clarify personal understanding. This interaction enables the educators to make sense of experiences and practice, and to feel empowered to try new ways of doing things.

There are many benefits of the development of the collaborative structure. Firstly is the emergence of the community of practice. Educators participate in these communities. Learning as participants within this community enables educators to learn from observing one another, co-participate in the learning as the collaborative structure sets the stage for social engagements which provide the context for learning. Little (1990) articulates that when teachers work collaboratively, focused on student achievement, assess and question their practice, then student learning and teaching improves.

There are benefits for the students in these classrooms. Educators in this study indicated there is increased precision in instruction as there are two educators in the classroom to meet the individual needs of all children. Research supports this claim; Thorton (1990) determined that successful team teaching structures are beneficial to student learning. Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) identified co-teacher structures to be associated with the highest child care quality , as the co-teacher structure provided a more collaborative and conducive learning environment in the classroom, which resulted in higher quality and more appropriate teacher behaviour. There is an increasing body of research on the importance of the co-teacher structure in early childhood education (Cutler, 2000; Kostelink, 1992 McNairy, 1988; Thorton, 1990). This study indicates the co-teaching structure is effective because of the resulting community of practice. Fullan (2011) agrees, stating the following:

> Research is clear and consistent for over 30 years- collaborative
> structures in which teachers focus on improving their teaching
> practice, learn from each other… result in better learning for
> students (p.2).

Collaboration could be considered the essential work of this community of practice. This partnership requires both educators to understand that their relationship goes beyond mere friendliness; it requires continual efforts to maintain the goal of ongoing growth and learning. Co-teaching is a break from the traditional isolation of teachers. It is a context for professional learning. Teachers' reflective thinking and engagement in a supportive community with shared visions, knowledge and commitment is seen as central to professional learning (Schulman & Schulman, 2004). In this collaborative structure, teachers have more knowledge to apply in practice than when working alone.

Furthermore, Fullan supports this view of collaboration being a catalyst for professional learning. He states: "learning is the work" (Fullan, 2011, p. 2). Fullan theorizes learning on the job, day after day is the work. School cultures need to change toward collaboration. As Fullan states: "the individual isolated autonomy of the teacher becomes passé the new norm – interactive professionalism" (Fullan, 2011, p. 2). Focused, purposeful team work produces better results.

The co-teaching structure in Full Day Kindergarten provides the environment for meaningful collaboration, an environment where educators can observe and be observed by their colleagues and engage in substantial learning about their practice (Elmore, 2004). Elmore points out opportunities such as this are rare for teachers. However, there are some barriers to this structure that should be discussed.

Barriers

Hargreaves warns:

> Collaboration and restructuring can be helpful or harmful
>
> and their meanings and realizations therefore need to be
>
> inspected repeatedly to ensure that their educational and
>
> social benefits are positive (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 248).

It is necessary to consider this warning, as there is the potential of the collaborative structure to be only "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 196). The educators in the co-teaching partnership in Full Day Kindergarten are required to work together. Nonetheless, there are opinions in this study that identify the development of trust through the collaborative structure, and Hargreaves indicates a strong sense of trust is essential for true collaboration to flourish. Therefore, lack of trust is a definite barrier in this structure.

A second barrier emerging from this study is the issue of time. Educators in the study attested to the lack of time together for planning, discussing and reflecting. Much of this professional dialogue happens intermittently throughout the day. The educators do not feel this is sufficient.

> Time to plan is a barrier- to discuss the day, time to learn
>
> new things - it is just busy, there is not enough time in the
>
> day to do all of these things. (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

Every interview in this study cited time as a barrier to the collaborative structure.

>Time- there is never enough time- you don't have to make
>
>your own time to plan but you should- talk about what is
>
>working, not working- unless the ECE is willing to put in the
>
>extra time, it is a barrier . (classroom teacher, June, 2012)

This comment highlights the time element, but also notes the inequity issue that

complicates the time issue; early childhood educators are paid an hourly wage; teachers

are paid by salary. Therefore it is truly the choice of the early childhood educator to work

outside the hours of the school day to ensure there is time for planning and

discussion/reflection. Gibson and Pelletier (2010) indicated in their results similar

conclusions regarding time as a barrier in the full day kindergarten partnership:

>Furthermore, a lack of joint planning time may also contribute to the ECE
>
>taking on an assistant role, given that the kindergarten teacher may plan
>
>classroom activities without the consultation of the ECE (p.14).

Lack of planning time within the hours of the school day is a barrier; it works against the

efforts to establish parity in the collaborative structure, and makes it difficult for the early

childhood educators to feel shared responsibility with planning and instruction.

Differences in preparation time exaggerate this barrier as early childhood

educators do not receive preparation time within the school day, unlike their teaching

partners. Efforts should be made to provide time for these teams to collaborate. This

could take the form of early childhood educators participating in professional learning

opportunities alongside their teaching partners. Another option could be to look at the

possibility of providing half day release time jointly for these teams together, so that the

teams could block preparation time together. This would not occur frequently due to

probable budget constraints, but it is worth consideration. As well, considering professional learning community opportunities for the Full Day Kindergarten co-teaching teams, within one school, or across several schools, could provide planning and discussion time to these teams. It is essential for schools and school boards to creatively find time for the teams to collaborate so as to support the development of a community of practice.

Thirdly, a possible barrier to the collaborative structure lies in the shared expertise and shared responsibilities of the educators. It is imperative for teams to align the human capital they bring to the team, that is, the cumulative abilities, knowledge and skills developed through formal education and experience - to the responsibilities within the collaborative structure. Co-teaching models are diverse, and many variations of co-teaching were observed during this study. The researcher noticed that there were times when co-teachers did not access their human capital, as perhaps the task was not connected to this human capital. This is not saying that co-teachers will not add to their human capital in the collaborative structure. Since the educators expressed that this structure provides many opportunities for professional learning. However, it is important that the involvement of each educator extends as their knowledge extends. Early childhood educators and classroom teachers have different areas of expertise in the initial stages of the development of the collaborative structure. Shared responsibilities must link to these areas directly. For example, it would be appropriate for a classroom teacher to facilitate a three - part math lesson with one group of children, while the early childhood educator worked with another small group at the water table. Educators will need to truly consider this shared responsibility, and look for ways to tap into these

diverse backgrounds. In doing so, there will be less whole group instruction occurring in the classroom, and more emphasis on small group instruction and facilitation.

Another last barrier worthy of discussing is the misconceptions of the role of the early childhood educator. It is crucial for all staff within each school site to understand clearly the co-teaching structure. Lack of understanding of the co-teaching structure will be alleviated with leadership support. School principals need to support the educators and ensure each partner has a voice and an opinion that is heard and respected (Speir, 2010). Leadership is critical to ensure that staff integration is successful (Speir, 2010). With this integration of early childhood educators into the school setting, principals need to educate the staff as to the role of the early childhood educator in the school and the importance of the perception of this partnership. Early childhood educators somehow feel that they negotiate their roles and responsibilities in the classroom, as the new addition to the structure, and this puts them in a precarious position, as without a strong sense of collaboration, this partnership can become hierarchical. The principal must ensure the expertise of the early childhood educator is acknowledged and valued within the school setting. In the Toronto First Duty Project (2008) leadership was seen as a make- or - break variable. Leadership is particularly important in the initial development of the collaborative structure (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). The principal is in the position to nurture shared understandings across the staff.

Future Research

Extension of this research is recommended, as Full Day Kindergarten continues to be implemented over the next two years in Ontario. Participants could be drawn from

other schools within the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, or extend to other boards. Secondly, valuable insights may be gained through a comparative analysis of educator teams in their first years, and then later when teams have worked together for three or four years, to compare the team positioning on the collaborative continuum and also examine co-teaching strategies employed by the various teams.

Consideration should be given to further studies that include examination of student achievement. School board data (Developmental Reading Assessment Data and Phonological Awareness Screening data) currently indicate that the students in Full Day Kindergarten are exceeding the achievement levels of previous kindergarten students at these schools. Is this solely due to the fact the students are now at school every day, as opposed to every other day? Or is the collaborative structure and the co-teaching model utilized in these rooms also impacting student achievement, as research indicates can happen? Although the novelty of this structure could be a factor, continued examination of student achievement and the role of the collaborative structure in the daily learning experiences of these students need to be a priority.

Perhaps the most interesting area for further research may be the exploration of the roles and responsibilities of the educators within the collaborative structure, and how this impacts the learning experiences and the structure of the day for the Full Day Kindergarten students. With two educators in the room, it seems that the organization of the day in these classrooms will evolve as the teams continue to access human capital and determine the best way to align this expertise within the instructional day. At present there is a shift from whole class instruction to emphasis on small group learning experiences, which access the two educators working in the classroom. How will this

continue to evolve? How does the collaborative structure best support the individual learning experiences of the students?

Further Recommendations

In the literature review of this study, the impact of co-teaching in a collaborative structure was outlined, as were suggested caveats. It suggested the Ontario government made the right decision in determining Full Day Kindergarten would be founded on a co-teaching structure. This study concurs; there are many benefits of educators working collaboratively in the school setting. However, the opportunity for joint work and professional learning provided through this collaborative structure is by far the greatest advantage. Collaboration is becoming one of the core requisites of post- modern society (Fullan, 2011). The Full Day Kindergarten team is a collaborative structure supporting continuous and substantial daily learning for the educators. Research indicates that participation in collaborative communities affects teaching practice (Little, 1990). With leadership support and barriers addressed, these teams will certainly achieve more collectively than would be possible independently. Interactions within this community of practice build efficacy, as educators believe in themselves and their abilities, and agency, as educators intentionally collaborate to enhance the learning experience both for themselves and their students. School boards must encourage the development of shared practice and reflective practice strategies to build an effective collaborative structure and, in turn, a community of practice where educators learn from each other. Hattie states:

> The strongest effects on student learning appear to take
>
> place when teachers become learners of their own teaching
>
> (Hattie, 2009, p. 22).

The collaborative structure in full day kindergarten places two educators in a partnership within the classroom. Obviously there are many benefits of having two educators in the room, as indicated throughout this study. Moreover the development of a community of practice in which educators engage in active, sustained learning opportunities is a benefit that is deserving of further exploration, further support and further discussion. Research realizes the power of collaborative work.

In sum, the greatest potential benefit of the collaborative structure in full day kindergarten is the opportunity for the educators to develop a shared depth of understanding about the nature of their work; this depth is only achievable by making learning the day to day work. There are minimal opportunities within the school system for educators to engage in ongoing and substantial learning about their practice. The collaborative structure provides this opportunity for educators. Therefore, it is imperative for school leaders to support this structure, consider the barriers and search for solutions, in order for the early childhood educators and classroom teachers to capitalize on the power of this collaborative structure, and learn from each other.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol and Questions

<u>**Focus Group Protocol and Questions**</u>

Hello. My name is Laura Callaghan and I am a University of Windsor Faculty of Education Masters student. I am completing my thesis as the final component of my degree in Educational Leadership. I am conducting a research study on Full Day Kindergarten and the implications of the educator teams in these classrooms as collaborative structures. Each classroom has a classroom teacher and early childhood educator working together as educational partners, or co-teachers. This is a new collaborative structure in Ontario schools. There are different co-teaching models and this study will explore these models through a comparison of the situation in selected classrooms in our schools. This study will contribute to my research and the existing research on co-teaching. Most research to date investigates co-teaching involving the classroom teacher and special education teacher. There has been minimal research completed in the area of the educator team in Full Day Kindergarten. This study will be useful within our classrooms, within our board and to share with other boards as Full Day Kindergarten is implemented across the province.

Let's review the consent form and letter explaining the study. If you agree to participate you may sign the form. Participation is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate.

Review Consent Letter

With your permission I would like to record our focus group session today. This will allow me to listen to your responses carefully and later transcribe the dialogue. Following the study the recording will be destroyed. I would like to remind you that you have complete anonymity and no names will be used in the study.

By signing this form you are agreeing to participate in this study. You are welcome to keep a copy of the form. Your signature indicates you have read all of the information and that you voluntarily are willing to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time, without any negative repercussions. You simply need to write a statement that you would like to withdraw. All information you have shared to that point will be destroyed.

I would like to take a moment to clarify an important point. This research is in no way connected to my role as Assistant to the Superintendent in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. Nor is this research connected in any way to your work in your school, or

to any type of performance appraisal or evaluative observation. Please understand as well that in no way are you obligated to participate, and if you wish to decline, this will in no way impact your position of employment with the school board, or any type of appraisal. You will not be penalized in any way if you wish to decline. Also please understand that in no way will any comments you make, or observations that are noted be used in any way other than to inform this research project. Finally, I would like to share that the Board has approved this research study and is fully aware of the process and recognizes as well that this research is not connected to any type of evaluative judgments.

Focus Group Questions

1. Please state your name and your position in the school.

2. What does the term "co-teach" mean to you?

3. Please describe your relationship with your teaching partner as co-teachers.

4. How does your team work together to plan and implement learning experiences for all learners?

5. How has this experience in Full Day Kindergarten had an impact on your beliefs about teaching on a teaching team?

6. What challenges have you faced with regards to working as a team?

7. What has supported the development of your partnership as co-teachers?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol and Questions

<u>**Interview Protocol and Questions**</u>

Hello, my name is Laura Callaghan and I am working on completing my thesis as the final component of my Master's Degree through the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor in the area of Educational Leadership. When we had our focus group session, I explained the consent process and the purpose of the study. Today I am here to conduct our first interview.

The research I am undertaking is examining the development of a collaborative teaching structure in Full Day Kindergarten educator teams. Through this study I am exploring the construct of co-teaching. There are different models of co-teaching and this study will examine what co-teaching looks like at your school in your classroom with your educator team. This research will contribute to existing research based on co-teaching and provide new insight into what co-teaching looks like in Kindergarten, as most research focuses on co-teaching relationships between classroom teachers and special education teachers.

I would like to express my thanks for participating in this study. Before we begin, do you have any questions about this study? Are there any sections of the consent form that you would like to review? Please remember your participation is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time, without any type of repercussion.

I would like to take a moment to clarify an important point. This research is in no way connected to my role as Assistant to the Superintendent in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. Nor is this research connected in any way to your work in your school, or to any type of performance appraisal or evaluative observation. Please understand as well that in no way are you obligated to participate, and if you wish to decline, this will in no way impact your position of employment with the school board, or any type of appraisal. You will not be penalized in any way if you wish to decline. Also please understand that in no way will any comments you make, or observations that are noted be used in any way other than to inform this research project. Finally, I would like to share that the Board has approved this research study and is fully aware of the process and recognizes as well that this research is not connected to any type of evaluative judgments.

With your permission I would like to record our interview. This will allow me to carefully listen to each response. The recording will only be used for note taking and all recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Remember your anonymity is ensured. No names will be used at any time in the study.

Individual Interview Questions:

1. Please state your name and position.

2. Please share your responsibilities in your role.

3. Please describe how you work together with your teaching partner in your classroom.

4. What are the benefits of working together as a team with your teaching partner?

5. What strategies do you have in place to facilitate collaboration between yourself and your teaching partner?

6. Identify any barriers that can hinder collaboration within your teaching team.

7. Has your approach to teaching young children changed since you began working in the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten program? If yes, how so?

8. Has working as a part of an educator team had an impact, positive or negative, on your practice as an educator? Please explain.

9. What is the key belief you hold with regards to teaching that guides your teaching practice?

10. Has the structure of an educator team had an impact on the students? Please describe this impact, either positive or negative.

VITA AUCTORIS

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