DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 041 PS 021 188

AUTHOR White, Kimberly A.
TITLE A Comparison of Interactions between Degreed and Non-Degreed Early Childhood Educators and their Four-Year-Old Children.
PUB DATE 15 Oct 92
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, October 15, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; Comparative Analysis; Day Care Centers; *Degrees (Academic); Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Preschool Teachers; Proprietary Schools; Public Schools; Self Concept; *Teacher Behavior; Teacher Education; *Teacher Expectations of Students; *Teacher Qualifications; *Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Knowledge Bases; *Teacher Knowledge

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of two studies of teacher expectations for 4-year-old children in private and public preschool programs. One study took place at a private day care center with 3 teachers who had no degrees in education and 48 children. The second study was conducted at 2 public elementary schools and involved 2 teachers with degrees, one in elementary education (EE) and the other in early childhood education (ECE), and 32 children. Data was collected by observation and interviews with teachers and children over a 6-month period. Results indicated that: (1) the teacher with an EE degree and the nondegreed teachers interacted with their children in similar ways; (2) the teacher with an ECE degree interacted with her children in a positive manner and provided a developmentally appropriate learning environment; and (3) instances of differential treatment of children and evidence of negative self-fulfilling prophecies were observed in the classrooms of the nondegreed teachers and the teacher with an EE degree. A case study illustrating a negative self-fulfilling prophecy is provided. It is concluded that the studies' results argue for the necessity of early childhood education training for adults working with young children. (PM)

A Comparison of Interactions Between Degreed and Non-Degreed Early Childhood Educators and their Four-Year-Old Children

Kimberly A. White

Ball State University

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Midwestern Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois
October 15, 1992

Running head: INTERACTION COMPARISON

Abstract

The conclusions from two six-month observational case studies examining teacher expectations for four-year-old children in both private preschool and public school preschool programs were compared. The first study was conducted in a private, for-profit preschool with three non-degreed teachers and 48 children. The second study was conducted in a public school preschool program with two degreed teachers (one had 17 years of experience and held an elementary education certificate and the other had 7 years of experience and held an early childhood education certificate) and their collective 32 children. Although both studies began with the focus of understanding the kinds of expectations the teachers had for their children, this paper examines how differences in how the teachers interacted with the children. The specific interactions that occurred between all of the teachers and their children were compared and the conclusions deal with the following: The degreed elementary education teacher interacted with her children in much of the same ways as the non-degreed teachers. The degreed early childhood education teacher interacted with her children in a positive manner and provided a developmentally appropriate learning environment. Instances of positive and negative differential treatment as well as evidence of negative self-fulfilling prophecies was observed with children in the non-degreed and elementary teacher's classrooms. These case studies are used to argue for the importance of early childhood education training for adults who teach and care for young children.

In our nation, the area of early childhood education (i.e., programs serving children birth through age 5) has been given considerably less attention by governmental and educational institutions than other areas of education. Quality early childhood programs are desperately needed in order to provide all children with a healthy start in life, yet the commitment has not been made to effectively meet the needs of our youngest generation. Institutions of higher education are now beginning to look toward the creation of specific programs for educating prospective early childhood professionals by incorporating early childhood teacher education programs into various departments such as Family and Child Studies, Elementary Education and Home Economics. As a united nation, we will need to address the questions related to teacher education and licensing if we hope to truly help all of our children succeed in life.

Developmentally, these early years in a child's life are the most critical stages in cognitive, social and emotional growth. Teachers and caregivers should understand the importance of their role in the lives of the young children in their care, thus interacting with them in appropriate ways which will enhance positive growth. Damage to self-concepts can occur at an early age as teachers and caregivers, unaware of the power their negative behaviors and attitudes have on the children's developing self-concepts, interact with them in less than positive ways. Within this article, I will present findings from two qualitative research studies which describe specific ways preschool teachers interact with four-year-old children. The teachers' educational and experiential backgrounds vary greatly, however I will attempt to illustrate the importance of encouraging early childhood teachers and caregivers to seek specific educational experiences in child development and appropriate preschool practices. Because children are fragile during their early years, positive

experiences with teachers and caregivers may help to insure more positive cognitive, social and emotional growth.

The dynamics of classrooms are complex and intriguing. In order to better understand the effects that a teacher's behavior may have on young children, the self-fulfilling prophecy, teacher expectation and differential treatment research was explored, although research conducted in these areas with children younger than five has not been reported. Many process-product (Brophy & Good, 1970, 1974; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) and classroom ecology studies (Rist, 1970) examining teacher expectations and effects on students have been conducted over the past three decades, lending support to the contention that the expectations teachers have for their students can have a profound impact on the academic achievement and behavior of individual students. The self-fulfilling prophecy was first studied by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and further defined by Brophy and Good (1970) as follows: Teachers form expectations for their students which influence the teacher's interactions with each student. The student interprets the teacher's actions and expectations, and will begin to expect the same from themselves. The student will respond to the teacher as expected and the cycle of negative or positive self-fulfilling prophecies may begin. This notion is important to this report because I will describe self-fulfilling prophecies witnessed between four-year-old children and teachers.

The first major classroom ecology study (i.e., naturalistic exploration) to examine the self-fulfilling prophecy with younger children was conducted by Rist (1970). In this observational study, Rist examined how a kindergarten teacher of ghetto children formed her expectations which led to obvious differential treatment of children. A major goal of the study was to ascertain the importance of the initial expectations the teacher held in relation to each child's future success or failure within

the public school system. Rist concluded that the teacher identified high-status and low-status students before the third week of school and then proceeded to interact differently with the groups of children. Into the second grade, Rist found that the children were locked into their labels of high- and low-status. No matter how well children performed in the lower reading group, they were destined to remain in that group. Rist believed that a "slow learner" had no option but to continue to be a slow learner regardless of performance or potential. Rist concluded that the success of a school and any teacher should not be measured by the treatment of high-achieving students, but rather by the treatment of those not achieving. This study lays the foundation for further exploration for the identification of specific behaviors that early childhood teachers may exhibit which may communicate positive or negative beliefs and feelings.

Central to the student role in the dynamics of the self-fulfilling prophecy is the ability of children to perceive and interpret the meaning of teacher behavior. Ways in which elementary teachers communicate differential treatment have been examined by Cooper and Good (1983), Weinstein (1989) and Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp and Botkin (1987). Overall, older children described teacher behaviors which communicated positive and negative expectations, for example, children receiving negative differential treatment were described as the recipients of more frequent negative feedback and direction from the teacher and more criticism. Children receiving positive differential treatment received more opportunity and choice, engaged in more fraquent teacher-initiated public interaction, and less criticism. Weinstein et al., (1987) found that younger children (i.e., first graders) are less accurate in reporting differential treatment patterns in their own interactions with the teachers, but are fairly perceptive in identifying differential expectations for other

children. Research findings in the area of children's perceptions of teacher differential treatment with younger children have not been reported.

Children grow and learn rapidly during the first few years of their lives. They begin forming expectations for their own behavior and performance based on their interactions with others. Each of us carries around a detailed, pervasive set of ideas about ourself collectively called the self-concept. These ideas affect our relationships with others, our choice of activities and our confidence (or lack of it) in many situations (Bee & Mitchell, 1984). Children begin developing their self-concepts early in life and the behavior and feelings that are reinforced by parents, day care providers and teachers are likely to prevail. Children develop their self-concepts based on interactions with, comments from and feelings about significant others in their lives, especially their teachers (Bullock, 1988). Goodlad (1979) believes that there is no direct way of teaching children to develop a positive self-concept, but contends that there are facilitating factors that could be provided within the school environment.

Research studies conducted by Bullock (1988) and Kenealy, Frude and Shaw (1987) examined teacher perceptions of children and from this information made inferences about teacher expectations for the children. The studies did not examine specific teacher-child interactions which lends support to the exploration of how teacher expectations are communicated to young children. The implications of these studies however, raise concerns about how socially rejected preschool children behave and whether or not self-fulfilling prophecies begin during the years before kindergarten. Poteat, Ironsmith and Bullock (1986) found that socially rejected preschool children can be reliably identified, which has important implications because the status of rejected children can become very stable during the elementary years. These findings suggest that once children have developed their social

reputations, their social status becomes increasingly difficult to modify as they get older, as shown by Rist (1970). Teaches have the potential for enhancing self-concept and reinforcing prosocial behavior (i.e., cooperation, helpfulness, empathy) in the classroom (Cauley & Tyler, 1989).

The purpose of the two studies reported in this article was to examine teacher-child interactions in order to identify specific behaviors which may communicate expectations. The focus of observations was broad in order to explain and describe variables related to expectations and interactions. The present studies examined the existence of self-fulfilling prophecies in preschool classrooms, how teachers relay their expectations, and the presence of differential treatment in the study classrooms. As with process-product research, I examined specific behaviors that relayed expectations, but the contexts in which interactions occurred were noted and considered in the analysis of the data, which is a characteristic of qualitative or classroom ecology research. I will attempt to provide evidence to support two claims: 1) "The teacher's behavior is what matters - what a teacher expects matters less than what a teacher does" (Goldenberg, 1992, p. 522), and 2) "When teachers are aware of the implications (of their negative expectations), their behavior toward students may change accordingly" (Dworkin & Dworkin, 1979, p. 713).

Study 1

Methods

The focus of this exploratory study was teacher expectations for four-year-old children, specifically, how teachers communicated their expectations to young children. Data were collected based on teacher-child interactions and the context within the interactions occurred was described.

The Setting

The study took place in a private, for-profit day care center located in a mid-sized university community in the Southeastern United States. Infants through kindergarten children from middle-class homes were served in this facility. This site was chosen because it was known in the community as having one of the most academically oriented prekindergarten programs which served four-year-old children. I felt it necessary to examine teacher-child interactions in this type of program in order to extend the line of research on teacher expectations from elementary to preschool. Since a national trend of creating four-year-old programs in the public schools is emerging and gaining support, conducting this study in an academically oriented program seemed appropriate.

Three teachers and their collective 48 children participated in the study. The classes shared a large room, divided into three classrooms by small open bookshelves. This arrangement created an open atmosphere conducive to large group activities. Because of this openness, while observing one group I was able to listen to and observe interactions occurring in the other classes.

The Participants

In order to separate the children into three classes at the beginning of the school year (late August), the teachers sequenced, in writing, all of the four-year-old children according to their chronological age. This list was then divided into three groups. The children were grouped according to their ages yet were perceived by the teachers to be ability groups, and taught accordingly. Tina (a first year teacher) taught the older children, referred to as the high group or the "top group" by the teachers. Leslie (a first year teacher) taught the youngest children who were referred to as the "low group". Molly, the head teacher with several years of preschool teaching

experience taught all of the children whose birthdays fell between the high and low groups; the "middle group". As children in the three-year-olds program turned four, they were moved to the four-year-old class and placed in Leslie's group with the youngest children. In order to keep the number of children in each class even, Leslie would move the oldest child from her group to the middle group. The groups were taught as ability groups, but movement to another group was solely dependent upon age.

All three teachers held no formal certification or degrees in education. Tina and Leslie did however, complete a technical school child development program which included guided teaching experiences in a laboratory preschool. All of the teachers were Caucasian and were in their twenties.

There were 48 children among the three observed classrooms. The racial composition was as follows: 40 Caucasian, 5 African-American, 2 Eastern Indian, and 1 Asian. The entire group consisted of 28 boys and 20 girls. The children ranged in age from 4 years 0 months to 4 years 11 months at the beginning of the study.

Data Collection

Data collection took place from the end of August through February of 1990-91. I visited the center on 60 occasions and spent 140 hours observing interactions between teachers and children, interviewing teachers and interacting with the children. I began the study by conducting an open-ended interview with each teacher during the first week of the academic school year. During this interview, I asked each teacher to "tell me anything I may need to know in order to better understand the interactions I may witness." This question opened the way for the teachers to describe their children as well as they could, and it also gave me a valuable insight into their early perceptions of each child. After the interview, I observed in Molly's class for four

weeks. Observations generally occurred during the morning group time (approximately 90 minutes) when intended academic instruction was scheduled. On several occasions, I observed interactions in the early morning hours while children were arriving, during playground time, lunch, naps and afternoon free play. In the field notes, I recorded witnessed interactions initiated by the teachers, interactions initiated by the children and the teachers' subsequent responses, and children's interactions with their classmates. When I reached the point that I was not observing new interactions between Molly and her children (i.e., data saturation), I began the observation process with Leslie and then with Tina.

When I completed the observational data collection with all of the teachers (in late January), exit interviews were held with each teacher. I asked the same general question used in the entrance interview, then compared responses and descriptions about each child. I was also able to ask more specific questions about interactions I witnessed and changes in behavior I noticed. During this interview, I asked the teachers to predict each child's potential for success in kindergarten. Their responses to all of the questions proved valuable in determining specific beliefs and feelings held for each child. The final component of data collection was the interactions I had with children in order to understand their perceptions of the rules, procedures and expectations their teachers held for the class and the children. I will not delve into this component because it was omitted in the second study and has no bearing on the findings relayed in this paper.

Study 2

The purpose of this study was to replicate the first study (with the exception of the interactions with the children) in a public school preschool program for four-year-old children and their college degreed teachers. Specific interactions between these

teachers and their children would be compared with the interactions from the previous study, and a comparison similarities as well as differences could be made. I wanted to know if a degree made a difference in the ways the preschool teachers interacted with the children.

The Setting

The study took place in two classrooms in separate elementary schools in the Midwestern United States. The school system has incorporated a preschool program for at-risk children for 17 years and is committed to providing a quality, appropriate school experience for young children. Two teachers and their collective 36 children who attended half-day sessions participated in the study. Each classroom was physically self-contained, complete with drinking fountain, sink and a restroom.

The Participants

Natalie and Claire were recommended by the Assistant Superintendent as participants in the study, mainly because they had varying educational backgrounds and experience. Both teachers are Caucasian. Natalie is in her mid- 40's and Claire is in her early 30's. Natalie has taught for 17 years in the same school and in the same classroom. She began her career when the preschool program was developed in the system. Natalie holds a bachelor degree in Elementary Education (Grades 1-8) and was working toward a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate during the study period; a requirement of the school system for those teachers with degrees in areas other than Early Childhood Education. Claire has taught in preschools for 7 years; two in a private preschool and five in the present school and classroom. She received a bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education (birth through kindergarten) and is currently working toward a master's degree in the same field. The two teachers follow the same curriculum, have the same materials in their classrooms, attend the

same in-service training sessions and are expected to interact with the children in a similar (e.g., positive and appropriate) manner.

There were 18 children in each classroom. Natalie's group consisted of 8 boys and 10 girls; 12 Caucasian, 5 African-American and 1 Eastern Indian. Claire's group consisted of 8 boys and 10 girls; 17 Caucasian and 1 African-American. Natalie's school served a more urban area while Claire's school served a more rural area.

Data Collection

Data collection took place from January through May of 1992. I visited each classroom on 15 occasions (i.e., approximately one day per week in each classroom) and spent 45 hours in each classroom observing teacher-child interactions and interviewing the teachers. As with the previous study, I began data collection with an open-ended interview and I asked each teacher to "tell me anything I may need to know in order to better understand the interactions I may witness." I then observed during the entire session (1:00-3:30) on each visit, so I was able to see the teachers and children in many different situations and engaging in various activities. In field notes, I recorded witnessed interactions initiated by the teachers, interactions initiated by the children and the teachers' subsequent responses, and children's interactions with their classmates. When data saturation was reached, I conducted an exit interview with each teacher so that they could describe changes they had witnessed in any children and discuss each child's potential for kindergarten success. I chose not to incorporate the component of children's perceptions with this study simply because I did not feel that area was of great importance to my overall purpose of comparing teacher interactions.

Data Analysis of Both Studies

Relationships among categories of interactions were discovered by using the constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data and analysis for each teacher were kept separate, and findings emerged from the synthesis of the data. Discrepant and negative cases were explored in detail in order to verify and strengthen the findings. As a result of the first study, a grounded theory describing teacher expectations for four-year-old children emerged from the data. The theory is composed of four major themes; how teachers relay their expectations, differential treatment of children, the accuracy of expectations and children's perceptions of teachers' expectations. This paper will focus on the similarities and differences between the non-degreed teachers (from the first study) and the degreed teachers (from the second study) in regard to how they relay their expectations (i.e., interactions with children). [See White (1991) for entire description of grounded theory.]

Findings

Teacher-Child Interactions

In this section, I will first describe the similarities in interactions between the three non-degreed teachers (i.e., Tina, Molly and Leslie) and the elementary education degreed teacher (i.e., Natalie), and their four-year-old children. Secondly, I will describe the similarities in interactions between all of the teachers and their four-year-old children. Lastly, I will describe the observed differences between the degreed teachers (i.e., Claire and Natalie).

Non-Degreed Teachers and the Elementary Education Degreed Teacher

The categories of interactions and specific properties within each category will be presented in this section. Because I am comparing similarities between all of the

teachers, the interactions are largely negative and/or inappropriate. The categories are: Teacher communication, behavior management, differential teacher treatment, and ignoring reciprocity.

Teacher communication. Three major properties characterize the similarities between the teachers, namely *sarcasm, tone of voice and non-verbal communication.* The teachers all spoke to children in a sarcastic manner. For example, "Evidently missing group time didn't affect you at all. Behave!", "It's no wonder you act like you do. You watch too many bad television shows", and "Oh look, she cut her leg. Do you want us to take you to the doctor so he can cut it off?" During my observations, I noticed that each teacher's tone of voice would change depending on whom she was speaking to. For example, when Molly was talking with Brit, whom she adored, her voice was kind and she smiled but when Garrett would talk with her, the tone of voice she used changed immediately, her faced turned red and she frowned. I witnessed this same type of interaction with Tina, Leslie and Natalie.

Behavior management. Four properties characterize this category, namely the use of *time-out, threats, drawing the attention of the group to one child's inappropriate behavior* and the use of *physical force* and location to correct behavior. In all of the classrooms, time-out was used as a form of discipline however, Natalie used the technique differently from the non-degreed teachers. Natalie would write children's names on the board if they continually misbehaved and time-out was a consequence for the name on the board. Many times a child's name would remain on the board for more than one day meaning that the child would sit in time-out during the center play period for one day or more. One day a child asked why his name was still on the board and Natalie said, "I can't remember what you did yesterday but I know it was bad." Tina, Molly and Leslie used time-out in an inconsistent manner as some

children would be isolated for exhibiting the same behavior that was ignored when exhibited by another child. Always, the teachers said, "Go to time-out. You can join the group when you are ready" with no further explanation or discussion. How are the children to know what behavior exhibited was inappropriate? What does "when you are ready" actually mean to a four-year-old when they are not sure why they were sent to time-out in the first place?

Threats were issued often and rarely followed through. "If you do that again I will _____" was very common. Once a teacher does not follow through with a threat, is his/her credibility compromised? In most cases, the children who received many threats were the ones who consistently misbehaved. Another property of this category is the teacher behavior of drawing the entire group's attention to the inappropriate behavior of one child or a few children. In all cases, the children whom the teachers disliked were the ones who were singled out, for example, "Garrett, we are all waiting on you to sit still before we can begin" instead of saying (as they would if children they liked were misbehaving) "We will begin when everyone is sitting still." The last property deals with teachers correcting behavior physically; either by moving children themselves using physical force, asking children to move away from from misbehaving children and often separating children who occasionally fight with one another to avoid future problems.

Differential treatment. Teachers communicated their expectations to the children through their interactions with individuals and groups of children. Differential treatment is an example of a teacher-student interaction which has *positive* and *negative* dimensions meaning one child would receive consequences for the misbehavior and the other child's misbehavior would not be recognized. For example, when two or more children were engaged in an inappropriate activity or behavior, one

child tended to be singled out to receive the consequences, receiving the negative differential treatment. The children whose misbehavior was not addressed by the teacher received the positive differential treatment. The following in an example of differential treatment:

> During Leslie's group time, Charlie was having trouble recognizing the number 10. Andrea yelled out the answer. Leslie replied to Charlie, "It's 10 but Andrea told you." The activity continued and Kalen was telling Kenny the answer. Leslie told Kalen twice, "Let Kenny do it." Kalen yelled the answer out again and Leslie said, "Kalen, you need to listen to whose name I called." Andrea then yelled the answer and Leslie said, "What did I tell you? Leave my group."

When two or more children were engaged in an inappropriate activity, consequently the behavior of the children the teachers liked was basically ignored and the other child or children (usually the ones the teachers did not like) were punished.

Ignoring reciprocity. An ignoring reciprocity interaction occurred with the four highlighted teachers and a few of their children. The reciprocity is as follows: The teacher would ignore a child's attempt to interact (e.g., trying to get their attention by calling her name over and over, or patting her arm) and in turn the child would later ignore a teacher directive (e.g., "Put the puzzle away"). Most often, the teachers would tell a specific child to do something and this request would be ignored. The teacher would continue to tell the child until the child complied. Then when the teacher's attention was diverted, the child would usually continue exhibiting the inappropriate behavior.

Degreed and Non-Degreed Teachers

There were three properties of behaviors which all teachers exhibited with children; Making a *statement to correct behavior*, asking a *question to correct behavior*, and *addressing the entire group* to correct the behavior of a few. Overall, these interactions can be considered positive in nature. In making a statement to

correct behavior, the teachers would say for example, "We need to be listening carefully now with our ears open and our mouths closed", "We are cutting pictures right now", and "You need to be paying attention up here." The teachers would also ask questions in order to correct behavior, for example, "What were the directions?" and "Why are we so loud?" All of the teachers would address the group to correct the behavior of a few instead of singling children out and their misbehavior be discussed. The difference lies with the children involved - the behaviors of children whom the teachers disliked were pointed out to the entire group while the misbehavior of children the teachers felt more positively about were reminded of the appropriate behavior in an emotionally safe way. This explanation applies to all of the teachers except Claire (the early childhood degreed teacher) because Claire did not single out a child and correct inappropriate behavior in front of all of the children. Instead, she reminded the entire group of the expected behavior.

The Degreed Teachers

Claire and Natalie are preschool teachers in the same public school system. They used the same curriculum and attended the same in-service training sessions, however they implemented the requirements in opposite ways. Claire is an example of a teacher who provides developmentally appropriate activities (Bredekamp, 1987), interacts with her children in positive and respectful ways, and truly meets children where they are developmentally and works to meet individual needs. Natalie believes her job as a preschool teacher is to prepare her children for the academic demands of kindergarten. Her classroom is set up for the convenience of the adults (Natalie and her educational assistant) and her schedule never varies. The children must wait in the school foyer and are not allowed into the room until exactly 1:00. Upon entering, they immediately hang their coats and sit on the large group rug. Within minutes, the

day begins as the children recite the usual daily sentences about the calendar, weather and nursery rhymes. The children are then divided into two groups for teacher-directed instruction. The groups of children are always the same because the children who do not interact well with one another are separated. Natalie teaches one group while her assistant teaches the other group. After 30 minutes, the groups change teachers and the lessons are repeated. Natalie follows lessons outlined in the Peabody Early Education Kit and the assistant conducts a Lavatelli math lesson which usually includes a worksheet or two. Natalie believes these group routines are important because she feels that her children are better prepared for kindergarten by participating in structured and formal lessons. Natalie told me one day that she has her children do less worksheets than she used to. Only occasionally are the children given free center play time for approximately 20 minutes. During this time, the adults talk among themselves and do not interact with the children. Outdoor play was "rewarded" to the children one time during my 15 visits.

I made two interesting observations which may best characterize the atmosphere in Natalie's classroom. First, I did not ever hear one child call Natalie by her name "Mrs. Ashcraft"; she was always called "Teacher". Secondly, the children did not know each others' names. Everyone knew Charlie and Deedee because they were yelled at often by the adults, but the environment and structure of each day was not conducive to positive social interactions, therefore the children did not know each other well. "Hey you" or "Little girl" was said instead of actual names.

Claire's sole purpose for teaching was the children. It was her job to see that the children's needs were met in every way. She was always available to talk with children, help them with activities and encourage them. Claire's day also began at 1:00, but the children were free to enter the room when they arrived at school. As the

arrived, they began playing in the various centers immediately. When all of the children arrived, they gathered on the large group rug and discussed the calendar. Claire's approach was very informal as she discussed topics related to the weather, a child's question about electricity or whatever seemed to come up in the conversation. Then the children chose songs they would like to sing and dance to before they began center play. Center play lasted from 60 to 90 minutes, depending upon other scheduled events or the children's interest and energy levels. During center play, Claire and her educational assistant interacted with every child, answered every child's request for help, modeled problem solving behaviors and encouraged children to solve problems with tasks or with other children. The room was set up for center play, and the activities (regardless of how messy the room would be afterwards or how much adult supervision was required) were developmentally appropriate. The children were happy, and the cohesive group shared and truly cared about others. Time-out was not used, nor were any punishments. Claire handled behavior problems quietly with individual children.

The differences between Claire and Natalie are immense, but then each teacher saw her role differently. Claire's purpose was to encourage the positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of the children in her care, an important component of developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp, 1987). Natalie's purpose was to prepare her children for the academic requirements of kindergarten. Why the difference? The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) created the developmentally appropriate practice guidelines because they reflect the positive, supportive and respectful interactions and philosophies early childhood educators should strive to incorporate into their daily lives. Claire is an example of a teacher who believes in developmentally appropriate practice and her

philosophy is evident in every interaction and every word spoken to the children. I believe that all adults who work with young children either in day care settings or preschools, degreed or non-degreed, must receive necessary education and training in child development, positive guidance and developmentally appropriate practice principles. The differences are shown in this comparison of three non-degreed preschool teachers, a degreed preschool teacher with an elementary education background, and a degreed preschool teacher with an early childhood education background.

Negative Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: An Example

In this paper, I have attempted to reinforce Goldenberg's (1992) idea that "what a teacher expects matters less than what a teacher does" (p. 522). Specific teacher behaviors and interactions with children have been described, although I have not discussed how these behaviors related to expectations. Another similarity between the non-degreed teachers and the elementary education preschool teacher concerns the observance of negative self-fulfilling prophecies occurring in their classrooms with four-year-old children. In this section, I will tell the story of Garrett who was in Molly's class. Garrett's story is very similar to Rebecca from Tina's class, Annie from Leslie's class and Joey from Natalie's class. Cooper and Good (1983) contend that the most dramatic form of teacher expectancy effects involves observable changes in student behavior. Garrett's story will only reinforce the statements of Goldenberg and Cooper and Good.

Garrett: A Case Study

Garrett turned four years old at end of August and was the youngest child in the pre-kindergarten classes which meant he should have been placed in Leslie's class (because she had the youngest children), however he was placed with Molly because

she was "the veteran teacher and knew all about Garrett, and she [I] knew how to handle him." During Molly's entrance interview, I was told that he is "really bad and he cannot concentrate at all." From the beginning, Molly knew she did not like Garrett and she expected him to misbehave. Garrett has been at the center since he was two-years-old, and his reputation preceded him. I decided to watch Garrett closely and take careful note of his behavior with his peers and with the adults.

At the beginning of the year, Garrett interacted with many children in appropriate ways. He was not "bad" and he did not seem to instigate problems or aggravate other children. I soon noticed that Garrett received negative differential treatment and was often punished for minor misbehavior and even blamed for actions of other children. The children began blaming Garrett for everything, even when he was nowhere near the problem area. Within a few weeks, Garrett's interactions with other children changed as he seemed to only interact defensively as the other children teased and bullied him. When he tried to defend himself or react emotionally, he was reprimanded by Molly and/or the other teachers.

Within two months, I noticed that Garrett was not even attempting to interact with the children and they in turn were not initiating interactions with him. Whenever the children were to form a circle for group activities, Garrett began isolating himself by sitting a little further out of the circle. Molly did not mention this to Garrett, nor did she attempt to include him in the group. On the other hand, if any of the other children sat apart from the group, she would not begin the activity until the child sat correctly within the circle. Molly spoke in a harsh tone to Garrett and her facial expression changed whenever she spoke with him. The following are excerpts from the observational data.

> Molly was talking to Garrett about making a list of all of the thing he will do wrong today. "Have you been nice to Todd? NO, you haven't. I've been watching you all morning." Molly told me that Garrett's dad

had asked Molly to be specific about the kinds of things Garrett does that constitutes a "bad day" and Molly could not think of anything specific. She decided to keep a list of the "ugly" things he would do to children. During the day, Garrett seemed to be misbehaving in order to get Molly's attention so she would put "bad" things on the list but she seemed to forget about the list until a few hours later when the children were practicing tying their shoes. Garrett did not have lace shoes so Molly let him borrow her shoes but she said, "If you mess up my shoe, I will be so mad." Later, he began playing with the shoe and Molly said, "I am not happy with you and the next time you do not follow my direction it goes on the list." I stayed for another hour and Molly did not write on the list but continued to reprimand Garrett for his behavior.

The center director told Molly that Garrett was sick and would not be coming to school. In front of the children Molly smiled, laughed and said, "Good. I might have a good day then."

Many times, I heard children yell at Garrett using Molly's words like, "I said, go to your seat." One child told me that "Garrett is the meanest kid around."

During learning center activities, four children were playing with a "pig game." The rule was that only four children could play at once. Garrett wanted to play and asked Molly if he could. She told the four children to leave because Garrett wanted to play the game. He looked at her with tears in his eyes and then just stared at the pig game.

As the children were cleaning up learning center activities, a child told Molly that all of the clothespins to a game were broken. Molly asked, "Who broke these clothespins?" All of the children yelled, "Garrett!" He did not even visit that center.

Sara told Molly that Garrett was bothering her. Molly said, "Tell him I said to leave you alone." Sara did, stuck her tongue out at Garrett then hit him hard on the head.

Molly was leading the music center activity. She and a few children were holding hands and dancing in a circle to Christmas music. Garrett came over and asked Molly if he could play. She ignored him. He persisted, was continually ignored as other children were invited to join the group. Garrett then made two more attempts to join the group, then began dancing in a large circle by himself next to Molly's group.

> During the exit interview Molly said, "When I first got Garrett, I didn't want him. I didn't like him. He's still not with the group yet. I feel like he needs to spend another year here before he goes to kindergarten. He hasn't grasped a lot. I believe there is a problem and he needs to be tested for anything abnormal. He talks to inanimate objects, like Alice did, and she was tested and she has something bad enough they put her in special education in the public schools."

The effect that Molly's behavior and attitude was having on Garrett became clear to me the day he asked her if he could play with the pig game and she told the other children to leave so Garrett could play the game, alone. The look on Garrett's face as the four children wandered off to other activities showed his disappointment in being isolated once again. My conclusion about the effects that Molly's behavior had on Garrett was reaffirmed when she ignored his attempts to join the music circle and began dancing in a circle by himself. Garrett was alone. I believe he will continue to be alone. The children did not like him. The teachers did not like him. He may have received many messages about his self-worth that he will carry with him to kindergarten and beyond. Garrett's story is an excellent example of why the examination of teacher's behaviors, interactions with and expectations for four-year-old children, and for even younger children is critical. We may never know the damage done to Garrett's self-concept while in Molly's pre-kindergarten class. Garrett most likely continued to behave in similar ways in kindergarten and those behaviors may be reinforced by his kindergarten teacher. Will Garrett end up in a special education program? The self-fulfilling prophecy is alive and well in preschool classrooms and may continue as children begin formal school experiences. As mentioned earlier, similar self-fulfilling prophecy scenarios were observed with a child in Tina's class, Leslie's class and Natalie's class.

Conclusions

In a further review of relevant literature, several implications are reinforced by previous findings. Teachers need to be aware of young children who may be socially rejected at an early age and provide assistance to these children in the acquisition of appropriate social skills. The promotion of positive social reputations of these children is important because they may be more amenable to change while they are younger (Poteat, Ironsmith & Bullock, 1986). The role that teachers of young children play in the development of positive self-concepts is important for teachers as well as teacher educators to understand and appreciate.

Teachers of young children need to be aware of how their words and actions may influence children's self-concepts. The years before kindergarten are critical to the development and formation of children's self-concepts. Within the classroom, teachers can enhance children's self-concepts by providing a predictable environment with clear and reasonable rules. Reasons for the limits placed on behavior should be explained, and appropriate behavior should be modeled by the teacher. Young children who have been treated in unhelpful and discouraging ways by their preschool teachers may experience academic difficulty when they begin formal schooling. Firestone and Brody (1975) found that the children who experienced the highest percentage of negative interactions with their kindergarten teacher were also those who did poorly on a standardized test given at the end of first grade. These results imply that negative interactions experienced in kindergarten may have been related to lower achievement levels.

The atmosphere of a preschool classroom should make the children feel comfortable, safe and successful. In this type of classroom, the children are encouraged to explore their surroundings and materials, and play and interact with the

teacher in socially acceptable ways. Positive interactions should occur between the teacher and the children, and between children themselves. By directly motivating children through positive statements about their potential for achievement, it is possible to help children translate this potential into actuality.

It is imperative that the adults caring for our nation's youngest citizens understand how critically important their attitudes toward, expectations for and interactions with children are in the development of healthy self-concepts. Most adults who care for young children are, although they may love children and enjoy being with them, do not have formal educational experiences and background information about child development and developmentally appropriate practices for young children. I believe our governmental and higher education institutions must address this concern and work toward upgrading education standards for child care providers and preschool teachers. Even public school teachers working in preschool programs should have training and education specifically in early childhood education because it is not appropriate to interact with four-year-olds or expect them to work in school like fourth grade students. We must strive to encourage the "Claire's" of our nation and support the "Molly's" and "Natalie's" as they learn to interact more appropriately with their young children. We must remember that "what a teacher expects matters less than what a teacher does" (Goldenberg, 1992, p. 522).

References

Bee, H.L., & Mitchell, S.K. (1984). The developing person: A life-span approach (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Bredekamp, S. (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Brophy, J.E., & Good, T.L. (1970). Teacher-child dyadic interaction system. In Mirrors for behavior: An anthology of observation instruments continued, 1970 supplement volume A. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, Inc.

Brophy, J.E., & Good, T.L. (1974). Teacher-student relationships: Causes and consequences. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Bullock, J.R. (1988). Encouraging the development of social competence in young children. Early Child Development and Care, 37, 47-54.

Cauley, K., & Tyler, B. (1989). The relationship of self-concept to prosocial behavior in children. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4, 51-60.

Cooper, H.M., & Good, T.L. (1983). Pygmalion grows up: Studies in the expectation communication process. New York: Longman.

Dworkin, N., & Dworkin, Y. (1979). The legacy of Pygmalion in the classroom. Phi Delta Kappan, 60(10), 712-715.

Firestone, G., & Brody, N. (1975). Longitudinal investigation of teacher-student interactions and their relationship to academic performance. Journal of Educational Psychology, 67(4), 544-550.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Adeline.

Goldenberg, C. (1992). The limits of expectations: A case for case knowledge about teacher expectancy effects. American Educational Research Journal, 29(3), 517-544.

Goodlad, J.I. (1979). What schools are for. A publication of the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Haynes, N.M., & Johnson, S.T. (1983). Self- and teacher expectancy effects on academic performance of college students enrolled in an academic reinforcement program. American Educational Research Journal, 20(4), 511-516.

Kenealy, P., Frude, N., & Shaw, W. (1987). Influence of children's physical attractiveness on teacher expectations. The Journal of Social Psychology, 128(3), 373-383.

Poteat, G.M., Ironsmith, M., & Bullock, J. (1986). The classification of preschool children's sociometric status. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 1, 349-360.

Rist, R.C. (1970). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. Harvard Educational Review, 40(3), 411-451.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). Pygmalion in the classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Weinstein, R.S. (1989). Perceptions of classroom processes and student motivation: Children's views of self-fulfilling prophecy. In C. Ames & R. Ames (Eds.), Research on motivation in education: Goals and cognitions (Vol. 3). San Diego: Academic Press.

Weinstein, R.S., Marshall, H.H., Sharp, L., & Botkin, M. (1987). Pygmalion and the student: Age and classroom differences in children's awareness of teacher expectations. Child Development, 58, 1079-1093.

White, K.A. (1991). Teacher expectations for four-year-old children: A qualitative analysis. Dissertation Abstracts International, 52(6), 2020-A (University Microfilms no. 91-33, 547).