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A Comparison Of The Philosophy And Implementation Of Kindergarten Programs For Rural, Disadvantaged Children.

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A COMPARISON OF THE PHILOSOPHY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS FOR RURAL, DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

by

ROSE DEAN MCGEE

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Child Development and Early Childhood Education in the Graduate School of the University of Alabama at Birmingham

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
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This research addressed the issue of determining if significant child outcomes exist in relation to the philosophy and methodology implemented within the public school kindergarten. Specifically, this matter was studied in terms of rural, disadvantaged children that were randomly assigned to either an academic or developmental kindergarten program within their community. Developmental areas that were assessed included motor, conceptual, language, and total development. Writing progress and social competence were also evaluated in regard to curricula treatment.

A pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental controlled group research design was employed. The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning--Revised (DIAL-R) was selected as the evaluative instrument for the assessment of the aforementioned areas of development. Each group participated in the Writing to Read Program, therefore the writing progress outlined in this program was used as the basis for the analysis of writing development. The Preschool Behavior Q-Sort was the instrument used to assess

the teachers' perceptions of their students' development in the area of social competence.

Following an analysis of the developmental data it was concluded that no significant, between-group differences were found in the areas of motor, language, or total development although the measure for total development did approach significance for the developmentally appropriate group. The academically oriented subjects evidenced a statistically significant higher mean in the area of knowledge of concepts. The writing progress for the two curricular groups evidenced a significantly higher mean rank for the developmentally appropriate curricular group. Finally, a two factor solution of the social behavior items was derived; one factor represents positive behaviors of social competence, while the other was characteristic of less competent behaviors. The first factor was comprised of items related to the constructs of self-confidence, achievement orientation, dependable relationships with adults, constructive actions and trusting actions. Differences between the two groups concerning this factor were not manifested. The second factor was characteristic of the constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, withdrawn, and suggestible behaviors. A significant between-group difference was found; the developmental group displayed a higher mean rank.

Abstract Approved by: Committee Chairman Nicey Cowles

Program Director Anne C. Shelly

Date 9/4/91 Dean of Graduate School Anthony Ballard

DEDICATION

This work was not completed alone, but was shared with those who constantly supported my goals. I want to recognize my husband, Terry L. McGee, for the love and support he provided throughout this endeavor. He was ever present to share both the difficulties and joys I encountered. This work is dedicated to my husband and the memory of my parents, Robert and Julia Dean.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Entrance into kindergarten often heralds a transition from a home and family-centered existence into the major social institutions within our culture. At this time, the child broadens his/her field of significant others to include individuals outside the family group as well as initiates the development of vital social skills with the peer group (Erikson, 1963). Some educators view kindergarten as primarily a socializing experience which allows children to adjust to life within the elementary school setting. Others believe the primary purpose of kindergarten should be to teach academic skills in prepara- for first grade (Spodek, 1988). These viewpoints represent contrasting ideologies concerning children and learning which have emerged from various theories of development and learning. These include the maturational, traditional, and cognitive-developmental theories which are reflected in the developmentally appropriate approach. The behavioral theory of development and learning is the basis for the academic kindergarten philosophy and curricula. The developmental or child-centered philosophy conceives of early childhood education as supporting children's personal development,

with education following development. The other ideology views early childhood education as supporting children's learning and is concerned with teaching content (Bredekamp, 1987; Moyer, Egertson, & Isenberg, 1987; Spodek, 1988).

The evolution of kindergarten within the public schools has drastically changed the structure of the classroom and the purpose of the teacher during the 1970s and 1980s (Webster, 1984; Spodek, 1988). Webster (1984) has traced the purpose and design of early childhood programs from the 1960s into the 1980s. The 1960s period marked the "re-discovery" of early childhood programs that were child-centered and focused on the developmental needs of the young child. During the 1970s the concept of "mastery learning" was implemented within early childhood classrooms; teaching and learning were systematized through clearly stated goals and objectives which outlined classroom curricula and experiences. Even within the context of "mastery learning" and "accountability" of the 1970s the kindergarten classroom evidenced a balanced and integrated curriculum (Webster, 1984). As early childhood education entered the 1980s the "back to basics" movement swept throughout the domain of public schools. The content areas were clearly defined as separate disciplines within which a prescribed sequence of skills was assigned. Clearly, educators and researchers of the 1990s are finding it necessary to re-examine and re-define the kindergarten and early childhood programs and curricula formulated within the previous decade (Bredekamp,

1987; Charlesworth, 1989; Peck, McCaig, & Sapp, 1988). Rasala (1989) described the process whereby the subject-splintered kindergarten curriculum can be re-connected or integrated, thereby presenting content in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Most kindergarten classrooms are not formulated as a pure model of either the academic or developmental philosophy described previously, but tend to fuse various components of each ideology. As a result, kindergarten programs reflect a preference for one philosophy or the other as evidenced by the structure of the classroom environment and preferred teaching methodologies (Hatch & Freeman, 1988). Spodek (1988) acknowledged there is a vital need to analyze the content of early childhood education, or what is taught, separately from the process, or how it is taught.

Educators that possess a working knowledge of child development understand what children are capable of knowing or learning; how they come to know at each stage in their development often differs. Spodek (1988) stated:

> Educators need to define the content of early child education as something more than a set of skills that enable children to function adequately and meet the demands of the primary-grade curriculum...Making explicit the content of early childhood education to be learned by children does not require that all children learn the same thing or that there be a single standard early childhood curriculum. (p. 207)

Kindergarten programs can present culturally relevant content in a developmentally appropriate manner as a means

of socializing children into the school environment while preparing them for later school experiences (Spodek, 1988).

Many experts recognize there is vital academic material that kindergarten children must be exposed to and should be capable of mastering. The controversial issue lies in how such knowledge should be introduced to and learned by the child. Some classroom environments exhibit highly active learning experiences within a meaningful context which were designed to motivate and develop the total child. Others focus on the acquisition and mastery of fragmented academic skills for the purpose of alleviating deficits in an effort that supposedly insures academic success. It is imperative educators realize that the strict adherence to teaching only the "basics" may limit learning and not foster the development of democratic values and equip children with life experiences they can transfer into future situations. This may be true not only for early childhood programs, but also for the entire structure of education. Learning experiences that children have within the developmental kindergarten classroom serve not only to promote skill acquisition, but also relay information in such a way that it is internalized and can be utilized in application to various problem solving situations. The process of learning is the priority of this philosophy, rather than the final product which only depicts one aspect of learning--skill mastery. The process-oriented structure of early childhood programs serves to develop within the

child intrinsically motivated learning. The most beneficial aspect of this type of pedagological methodology is that the kindergarten child "learns to learn" or the process of learning is instilled within the child through his/her own actions.

Statement of the Problem

The two varying types of kindergarten philosophies and curricula, developmentally appropriate and academic, which undergird public school practices were examined as they related to rural, disadvantaged children and their growth and development. Specifically, the basis for the assessment of the outcomes of these programs was determined through the related developmental progress of the total child--physically, mentally, socially, and in the areas of language and the development of writing. These child variables were assessed in relation to the ideology and structure of the program. The assessments specifically addressed the impact of these divergent program designs upon the development of the whole child.

Significance of the Study

In the recent past, studies that focused on different types of curricula for young children were implemented primarily through the federal government in an effort to document the results of early intervention programs which were launched during the War on Poverty of the 1960's. Peck, McCaig, and Sapp (1988) and Weikart and Schweinhart (1986) readily acknowledged that these two approaches, the

academic and developmentally appropriate curricula, are characteristic of public school kindergarten programs within this country. Most research concerning a comparison of these two early childhood approaches has not been extended to include the public school kindergarten program. This investigation serves to broaden the body of knowledge related to early childhood philosophy and curricula, enabling educators to make more informed decisions concerning the development and implementation of kindergarten programs.

Numerous publications describe developmentally appropriate and academic early childhood programs. These convey information concerning program implementation, classroom management, curriculum, instructional methods and materials, program goals and objectives, and the structure of the learning environment in relation to these contrasting viewpoints. Limited research is available that compares these two philosophies in relation to immediate child outcomes in terms of kindergarten curricular models. Most of the past research has focused on early intervention preschool programs or has dealt mainly with the long-term effects in relation to school achievement and/or IQ gain; little information is available that analyzes the immediate developmental outcomes in relation to the philosophy and method of implementation of the kindergarten programs. This research was designed to evaluate the developmental outcomes of disadvantaged children enrolled in public school

kindergarten in light of the program philosophy and to determine if significant differences existed which may be related to later school success.

Definition of Terms

Developmentally appropriate kindergarten: A curriculum and instructional method for young children that was planned in consideration of both age and individual appropriateness. The kindergarten curriculum provided for all areas of a child's development (physical, emotional, social, cognitive) and used an integrated approach toward planning and learning. Learning was recognized as an interactive process between the child and the environment. Therefore, the environment was prepared so children could explore and interact with both adults and children and an array of materials. Children engaged in learning activities that allowed them to interact with real, concrete objects embedded in experiences that were relevant to their lives. A variety of activities and materials were provided which increased in difficulty and complexity in an effort to challenge each child's understanding and level of skill development. The developmentally appropriate kindergarten program studied was a child-centered approach in which the classroom activities were balanced between those that were child-directed and those which were teacher-directed. Children were active learners who made major choices concerning their learning experiences. The students were

free to initiate activities independently or with their peers and adults.

Academic kindergarten: A curriculum and instructional system for young children that was based primarily on behavior modification. Within this approach, the kindergarten teacher and curriculum stressed preparedness for first grade through academic development. There was heavy reliance on total class, teacher-directed or instructed activities. Children were usually subjected to reward and punishment approaches toward discipline; compliance was rewarded. Teachers of the academic kindergarten strived to meet the academic and behavioral demands for children which were delegated by the principals, school boards, and first grade teachers within the school or school system. Teaching strategies included the use of highly-structured, teacher-directed lessons with the whole group centered upon the prescribed skills. Pre-packaged curriculum materials (workbooks, ditto sheets, flashcards, etc.) and other structured abstract materials dominated the curriculum. Rote memorization and drill focusing on the "correct" response were emphasized.

Development: Change that is cumulative over time; it is orderly, results in long-lasting behavior, and is evidenced by a more advanced or superior form of functioning than what had preceded (Kopp &, Krakow, 1982). Development of the children was assessed in four areas--motor, concept, language, and social competence. Motor, concept, and

language development were measured using the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning--Revised (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1983).

Motor development: The ability to use both gross and fine motor skills in a more complex, refined manner.

Conceptual development: The increasing ability to use knowledge to form and apply concepts or mental images.

Language development: Children's ability to understand (receptive) and produce (expressive) more complex patterns of speech.

Social competence: The ability of children to engage in behaviors which are socially responsible and independent (Baumrind, 1981). Such behaviors include those which are achievement-oriented, self-confident, constructive, trusting, approach-oriented (friendly), dominant, purposive, and autonomous (Baumrind, 1968; 1981).

Writing development: An assessment that focuses on how and when children use phonemic relationships to convey printed messages using conventional tools or the word processor. Writing progress will be assessed using the defined phases formulated within the IBM Writing to Read program. These seven stages include Pre-Writing behaviors, Stage 1--Cycle Word Writing, Stage 2--New Word Writing, Stage 3--Phrase/Sentence Writing, Stage 4--Simple Story Writing, Stage 5--Intermediate Story Writing, and Stage 6--Advanced Story Writing. Writing development is characterized by means by which the child conveys a message, not the

art or skill of handwriting or the formation of letters. These writing stages will be further defined and elaborated upon within the Review of Related Literature.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The outcomes of developmental and academic kindergarten programs for a limited population--rural, disadvantaged children--were addressed. The subjects lived in a rural, agricultural area within which 72 to 84 percent of the families were economically disadvantaged according to federal guidelines (Lawrence County Chapter I Schoolwide Project Implementation Plan, 1989). The findings could only be generalized to similar populations. Also, evaluative data were largely based on developmental information and did address specific skill acquisition. Only the experiences and design of the kindergarten program in relation to the outcomes were considered. Extraneous variables within the home environment were neither measured nor used. Finally, the measure of social competence was performed by each teacher and limited to her own observations and perceptions of the child's behaviors. The teachers' preferential philosophy may also have affected that measure of social behaviors.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Historical and Theoretical Perspective of Kindergarten

During the 20th century, kindergarten has become an integral part of the public school system. Under the leadership of such early childhood figures as Susan Blow, Patty S. Hill, Caroline Pratt, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, kindergarten was introduced into the United States as a child-centered form of teaching and learning based upon the nature and needs of young children (Snyder, 1972). Since the initial development of kindergarten in America and the sector of public education, the program has drastically changed. According to Patty S. Hill (1926/1987) the structure of kindergarten was initially a philanthropic venture designed to meet three goals: 1) To minister to the nature and needs of children from 4 to 6 years of age, 2) To look forward to the nature and needs of children as they develop through the sixth year, and 3) To look backward to the home in an effort to study the experiences and learning that precede the onset of kindergarten.

Initially, the kindergarten developed and grew as a sector of philanthropy long before it was accepted as an integral part of the educational system. Once kindergarten

was placed into the domain of public education, it remained a misfit for many years because of the philosophical differences that were prevalent within the incongruent backgrounds and foundations upon which philanthropy and public education were based (Hill, 1926/1987). The kindergarten was founded upon the premise that the educational program was responsible for all those conditions in the home which hindered the learning and general welfare of the child. Kindergarten teachers were trained in separate normal schools and focused on the work of social welfare within the family context as a part of their responsibilities. Patty Hill (1926/1987) stated:

> The kindergarten teacher's philosophical background, her curriculum, materials, and methods were too unique to be understood by grade teachers, who had been trained to use a curriculum based upon the acquirement of the three R's in their baldest and most barren form...The kindergarten was in the school but not an organic part of it. The kindergarten teacher brought with her a peculiar philosophy of education deemed highly sentimental, and a correspondingly strange conception of a curriculum based upon play (p.14).

Frequently, within the context of the past system of education, the philosophy behind the programs and the manner in which they were implemented within kindergarten and the primary grades were diametrically opposed. Within the present structure of kindergarten, teaching methodologies and curricula that are increasingly content-centered and decreasingly child-centered are operational within the public schools (Spodek, 1988). Primary teachers are often unprepared to build upon the experiences and achievements

acquired during kindergarten. For this reason it is now commonplace to see kindergarten children subject to the academic methodologies and pressures that have existed within the structure of the primary grades for years. Many kindergarten and primary teachers now expect the activities that occur in the kindergarten classroom to be directly related and designed to meet the academic demands of first grade (Freeman & Hatch, 1989; Peck, et.al, 1988).

John Dewey (1916/1966) was concerned with whether the dominant focus of education should be the child and his/her interests and needs or the bodies of knowledge (curricular content) that were to be presented to the child. He concluded that these two issues were not diametrically opposed because the curriculum of schools was developed from human interests. Therefore, it was possible to interest children in curricular content if the teacher presented the subject matter to students in a relevant manner based upon their needs. John Dewey (1916/1966) established an educational philosophy and curriculum which utilized cooperative, problem-solving not only to teach skills, but to promote the democratic values of the American culture. Dewey's educational reform movement was based upon the premise that education was not only founded upon democratic ideals, but functioned through democratic processes. Dewey (1916/1966) believed that an individual must be seen as a member of a social group and without the group the individual was nothing.

Democracy and Education (Dewey, 1916/1966) presented the classroom as a miniature society in which problems of democracy, of its rights and responsibilities, were met as they occur in normal, natural school experiences. Dewey (1916/1966) felt the teacher should have a wealth of subject matter to draw upon, as needed by the children, to solve their problems and to extend their horizons beyond the immediate. He negated the idea of teaching prescribed, logically sequenced bodies of subject matter with explicitly defined lines between content areas. Instead, he proposed the continuous reorganization of subject matter in terms of experience and need, modified as environmental conditions demand.

The early childhood classrooms established during Dewey's progressive education movement enabled children to solve problems and acquire skills through experimentation and exploration (Dewey, 1938). Learning and activity were synonymous within the classroom environment. Such an environment enabled children to "learn to learn." Dewey (1938) based his premise of experience in education upon the belief that participation in productive work is the chief stimulus and guide to self educative activity on the part of pupils. Such productive work is in accord with the process of natural learning and also provides a connection between school and social life. When children engage in experiences they are interested in, these experiences provide the basis for learning. When a child expresses his/her need or

interest in acquiring a particular skill, such as reading, he/she is much more likely to meet the task with success.

The classroom formulated during the Progressive Education movement was designed as a working model of a democratic society in which students could discover and experience various social roles and their related impact on people and other situations (Dewey, 1916/1966). The classroom environment was designed to foster cooperative projects which were introduced as "occupations," such as, cooking, woodworking, or weaving. Dewey (1938) viewed social experiences as imperative within the process of learning. He wanted children to learn the social virtues of cooperation, consideration, the dignity of labor, concentration, workmanship, and other vital qualities of societal living through direct experiences. The "occupations" also served as a vehicle by which to interest children in curricular content. The ideal learning environment in which these experiences took place provided adequate work space, such as tables instead of desks, room to move, with accessible laboratory and library areas. The social atmosphere within the progressive classroom fostered exploratory learning and provided abundant opportunities for social interactions both between adults and students and among peers (Dewey, 1938). The school and classroom environment was to provide a pleasant setting for all experiences and served to foster natural exploration and play while children learned.

Later theorists such as Jerome Bruner (1963) echoed and extended John Dewey's educational philosophy of education which promoted the democratic values of the American culture. Bruner (1963) viewed the purpose of education as the process of training children to be well-balanced citizens prepared for service in a democratic society. He believed schools must teach in such a way that the student learns not only skills, but also forms structures which enable him/her to deal with the affairs of life. The act of learning in this manner not only requires the acquisition of new information, but also the transformation and application of new information to fit new tasks as they arise. The teacher and learner must then evaluate the applications in order to check to see if the appropriate manipulation of the information has occurred in order to complete the current task or solve the problem at hand.

The educational ideology of progressivism holds that education should nourish the child's natural interaction with a developing society or environment. Development is not merely the unfolding of an innate pattern whereby the primary aim of education is to create an unconflicted environment that fosters the healthy development along a set pattern as the maturational view presents. Nor is development merely the cultural transmission of academic skills, knowledge, and values as defined by the behavioral school of thought. Development is a progression through invariant ordered sequential stages which are universal (Kohlberg &

Mayer, 1972, 1987; DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990). Therefore, the aim of education is the eventual attainment of a higher level or stage of development in adulthood, not merely the healthy functioning of the child at a present stage (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1987).

This cognitive-developmental theory of development and the aim throughout the process of education requires an environment that actively stimulates development through the presentation of resolvable, but genuine problems or conflicts. Cognitive development is a dialogue between the child's cognitive structures and the structures within the environment. In order for further progression through higher stages to occur, numerous and advanced experiences within the environment must be presented for cognitive stimulation which require the resolution of cognitive conflict. Kohlberg and Mayer (1987) stated:

> As applied to educational intervention, the theory holds that facilitating the child's movement to the next step of development involves exposure to the next higher level of thought and conflict requiring the active application of the current level of thought to problematic situations. (p.53)

Based upon this theory and its educational aim, the teacher must be aware of the child's stage of development, match the appropriate stimulation or experiences to this developmental stage, present genuine cognitive and social conflict of problematic situations, and provide the opportunity for interactive experiences within the environment to explore

the resolution of these conflicts and problematic situations (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, 1987; DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990).

Education and learning that allow children to discover and explore and solve problems within the context of real-life experiences foster the development of self-control and competence within the student. Erikson (1963) believed the rules of home and/or school are a hint of the "law and order" society of which the child is a member. Within Erikson's (1963) Eight Ages of Man, the second stage of development, autonomy vs. shame and doubt is a time when the child encounters rules from those with whom he/she has significant relations. Even though this stage begins before formal public education is experienced, the child constantly struggles with the dichotomy of self-will and self-restraint as the field of significant individuals is broadened. In balancing the tendencies of self-will and self-control, this newly discovered will power supports maturation both of free choices and self-restraint (Erikson, 1982). It is not sufficient for the teacher to issue classroom rules for expected behavior or set patterns for skill development. At some point in time the balance of power must be shifted from the teacher to the child so the child can internalize proper behavior and learn in an autonomous manner.

Bronfenbrenner (1979a) set forth the optimum conditions under which learning and the development of autonomous behavior can occur. He stated:

> Learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in

> progressively more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favor of the developing person. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a, p.60)

This is true in all areas of development and occurs in a variety of environmental settings, such as the home, school, and other community institutions.

As educators formulated goals, objectives, curricula, and evaluation techniques for programs for young children, varying theories of development and learning were evident throughout the past. Cowles (1973) identified four views of learning and development upon which modern early childhood and kindergarten programs were formulated. These include the behavioral-environmental, cognitive-transactional, psychosexual-personality, and normative-maturational views of development and learning.

The behavioral-environmental view of development and learning is based upon the reinforcement learning theory of Skinner, the developmental behavior-analysis approach of Bijou and Baer, and the cumulative learning model of Gagne' (Cowles, 1973). Educational programs based upon this theory focus on external rewards and punishments and the extrinsic control of children's behaviors and learning. The cognitive-transactional view is based upon the work of Jean Piaget, J. McVicker Hunt, Jerome Bruner, and has also been associated with the progressivism movement of John Dewey. The design of teaching and learning based upon this viewpoint, focuses on formulating environments that are

responsive to each child's level of development, while permitting children to choose many of their own activities. The works of Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, and Anna Freud are representative of the psychosexual-personality view. Development is based on how the child copes with each psychosexual stage and the conflicts associated with it. Programs based upon this approach focus mainly on helping the child learn to cope with issues relevant to the current stage of development while dealing with the world in a competent manner. All areas of development are fostered within such an educational plan because growth in each area contributes to the development of competence and healthy functioning in the world. Finally, the normative-maturational view is based upon the works of Arnold Gesell and his associates. Within this approach, growth and development occur according to prescribed normative standards which are genetically predetermined and only secondrily influenced by the environment. Early childhood programs formulated on the normative-maturational viewpoint attempt to provide a rich, supportive environment that fosters self-expression and the provision of information and materials that are based upon the child's needs and present stage of development. The concept of "readiness" is indicative of such an approach (Cowles, 1973).

The two most commonly practiced kindergarten/early childhood philosophies today are sharply contrasting approaches which have emerged from the aforementioned

theories of learning and development: 1) Developmentally appropriate or child-centered, and 2) Academically oriented or content-centered. These two philosophies delineate an overlap and coadunation of the basic theories of development and learning outlined by Cowles (1973). The first philosophy is exemplified in traditional American nursery school, kindergarten and first grade programs that focus on developmentally appropriate activities in which children are actively involved in discovery and exploratory learning. The second early childhood education philosophy is represented by academic preschool, kindergarten, and first grade programs in which children learn primarily through teacher-directed instruction and assigned paper-and-pencil activities that are designed within the context of a prescribed curriculum of skills (Bredekamp, 1987; Elkind, 1986, 1989; Greenberg, 1990; Peck, et al., 1988).

Traditional or developmentally appropriate programs are characterized by children learning through play and social interactions within a rich, stimulating environment in which they may make major choices from a variety of "live" activities. Students plan and initiate self-directed learning projects under the guidance of an endorsing adult and evaluate their own work and behavior with peer and adult participation. This environment is centered around an integrated curriculum so that learning occurs mainly through projects, learning centers, and playful activities that reflect the current interests and development of the

children. Skills are related and integrated within these activities; they are not fragmented and presented as the major focus of the curriculum (Bredekamp, 1987; Elkind, 1989; Greenberg, 1990; Minuchin, 1987, & Peck, et al., 1988; Weikart & Schweinhart,1986).

Evaluation in a developmentally appropriate program is based upon teacher observation, recording and keeping anecdotal records, identifying special needs of individual children in various areas of development (social, emotional, physical, intellectual, aesthetic, or academic), collecting and keeping samples and photos of their activities, and sharing extensively in the information- and opinion-gathering process with the child's parent(s) and other staff (Bredekamp, 1987; Greenberg, 1990). Developmentally appropriate early childhood programs focus primarily on the development of the total child and strive to develop positive self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and self-discipline throughout the learning process.

Academically oriented early childhood programs stand in direct opposition to the child-centered philosophy. Within the context of the academic approach, children learn through teacher-initiated, teacher-directed instruction centered around a prefabricated and often packaged curriculum program (Elkind, 1986, 1989; Freeman, 1990; Greenberg, 1990; Hatch & Freeman, 1988; Minuchin, 1987; Peck, et al., 1988). Children are allowed to make only minor choices and seldom initiate activities; they are also expected to obey and

follow prescribed classroom rules which are usually formulated by the teacher or school faculty/administration. Skill acquisition for the purpose of mastering prescribed objectives is the primary goal of instruction. Children are evaluated against a standardized group and all are expected to achieve the same narrowly defined, easily measured academic skills by the same predetermined time schedule typically determined by chronological age and grade level expectations (Bredekamp, 1987). Children's progress is assessed through the mastery of skills as measured by tests. This methodology is also the basis for motivation which is extrinsically oriented; teachers utilize external rewards and punishments as a means of promoting learning and controlling behavior.

The traditional, developmentally appropriate philosophy of early childhood education includes approaches, theories, and emphases associated with the Progressive Education movement of the early 1900's and is currently reflected in the works of Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Arnold Gesell and his associates, Jean Piaget, David Weikart, and David Elkind. Both the cognitive developmental and traditional nursery school programs, based on the theories of maturational and psychosexual and/or psychosocial development, are reflected in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten. The academic approach is a direct descendant of the behavioristic theories of Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner and relies heavily on behavior modification methods which include

extrinsic motivators and rewards through reinforcement procedures (Elkind, 1989; Freeman & Hatch, 1989; Hatch & Freeman, 1988; Minuchin, 1987).

Within the framework of public education it would be difficult to find a model that is a pure reflection of either previously described philosophy. Most teachers tend to combine various aspects of either model which as a whole favors one philosophy or the other. The dominant philosophy is thereby, reflected in the structure of the classroom environment and preferred teaching methodologies (Hatch & Freeman, 1988). The present trend appears to be more focused on the academic approach, whereby the mastery of content area objectives within a prescribed, fragmented curriculum is the central focus of the educational program (Freeman, 1990). As a result, the present trend has created expectations and requirements that are not suited to young children and often destine them for failure in kindergarten, because they are "behind" before they start (Charlesworth, 1989). Also, the intense emphasis and pressure associated with academic achievement may diminish the importance and enhancement of other areas of development, such as social or physical skills (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Related Research Concerning the Focus and Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs

Hatch and Freeman (1988) interviewed a group of 36 teachers, principals, and supervisors responsible for the implementation of kindergarten programs. They attempted to

assess five areas: 1) The subjects' understanding of how children learned; 2) How the kindergarten classrooms were organized, the tasks were structured, and instructional experiences were delivered; 3) What the subjects believed the function of the kindergarten experience is; 4) The goals and objectives of the programs; and 5) The assumptions concerning the development of literacy.

The findings of this research indicated that kindergarten programs are increasingly academic and skill oriented; most of the subjects interviewed regarded kindergarten as a preparation for first grade work (Hatch & Freeman, 1988). The curriculum was based upon predetermined objectives which were to be mastered at a prescribed level. These "Pupil Performance Objectives" were presented within a set curriculum. An analysis of the classroom organization, task structure, and instructional methods indicated the learning environment was highly teacher directed with few opportunities for child-initiated activities. Direct instruction was usually delivered to both large and small groups. Reading instruction was mostly skill oriented with few teachers using whole language methods or the language experience approach. All programs used a skill-based approach to evaluating reading progress, such as commercially prepared activities and worksheets and report cards based upon the mastery of the prescribed curricula. Hatch and Freeman (1988) also found that the individuals responsible for implementing kindergarten programs experienced a

high degree of conflict between how they believed children learned and what program design would best serve their needs and the type of programs they implemented within their schools. These results indicated these individuals experienced philosophy-reality conflicts.

In another study Freeman and Hatch (1989) analyzed the content of public school kindergarten report cards in relation to developmental theory. They found kindergartners were expected to master specific skills, especially in the areas of work habits, reading readiness, and math readiness. The report cards indicated there was a push toward academic kindergarten programs favoring the behaviorist perspective, in contrast to a maturationist or interactionist philosophy. The predominant marking systems utilized present negative evaluations of children based upon an assumed standard.

> The report cards seem to reflect the frame of reference that a mark describes the child's performance relative to an absolute external standard or a group norm rather than relative to the child's own previous performance or potential for growth and improvement. (Freeman & Hatch, 1989, p. 599).

Charlesworth (1985) noted that the current emphasis of early childhood programs related to minimum competencies, basic education, and pressure toward early maturity is a direct result of the pressure placed upon teachers and caregivers to "make them ready" for the next level in the education process. An educator's basic philosophy concerning readiness is dependent on the degree he/she

believes children have the ability to regulate and control some of their learning (Charlesworth, 1985). The developmental approach to early childhood education regards each child's "biological clock." Consequently, such a program is child-centered and allows each child to learn through discovery and exploration at his or her own pace and in their own appropriate manner.

Kenneth E. Smith (1990) recently compared developmentally appropriate practices with those typified by Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory Into Practice approach. Hunter's approach has been adopted by numerous states and public school system as the preferred instructional method. Smith (1990) views this model as completely incompatible with the child-centered approach. The Hunter methods are inherently teacher-centered as opposed to child-centered; as a result children experience the world through their teacher's organization rather than through their own interactions and constructions. Within the Hunter design, planning and instruction are behavioristic in nature, focusing on sequential units and skills which are prescribed for the entire group of children. Conversely, the child-oriented program focuses on each child's developmental level and interests; planned and spontaneous activities are engaged in both by individuals and small groups of children. Decisions within the Hunter classroom concerning activities, time, and materials are usually under the teacher's control. The developmental classroom revolves around child-initiated

activities regarding individual choices as a significant facet of the learning process. Finally, Smith (1990) regards the Hunter model as totally incongruent with past and recent research in regard to cognitive development and learning. The Hunter environment views teaching and learning as a behavioristic, mechanical process that is primarily the result of direct instruction. In accordance with Kantrowitz and Wingert's (1989) recent article "How Kids Learn," the developmentally appropriate curriculum encourages physical activity, exploration, problem-solving, direct experiences with materials, self-regulation, social interaction, and continuous assessment concerning each child's level of development in order to move them beyond their present level.

As a result of this wide acceptance of academic programs within early childhood, several solutions have been proposed in an effort to reduce the risk of kindergarten "failure." Such policies as raising the entrance age, testing for a prescribed level of developmental readiness prior to entry, and kindergarten retention have been widely adopted within the public school sector in an effort to solve the problem of inappropriate academic demands by removing younger or unready children (Charlesworth, 1989; Peck, et al., 1988; Shepard & Smith, 1988). Shepard and Smith (1988) investigated these procedures and found the research did not support the proposed advantages of such policies. Rather, the adoption and implementation of these

practices advanced the continued escalation of an academic curriculum because teachers adjusted their classroom procedures and content to an older, more able population of kindergarteners.

Early intervention programs for young children of low income, disadvantaged families were initially based on the premise that appropriate services from outside the family could compensate for the disadvantages within, which were believed to be responsible for the generally poor performance of these children in school (The Consortium on Developmental Continuity, 1977; Lazar, 1981). With the funding of Head Start, various program models were formulated which reflected numerous theories and philosophies of child development and learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Greenberg, 1990). The developmentally appropriate philosophy has come to be associated with such programs as Columbia Teachers College, Bank Street College of Education, The Merrill-Palmer Institute, the Perry Preschool High/Scope Program, and the Tuscon Early Education Model. Programs such as Bereiter and Englemann's Academic Preschool, DISTAR, Susan Gray's DARCEE Program, and the Portage Project are representative of the academic philosophy which advocates "moving down" the behaviorist-based, extrinsically motivated, skills-driven curriculum (Greenberg, 1990; Roopnarine & Johnson, 1987). Early childhood programs that focus on remediating skill deficits, which are believed to be created within the home environment, focus on the products of

cognitive functioning and extrinsically motivated learning as opposed to the underlying processes of cognitive development, such as inference and investigation, problem-solving, and interaction within the environment, which are promoted through intrinsically motivated means (Levitt, 1981).

Since 1966, the major form of early intervention within the United States has been through Head Start, but as previously stated a variety of programs were formulated and implemented. Recently, the Head Start research was analyzed through meta-analysis to study the overall impact Head Start had on children's cognitive and socioemotional development and health status, as well as its impact on families and communities. Schweinhart and Weikart (1986) reviewed the Synthesis Project and reached these conclusions concerning the overall outcomes of Head Start. Former participants of Head Start were less likely to be retained or be assigned to special education classes. Through this project families were provided health, social, and educational services within the community as they expanded their support network. Children enrolled in Head Start evidenced significant immediate gains in cognitive and socioemotional test scores, but these tended to fade as the children progressed through the primary grades.

Further, investigation of early intervention research indicates the effects of early intervention may be much longer and extend into adulthood. Schweinhart and Weikart

(1986) concluded through their investigation of early intervention research that preschool programs evidence their effect over time. The Berruetta-Clement, Schweinhart, Bartnett, Epstein, and Weikart (1984) model links short-, mid-, and long-term preschool effects. They found low-income children that participated in preschool child development programs were better prepared for school, both academically and socially. Because these children had a better start in school, they were less likely to be retained or placed in special education programs. Finally, greater school success consequently led to greater life success in adolescence and adulthood. This was evidenced by lower rates of teenage pregnancy and delinquency, less dependence on welfare, and higher rates of high school completion and employment (Berruetta-Clement et al, 1984).

The Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983) was formed to implement and study the long-term effects of various early childhood education programs for low-income children. Royce, Darlington, and Murray (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of 14 early intervention programs which included several curriculum comparison projects. They stated:

> We asked whether any of the curricula represented in these studies were more or less effective than other. This question, which has theoretical, practical, and commercial significance, was of considerable interest to many practitioners, because virtually every commonly used curricular model is represented in the data. We found no significant difference in later school outcomes related to curricula. All curricula were successful in reducing school failure...It may be

> that finer-grained outcome measures or measures of social learning would find differential effects, but the present indicators did not. It appears that a variety of curricula are equally effective in preparing children for school and that any of the tested curricula is better than no preschool program at all. (Royce, Darlington, & Murray, 1983, p. 442)

These unexpected findings indicated that diverse curriculum models may be equally effective in improving children's education. This success does not appear to derive from the curriculum models themselves, but rather from the fact that children participated in a high-quality, well implemented and administered preschool program. This viewpoint was widely accepted among early childhood professionals of differing philosophical viewpoints until recently when further longitudinal research was conducted.

Schweinhart, Weikart, and Larner (1986) examined the effects of three well-implemented preschool curriculum models on young people through age 15. The models included the High/Scope Cognitively Oriented Curriculum model and the traditional nursery school, which adhere to the developmental philosophy, and the Distar model, which is academically oriented. These approaches differ primarily in terms of the degree of initiative expected of the child and teacher in relation to the child's primary role as the initiate or respondent and the teachers' main role as the initiate or respondent within the classroom learning environment (Schweinhart, et al., 1986; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988).

The High/Scope Cognitive Oriented Preschool Curriculum was characterized by an open framework, within which both the child and teacher planned and initiated activities and actively worked toward goals formulated by both. The primary purpose of these activities was to relate experiences and learning through social and intellectual development. The traditional nursery school exemplified a child-centered approach in which the child initiated activities and the teacher responded. Classroom experiences and activities were the teacher's responses to the expressed needs and interest of the children. Active engagement in learning through free play was the primary method utilized to structure the learning environment. Within the Distar model, the programmed-learning approach, in which the teacher initiates activities and the child responds to them, was the primary method of instruction. The curriculum was clearly prescribed through sequential objectives of pre-academic skills (Schweinhart, et al., 1986; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988).

The initial assessment of these programs in the areas of IQ and school achievement evidenced these preschool groups differed little (Schweinhart, et al., 1986). These finding were in accordance with those presented by the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983) and the Head Start Synthesis Project (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1986). This recent research involving the High/Scope Cognitive Curriculum, traditional nursery school, and Distar suggests there

may be differential outcomes in relation to the contrasting philosophies of early childhood education (Schweinhart, et al, 1986; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988). They found preschool children participating in the Distar model engaged in twice as many delinquent acts as did the other two curriculum groups, especially those involving property violence, when compared at age 15. The Distar group also reported poorer relations within the family, less participation in sports, fewer school job appointments, weaker social support networks, and lower expectations for higher educational attainment. These findings imply there may be significant social implications in relation to early childhood program philosophies.

Schweinhart, et al. (1986) readily recognize the limitations of the scope of this study because of the small number of subjects and the investigation of only preschool programs. This research also exhibited a high degree of control and a sound research design. As a result of this research, Weikart and Schweinhart (1986) acknowledged that further investigation of programs for young children in kindergarten and the primary grades is warranted. The study did not look at five- and six- year-olds who are typically in the same cognitive developmental stages as preschool youngsters. Because kindergarten programs are moving from the traditional, developmental philosophy to more structured, academic behavioral practices, questions concerning

the implications of this study should be investigated (Weikart & Schweinhart, 1986).

School/Home Discontinuity for Low Income Children

Oftentimes, the preschool or kindergarten environment is the first formal educational experience many children encounter within the formal institutions of our society. School is the institution that provides the transition from the home into society. Bronfenbrenner (1979a) defines an ecological transition as a change in a person's position in the ecological environment as a result of change of role, setting, or both. The classroom situation changes the role of the child from a son or daughter into a student and the setting into the school environment, a formal institution of our society. Bronfenbrenner (1979b) sets forth the conditions for optimum development as ecological transitions occur.

> The developmental potential of a child-rearing setting is increased as a function of the number of supportive links between that setting and other contexts involving the child or persons responsible for his or her care. Such interconnections may take the form of shared activities, two-way communication, and information provided in each setting about the others. (p. 848)

Therefore, development is enhanced within a situation where continuity between settings exists throughout various ecological transitions.

Powell (1989) recognized the discontinuities which exist between the home environment of low-income families and that of most middle-class children. The family-based

socialization of children from cultural and linguistic minority families may differ significantly from the experiences schools assume children have had. Rutter (1985) has identified seven parent behaviors that predict cognitive development: 1) Avoids interference in learning; 2) Provides a variety of activities and experiences; 3) Provides ample play and conversation between the parent and child; 4) Responds with both verbal and nonverbal signals; 5) Provides nurturance; 6) Teaches specific skills and 7) Provides opportunities for the child to explore and to try out new skills and activities in meaningful settings. Parent-child interactions are characterized by reciprocity, variety and meaningfulness of content, and a child role that exemplifies active learning (Rutter, 1985). Hess and Holloway (1984) identified three other family qualities which predict successful development and learning for children. These include high expectations for achievement, authoritative control strategies, and knowledge and use of child development concepts.

Children which come from families that emphasize the achievement ethic confront the classroom environment differently from those whose family experiences have been focused on basic survival (Powell, 1989). Heath's (1983) ethonographic study of families, children, and schools of the Piedmont areas of the Carolinas noted marked differences in parent-child interactive styles, available toys and play practices within the home, vocabulary, and syntactic

structure of minority and low-income families and their middle class counterparts. An analysis of the school environment evidenced gross discontinuities between the school and home environment of the minority and low-income children. Heath (1983) found the child-rearing and oral and literate traditions of each community culture was directly related to academic success or failure of the children, with middle-class practices being more congruent with school experiences, thereby leading to greater school achievement.

Cox (1987) analyzed the effects of the early home environment in relation to later school achievement and found that even moderately disadvantageous home conditions can significantly impair children's school progress. This was not only evident in terms of academic achievement, but also in terms of social and emotional adjustment, attitude toward school, and subsequent career prospects. Initial differences between the disadvantaged children and the control group were not highly significant at an early age, but as these children progressed through school the disadvantaged children appeared to suffer from a 'cumulative deficit' in their academic learning. This deficit appeared to be more pronounced as the children remained in a learning environment that lacked sufficient intellectual stimulus and guidance.

Laosa (1982) found that the level of parental schooling was a major influence on the child's adaptation to experiences within the standard classroom. Children of more

highly educated parents appear to learn to master within the home the form and dynamics of teaching and learning processes that are utilized within the classroom. These children have a marked advantage over children whose parents are less educated because they have mastered classroomlike interaction processes before entering formal education programs. The learning processes engaged in by children of lesser schooled parents apparently have little adaptive value within the sector of the formal classroom (Laosa, 1982).

Silvern (1988) and Powell (1989) both reported that discontinuity between the home and school environments offers children both developmental opportunities and risks. Powell (1989) views this as dependent upon four factors: 1) The magnitude of the discrepancy; 2) The duration of the discrepancy; 3) The timing of the events in terms of sensitive periods of development within normative transitions; and 4) The preparation for and understanding of changes and discrepancies, which includes communication concerning the transition.

Silvern (1988) acknowledged that the characteristics found within an idealized home environment, i.e., reciprocal language interactions between mother and child, adult-directed experiences, overt affection, free expression of positive and negative feelings, sensitive parents, family unity, and high verbal and emotional exchange, were correlates of desirable developmental outcomes. He proposes these characteristics should be implemented within the

classroom environment; even if they are discontinuous with home practices, they will enhance the children's optimum growth and learning in all areas of development. Silvern (1988) argued that instead of looking to families to reduce discontinuities between the home and school environments, the school program itself should be designed to reduce discontinuities. The classroom should reflect more homelike usage of space, time, and language rather than expect children to adhere to set conditions within an institution. Elkind (1986) describes appropriate early childhood education as an extension of the home, not merely conforming to the standards of formal school instruction.

There is evidence to suggest that discontinuities between family and school programs do exist and are probably of greatest magnitude for children of low-income and ethnic minority families. These exist in the areas of parent and teacher values, expectations for child behavior, and styles of adult-child interaction. Appropriate levels and types of discontinuity can enhance a child's developmental potential, but major between system discontinuities can lead to maladaptive behavior and poor academic performance. Supportive links between institutions of socialization contribute to a child's adjustment within the school setting and to overall child competence, both social and academic. The research supports the assumption that marked disparity between the home and school can constitute an educational risk for

children whose parents have limited formal education and/or come from an ethnic minority background (Powell, 1989).

Adult-Child Interactions in Relation to the Development of Social Competence

Another variable to be investigated is that of the development of social competence within the classroom environment. Hess and Holloway (1984) have determined that the use of authoritative child-rearing techniques was related to positive developmental outcomes. The authoritative parent attempts to direct the child's activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner (Baumrind, 1981). Verbal give-and-take, sharing of reasoning in relation to actions and policies is encouraged. This parent values autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity; he/she exerts firm control at points of parent-child divergence, but does not set inflexible policies. Divergent as well as convergent thinking is encouraged within the home of the authoritative parent as means of solving children's problems as they arise (Roberts & Strayer, 1987). These adult-child interactive styles might also be employed within the classroom environment.

Baumrind (1981) found the authoritative style of child-rearing was positively related to the development of social and instrumental competence of preschool children as displayed in the classroom environment. Instrumental competence is behavior which is socially responsible and independent. These behaviors include those that are

achievement-oriented rather than not achievement-oriented, friendly rather than hostile, cooperative rather than resistant, dominant rather than submissive, and purposive rather than aimless (Baumrind, 1981). Children who displayed the most self-control, were self-reliant, explorative, and content had parents who were also controlling and demanding. Along with these elements of child-rearing, their parents also were warm, rational, and receptive to the child's communication (Baumrind, 1981). This combination of flexible control and positive encouragement of the child's autonomous and independent striving is associated with authoritative parental behavior.

Roberts and Strayer (1987) investigated parents' responses to emotional distress in young children and assessed the relationship of these responses to children's competence outside the home. Upon analysis of emotional distress in children and parental responses, it was found parents were firm enforcers and in some context were warm and responsive, but also exerted pressure toward the control of emotional expression. Most parents did not focus on the upset, but approached the situation from a pragmatic, problem-solving viewpoint while involving the child in formulating a solution. The major findings of Roberts' and Strayer's (1987) was the demonstration of the association between parents' response to children's emotional distress and children's competence which were statistically independent of warmth. In relation to children's competence,

moderate levels of responsiveness to upset were associated with higher levels of competence. Also, parental problem-solving responses were associated with higher levels of competence among children. These parental characteristics might be considered authoritative in nature. Such child-rearing practices enhanced the development of the traits of pragmatic problem-solving and enriched the social competence skills of their children, which were later transferred and used as a means of functioning within the school setting (Roberts & Strayer, 1987).

The techniques employed by the authoritative parent are highly synonymous to those utilized within a developmental early childhood classroom for the purposes of guiding learning and managing the classroom. Greenberg (1987) believes the early childhood classroom environment should be managed in such a way as to allow children to make choices and direct their own activities within consistent limits and boundaries. When activities are designed in such a manner as to give children choices to direct their own learning and explore, there is a greater sense of commitment, higher task orientation and completion of projects, and the learning outcomes are meaningful for each student. Within the developmentally appropriate classroom structure, child initiative, autonomous behavior, and independence are fostered which further enhance the development of social competence (Bredekamp, 1987; Greenberg, 1987; Peck, et al., 1988).

Recently, Pellegrini and Glickman (1990) examined the peer interactions of 35 children of lower and middle socioeconomic status in various play situations. This behavioral information, along with achievement test scores, teacher rating scales, and peer status data was used to predict first grade achievement. The behavioral data indicated that passive children who were adult directed and noninteractive were less competent than peer-oriented children who participated in social games with rules. Pellegrini and Glickman (1990) attributed this outcome to the nature of games which allowed children to interact socially and develop vital linguistic and social-cognitive skills that are the basis for more advanced levels of learning. Even though this data is limited, it does have implications for kindergarten practices which allow children to interact and engage in various types of child-directed games and learning based upon the developmentally appropriate philosophy.

The Writing To Read Program and Related Research

Another variable examined in relation to the kindergarten program, was the implementation of IBM's Writing to Read program. This program was utilized in these schools in conjunction with the regular Heath Reading program. Writing to Read was designed to teach kindergarten and first grade children to write anything they can say, and then read what they have written. It was formulated upon the belief that a child's own words should be the basis for acquiring reading

skills; this educational approach was based upon the concept of "language experience" (International Business Machines Corporation [IBM], 1987). Writing to Read was designed as a multi-activity, multi-sensory approach to learning by which children are taught to "write it the way it sounds" in order to avoid the confusion of the English spelling system (IBM, 1987, p.10). The objective of Writing to Read was to teach children the 42 phonemes of English speech so they can write anything they can say and then read anything they have written. Through this process, children come to understand the logic behind an alphabetic system, which becomes the springboard for future language growth. Then the task of reading what others have written in books and printed materials is simplified.

Writing to Read is an analytical, phonetic approach to reading instruction, but is presented within a meaningful context and utilizes each child's level of vocabulary development as the point of instruction. Also, children engage in a variety of learning activities using multi-sensory materials; these activities are self-initiated, self-directed, and guided by the classroom teacher and/or lab instructor. The Writing to Read center is a non-threatening environment that allows each child to progress at his/her own rate and choose the experiences that are meaningful to him/her (IBM, 1987).

The Writing to Read program is designed to develop specific academic skills, but it is also formulated to

provide developmentally appropriate activities to accomplish these activities. The Writing to Read laboratory is comprised of six areas or stations: 1) The computer input station, 2) The work journal station, 3) The write/type station, 4) The make words station, 5) The listening library station, and 6) The book browsing area. The computer input station presents the basic phonemes of the English language within the context of 30 "cycle words" through multi-sensory experiences, interactive software, and peer tutoring. The work journal station is comprised of a taped lesson which is based on the cycle word presented at the previous station to provide reinforcement; independent extension activities are also presented. Children practice applying the phonemic concepts through creative writing at the write/type station; they may write using conventional materials or use the word processor. Students' writing is accepted as is; as they advance in their writing abilities the teacher is to aid in the development of editing skills. The make words station is utilized to apply phonemic concepts through multi-sensory experiences, i.e., manipulatives, puzzles, and games. These activities are self-initiated and self-directed or engaged in cooperatively. The listening library station is comprised of high quality literature read at a slow pace to facilitate word recognition and the transition to reading trade books. The book browsing station is an area for pleasure reading and independent enjoyment of books (IBM, 1987).

The class room teacher has a tremendous impact on how the Writing to Read program is incorporated into the total kindergarten curriculum. A teacher that adheres to developmentally appropriate practices will utilize this program as a means to foster the positive traits of responsibility, independence, achievement orientation, problem-solving and critical thinking, self-esteem, self-discipline, autonomous behavior, and creativity. These behaviors are a vital part of the Writing to Read philosophy as well as those associated with a child-centered kindergarten program (IBM, 1987). The development of these traits will be the focus of the total program and learning experiences will be formulated to foster the development of the total child within both settings--the classroom and the Writing to Read Center. The mastery of academic skills will be an integral part of the kindergarten program, but will be grounded within a meaningful context and complement the child's total development.

Writing to Read, as implemented by a teacher that focuses primarily for the mastery of academic skills, serves only as an instructional means of accomplishing prescribed skills objectives. The academic kindergarten teacher may not utilize the Writing to Read program as a means of cultivating vital social and personal traits which subsequently enhance the process of learning. Oftentimes, the Writing to Read program is not extended and incorporated into the regular classroom activities, such as through

learning centers and publishing projects, etc. It is merely another sector of the already fragmented curriculum that exists within the academic kindergarten program.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) conducted an independent evaluation of the Writing to Read system. ETS gathered and analyzed pre-and post-objective reading test scores; they also collected and analyzed numerous writing samples to determine the degree of writing skills gained by its measurement. The research sample was representative of high-, middle-, and low-socioeconomic status populations, and also included multi-racial, ethnic, and language groups. Major findings included:

> When compared to not-Writing to Read students' performances in writing and standardized reading tests, the Writing to Read students had a distinct advantage.
>
> Writing to Read students performed as well as other students on spelling tests.
>
> Teachers responded positively to Writing to Read. Teachers reported that their Writing to Read students were writing and reading better than students in previous classes.
>
> Finally, parents also responded positively to Writing to Read. Ninety-three percent reported that they hoped their school would continue to use the Writing to Read program. (IBM, 1987, pp.11-12)

Writing is a major component of the Writing to Read program; children's progress within the area of writing is used as a means to evaluate their understanding of the phonemes of the English language. Students' writing also serves as a means of interpreting how children transfer their phonemic skills into practice through their productions at the write/type station. Analysis of student

writing also yields vital information concerning their present level of vocabulary development, understanding and usage of sentence and story structure, and creative use of language.

Evaluation of students' writing was followed throughout the program as the teacher examined writing samples and followed their progress through six stages of writing as outlined by the Writing to Read system (IBM, 1987). Initially, children engaged in pre-writing behaviors which are characterized by squiggly lines or "pretend writing" and mock letter. Stage 1: Cycle Word Writing consists of the production of whole word units, whereby children demonstrate beginning phonemic understanding. These words are usually the words associated with the various cycles of the Writing to Read program. Stage 2: New Word Writing demonstrates students' further understanding of phonemic principles through the application of their skills in the production of new words using the phonemes. Stage 3: Phrase/Sentence Writing is marked by the production of unrelated phrases, pictures with captions, sentence starters, and simple sentences. Stage 4: Simple Story Writing is characterized by the writing of simple related sentences which may or may not be accompanied by pictures. Children also engage in assisted self-editing practices. Stage 5: Intermediate Story Writing is evidenced as students progress to compound or complex sentences which are similar to their own speech. They also develop more story details and display more

assisted self-editing practices. Stage 5: Intermediate Story Writing is evidenced as students progress to compound or complex sentences which are similar to their own speech. They also develop more story details and display more assisted self-editing behaviors. Finally, Stage 6: Advanced Story Writing is accomplished as children produce stories that are characterized by complex content and length. They also use self-editing procedures with minimal assistance (IBM, 1987).

Research and Theory of the Evolution of Writing

To understand the structure of these stages within the Writing to Read program, it is necessary to compare them with current research and theory as it relates to the evolution of writing. Carol Chomsky (1971) proposes children enter the classroom having constructed a complex system of language rules which enable them to understand and produce sentences in their own language. Therefore, their own language should be the basis for literacy development through self-initiated and self-directed writing and reading activities. Children should be allowed to produce familiar words they choose as they become more familiar with alphabetic concepts (sounds and/or names). This might be accomplished through a variety of means such as manipulative materials or conventional writing tools (Chomsky, 1971). These words would then be read by the child; by writing first, literacy emerges from the child's own consciousness, and a sense of ownership and accomplishment is experienced.

This type of literacy development based upon the child's own language and printed productions allows him/her to move from his/her own words to more arbitrary productions as more advanced skills emerge (Chomsky, 1971).

Ferreiro & Teberosky (1982) delineated a sequence of levels that children move through as they construct the writing process. The evolution of writing in individual children parallels their general cognitive development, such that there is a regular progression in development with or without schooling as long as the environment provides a variety of printed material for the child to reflect on. Early writing attempts, as evidenced by middle class children, begin at the age of 2 1/2 to 3 years of age. These initial attempts are either continuous wavy lines with the continuity of cursive or a series of small circles or vertical lines with the discontinuity of print (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982).

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) have outlined the progression of writing prior to formal schooling. During Level 1 children reproduce the features of the basic writing form. There is often a correspondence between writing and object represented. There may be a correspondence between quantifiable aspects of the written string or use of longer strings, or larger characters, if the object named is bigger, longer, or older, or if a greater number is represented. At this level, writing does not function to convey information, as children can read their own writing, but not

that of others. Children have difficulty moving back and forth between writing and drawing. Drawing can support writing, ensuring its meaning, and it often precedes writing. Simplification of letters and modification of left-right orientation are common. Reading of the letter strings is global, with each letter standing for the whole.

During Level 2, children believe that to read different things there must be objective differences in written texts (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). Graphic formation of written characters approach more conventional forms. Children cling to the fixed minimum number and variety of characters, but achieve differences in word meaning by making variations in linear order. This may be accomplished by using classification and serial ordering to produce different words. Fixed, stable strings (usually the child's name) begin to appear. Cultural influences such as social class and personal influences such as older siblings contribute to the acquisition of fixed strings. The written parts of children's productions do not correspond to the spoken parts at this level. The preceding stages of the evolution of writing might be compared with pre-writing behaviors within the framework of the Writing to Read program.

During Level 3, children attempt to assign a sound value to each of the letters of a piece of writing. They develop the syllabic hypothesis in which they assign a syllable value to each letter. At this point, they relinquish the idea of global correspondence and progress to a

correspondence between parts. The idea that writing represents sound segments of speech is adopted; letters may or may not appear conventional and they may or may not have stable sound value. The application of the syllabic hypothesis leads to the following conclusions: 1) Assigning a syllabic value to consonants provides a stable way of identifying consonants and therefore, recognition of individual letters; 2) It is an original construction of children and cannot be attributed to adult transmission; 3) When children move from writing words to writing sentences they may continue to use the syllabic hypothesis.

As children progress from the syllabic hypothesis to the alphabetic hypothesis, characteristics of Level 4 emerge. This development arises from a conflict between the syllabic hypothesis and the requirement for a minimum number of characters. Progress throughout this level is facilitated when the environment provides an exposure to letters, a series of stable, familiar strings, and a series of sound equivalents for letters. From this point, children develop alphabetic writing--Level 5. They understand each written character has a sound value smaller than a syllable and can analyze the phonemes they write (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). Levels 3 through 5 are comparable to Cycle Word and New Word Writing of Writing to Read.

From this point, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) describe the development of writing as progressing through more complex levels of orthography. As children construct more

advanced levels of understanding for the written system of language and develop their own language structure to higher levels in the areas of vocabulary, content, and comprehension, their writing will become more complex. This is synonymous with higher levels of cognitive development.

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) have also formulated some conclusions concerning further development throughout the writing process once a child enters school. The environment a child is exposed to has a significant impact on writing development, because it serves to stimulate the process. When children come from an impoverished background that does not provide much raw material for literacy, the child is less able to formulate hypotheses and draw conclusions concerning print. Conversely, children who enter school from a print oriented environment have initialized the process of the acquisition of literacy. These children are in a position to profit much more greatly from the instruction available within the classroom environment. In relation to formal school instruction, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) found that children who are taught to reproduce limited stimuli and/or a single correct answer have developed minimally because they have not advanced in their reasoning abilities. The instructional system that is prevalent within the formal realm of education appears to have a restraining effect on children's exploration of literacy. Finally, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) concluded that children display an increasing resistance toward

writing at the end of the first year of formal writing instruction. This is usually accompanied by increased academic pressure and direct skills instruction. Therefore, the program design may effect children's advancement through the writing process.

Another assessment of children's development of writing was formulated by Connie Green (1990). The Lamme/Green Scale of Children's Development in Composition is comprised of three precompositional stages and three compositional stages. During the precompositional stages writing does not appear to convey a clear message. Precompositional 1 is similar to prewriting development; during this time children's writing is composed to random letters, mock letters, and mock cursive writing mixed together. During Precompositional 2 writing is characterized by letters or mock letters read as words, incomplete alphabet or lists of numerals, and memorized or copied word. This stage is similar to the period of Cycle Word Writing. Children in Precompositional 3 generally list newly learned words, form mock words with some phonetic relationships, and utilize word boundaries, such as, spaces, dots, or lines (Green, 1990). This phase corresponds to the New Word Writing Stage of Writing to Read.

During the Compositional Stages of the Lamme/Green Scale, children clearly convey messages or tell stories with their writing. They exhibit a clearer understanding of writing for meaning and adjust their writing style or

pattern to accommodate various audiences (Green, 1990). During the Compositional 1 stage, children write simple messages, frequently in a repetitive manner. This is similar to the Stage 3--Phrase/Sentence Writing. Compositional 2 writing is characterized by original messages of two or more sentences, short stories, letters, or lists of sentences. Finally, children progress to more complex stories or letters that focus on a primary topic during the Compositional 3 period. At this time, children may self-correct as they read their writing and respond appropriately to the suggestions of others. These final two compositional stages as described by Green (1990) are synonymous with the final stages outlined within the progression of Writing to Read: Simple Story Writing, Intermediate Story Writing, and Advanced Story Writing.

A review of the literature indicates there exists a need to formulate and conduct research that compares the outcomes of public school kindergarten programs implemented according to varying philosophies and methodologies--developmentally appropriate and academic. Oftentimes, the objectives within these contrasting environments are similar, but the means whereby these are achieved and the priority set upon the development of the total child as opposed to skill acquisition are distinct points of differentiation and controversy. The purpose here was to examine the curricula and its implementation within public school kindergarten programs for rural, disadvantaged children conducted by

teachers with contrasting philosophical viewpoints, and to measure the outcomes in relation to the development of the total child.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was specifically designed to address the problem of determining if significant differences existed between child outcomes in relation to the philosophy and methods used within public school kindergarten. A pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental controlled group research design was employed. Two groups of rural, disadvantaged children enrolled in public school kindergarten were examined in relation to the philosophies, methodologies, and curricula of the developmentally appropriate or academic models to determine if specific outcomes differed between them. The areas examined were motor development, knowledge of concepts, language, social competence, and writing development.

Statement of Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis: The child variable of motor development, knowledge of concepts, and language as measured by the DIAL-R was not significantly different for children who participate in a developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those who participate in an academic kindergarten program.

Alternative Hypothesis: The child variables of motor development, knowledge of concepts, and language as measured

by the DIAL-R was significantly different for children who participated in a developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those who participate in an academic kindergarten program.

Null Hypothesis: The development of writing skills were not significantly different for children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program as determined within the WRITING TO READ system.

Alternative Hypothesis: The development of writing skills was significantly different for children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program as determined within the WRITING TO READ system.

Null Hypothesis: The factors evidenced in the analysis of social competence were not significantly different for children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program.

Alternative Hypothesis: The factors evidenced in the analysis of social competence were significantly different for those children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program.

Subjects and Settings

One hundred one kindergarten children enrolled in three North Alabama public schools were chosen as subjects. There

were 57 females and 54 male subjects. The students ranged in age from 5 years and 0 months to 6 years and 4 months at the initiation of the study and 5 years and 8 months to 7 years and 0 months at the time of completion. The children were randomly assigned to six kindergarten classrooms--three developmentally oriented and three academically oriented. The preferred philosophy and teaching methodologies utilized by the teachers were determined by conducting Hatch and Freeman's (1988) teacher interview which lasted about one hour. Interviewing and analysis of interview data were guided by Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS). The DRS is an inductive model designed to reveal the components of a social phenomenon, the relationships among the components, and their relationships to the wider social contexts involved. The component of the DRS that was utilized for the interview data was the domain analysis procedure. Analysis of the interview responses and past classroom observation conducted informally by the researcher evidenced three teachers conducted their kindergarten classroom according to the developmental philosophy and the other three adhered more to the academic philosophy. A verification of this assessment was conducted through the triangulation method. The Chapter I resource teacher, who holds a Master's Degree in Elementary and early childhood education, reviewed the interview data and observed each teacher and verified the classification of the teachers according to their preferred philosophy and teaching

methodology. Both types of philosophies were prevalent within two of the three schools chosen.

The three schools all lie within an agricultural valley of a northern Alabama county. Two of these schools were eligible and participated in the Chapter I Schoolwide Project program. One school had an enrollment of 76% that was classified as low-socioeconomic status, while 84% of the total enrollment of the other Chapter I school was classified as such (Lawrence County Chapter I Schoolwide project implementation plan, 1989). At the third participating school, 72% of the total school enrollment was considered of lower economic standing, which is highly comparable to the low-income enrollment in the other schools.

Methodology

Instrumentation

Subjects within each group were administered three separate measures to determine various developmental outcomes in relation to the kindergarten programs. These instruments included The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning--Revised (DIAL-R) (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1983), Diana Baumrind's (1968) Preschool Behavior Q-Sort, and the writing stage progression defined within the IBM Writing to Read Program.

The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning--Revised (DIAL-R) (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1983) was used to assess developmental skills in the areas

of motor development, knowledge of concepts, and language. The DIAL-R also renders an overall score for development with established cut-off points for each area to indicate a 'potential problem.' The standardization of this instrument was based on a national sample of 2,447 children and analyzed several major variables, such as chronological age, sex, ethnicity, geographic region, and community size. The validity rating of the DIAL-R was comprised of four types of validity tests: Construct validity, content validity criterion-related validity, and concurrent and predictive validity. Construct validity of this measure was reported to be .98. A panel of early childhood experts reviewed the DIAL-R test design and construction, manual instructions, and scoring criteria in order to determine the content validity of this instrument. Included on this panel were D. Bannister, B. Caldwell, D. Clapper, L. Feldt, L. Halverson, D. Johnson, T. Jordan, and B. White. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for the DIAL-R was .96. Test-retest reliability ratings for the DIAL-R were highly acceptable--.75 for motor skills, .89 for concept knowledge, .77 for language, and .81 for the total assessment. Based on the standardization sample and procedures and the strong validity and reliabilty ratings of the DIAL-R, this instrument was determined to be acceptable and applicable for the purposes and subject population of this research.

Baumrind's (1968) Preschool Behavior Q-Sort was used to assess the social competence of the children. The

Preschool Behavior Q-Sort is a 72 item set distributed across nine categories: 9--Extremely characteristic or salient, 8--Quite characteristic or salient, 7--Fairly characteristic or salient, 6--Somewhat characteristic or salient, 5--Relatively neutral or unimportant, 4--Somewhat uncharacteristic or negatively salient, 3--Fairly uncharacteristic or negatively salient, 2--Quite uncharacteristic or negatively salient, 1--Extremely uncharacteristic or negatively salient.

The items in the Q-sort were devised to define eight constructs with nine items for each construct. These include: High vs. low stress tolerance, Self-confidant vs. fearful, Achievement-oriented vs. nonachievement-oriented, Approach-oriented vs. withdrawn, Autonomous vs. suggestible, Rebellious vs. dependable with adults, Destructive vs. constructive, and Alienated vs. trusting. Each item within the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968) is defined by describing what both a child rated high and a child rated low would look like within a classroom setting. Baumrind (1971) reported a moderate reliability rating of .69 for this instrument. Roberts and Strayer (1987) verified this reliability rating in their recent use of the Preschool Behavior Q-sort reporting a reliability of .72.

The development of writing skills was assessed by tracking each child's progress through the writing phases defined in IBM's Writing to Read Program. These seven levels include pre-writing behaviors, Stage 1--Cycle Word

Writing; Stage 2--New Word Writing; Stage 3--Phrase/Sentence Writing; Stage 4--Simple Story Writing; Stage 5--Intermediate Story Writing; and Stage 6--Advanced Story Writing (IBM, 1987). These were previously described. The classroom teacher and Writing to Read instructor collected writing samples and recorded each child's progress throughout the year.

Data Collection Procedures

The Hatch and Freeman (1988) interview was conducted by the researcher in the classroom setting at the onset of the 1990-91 schoolyear. The information from these interviews was used to determine the preferred philosophy and teaching style of each teacher. The children were already randomly assigned to the classes through standard class selection processes used within the school system. No ability grouping was utilized. Answers were written down with accompanying interview questions. One question concerning the implementation of the Writing to Read program was added to the original interview questions. Following the domain analysis of the interview data, each classroom was classified as either academically or developmentally oriented. Therefore, two separate groups emerged with three classes in each.

A pre- and post-administration of the DIAL-R was conducted in September and April, respectively, to assess and evaluate developmental gains. Both area (motor, concept, and language) and total scores were utilized. Thereby, it could be determined if there were significant

gains between the two groups in relation to the implementation of the kindergarten programs for specific areas and in terms of overall developmental progress. During the first two weeks of September each subject was administered the DIAL-R (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1983) to determine his or her present level of development in three areas--motor, concepts, and language; a total developmental score was also calculated. Two members of the Chapter I staff were trained to administer this test; the clerical assistant administered the motor skills section, the resource teacher administered the concepts area, and the researcher was responsible for the language assessment. Each area to be tested was set up at a station and each child rotated from one area to the next until the assessment was complete. This procedure was repeated again in late April using the same data collection process and staff.

Each kindergarten used the D.C. Heath (Alverman, et al., 1989) reading program and the IBM Writing to Read program as its core curricula for instruction in the areas of reading and language arts. The basic Heath program was the focus of instruction during the first semester with some orientation for the Writing to Read laboratory being implemented also. The D.C. Heath (Alverman et al., 1989) kindergarten program is presented through integrated units of study which are built upon eight pieces of literature. Ideally, this reading program was written to reflect the philosophy of literacy development through whole language

activities while teaching specific academia, but the presentation of this program was determined by the philosophy of each kindergarten teacher.

Full implementation of the Writing to Read program was begun during the second semester at each school while continuing with the Heath program. Students attended the Writing to Read laboratory each day and progressed through the prescribed cycles within the program. The classroom teacher and Writing to Read instructor tracked writing and cycle progression weekly. They collected writing samples and recorded the current stage of writing development and cycle word progression. A final analysis of writing development was performed in April to determine the current stage of writing and accompanying samples were collected by the classroom teacher.

During the spring, each classroom teacher performed the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort for each student after having observed him/her within the classroom environment throughout the school year. Q-sort items were distributed and defined. The Manual for the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968) was used as a reference.

The Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968) was performed on each child by the regular classroom teacher during the first two weeks of May. A copy of the manual, which included instructions for completing the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort, Q-Sort items, and a definition and description of each item as it would appear with a high and low rating, was distributed to each teacher two weeks before the

Q-Sort cards were made available. Following the opportunity to study the manual and the items, the six participating teachers were brought into a central location, given the Q-Sort cards, and were instructed on how to perform this measurement. These instructions included the following items from the Manual for the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968).

> 1) Look through the 72 cards with the individual to be rated in mind. You are to sort these statements into a row of nine categories placing at one end of the row those cards you consider most characteristic or salient with respect to the subject and at the other end, those cards you believe to most uncharacteristic or negatively salient with reference to the subject. Eight cards are to be placed in each category:
>
> | Category | Label of Category |
> |---|---|
> | 9 | Extremely characteristic or salient |
> | 8 | Quite characteristic or salient |
> | 7 | Fairly characteristic or salient |
> | 6 | Somewhat characteristic or salient |
> | 5 | Relatively neutral or unimportant |
> | 4 | Somewhat uncharacteristic or negatively salient |
> | 3 | Fairly uncharacteristic or negatively salient |
> | 2 | Quite uncharacteristic or negatively salient |
> | 1 | Extremely uncharacteristic or negatively salient |
>
> 2) First, form three stacks of cards. One stack should consist of attribute-descriptions characteristic of the individual; another stack should consist of about the same number of attribute-descriptions uncharacteristic of the individual; remaining cards belong in the middle pile.
> 3) When the three piles have been established, they may be further divided, this time into the 9 categories with 8 items in each. (Baumrind, 1968, p.iii)

Once the items were categorized each set of placements was recorded on a data sheet by ordering the item numbers within each category from low to high. This procedure was

completed during an afternoon training session for as many subjects as possible, then the teachers performed the Q-Sort on the remainder of their students during the following week.

Throughout the second semester, each teacher collected writing samples that were done in the Writing to Read laboratory. These samples were done using either conventional writing tools or the word processor. These were charted by each classroom teacher for every child to reflect the present stage of writing. During the third week of May, a final sample copy of each child's writing and the teacher's Writing to Read tracking chart was collected.

Analysis of Data

Upon the initial data collection of the DIAL-R in September, a t-test was conducted upon the total development means of the two groups, developmentally appropriate and academic, to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups prior to the initiation of the instructional period. A slight difference in the mean of the two groups was evident ($p < .03$). In May, when the final assessment of the DIAL-R was conducted, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed in each area of development (motor, concept, and language) and on the total developmental assessment score. The statistical analysis tested mean differences between the two groups in each area of development and total development. By employing the ANCOVA, the initial between-group differences were

controlled. The pre-test scores were used as covariates. The ANCOVA statistical procedure served to eliminate any bias in treatment comparisons due to an uneven distribution of the fixed variate or pre-test score to the treatment, the ascribed kindergarten program (Anderson & Bancroft, 1952; Cohen, 1987). Therefore, this procedure was performed in order to determine if the gains made throughout the schoolyear were or were not significant based upon the philosophy and methodology of the kindergarten program after controlling for initial between-group differences.

In May, the writing samples and final assessment of the current writing stage within the Writing to Read program were collected. The stages of this assessment were treated as ordinal data using the categories of 0-6 from pre-writing behaviors up through Stage 6--Advanced Story Writing, respectively. Each teacher reported that all students within the study entered kindergarten in the pre-writing stage of development or 0 on the categorical scale. Therefore, only the assessment of final writing progress was utilized for statistical analysis. A one way Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if there were significant differences between the groups in the final analysis of writing development.

A principle components factor analysis was performed on the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968) data for each group using a varimax rotation. The purpose of this procedure was to maximize the purity of saturation of as many variates (Q-sorts) as possible (McKeown & Thomas, 1990).

This procedure identified significant factors for the entire subject body, developmentally appropriate and academic, based upon the behaviors reported by the teachers for each student. The factors for each group that were identified as significant were then defined using the constructs and designated items within the instrument which were determined by Baumrind (1968). The behavior constructs defined by Baumrind (1968) were high vs. low stress tolerance, self-confident vs. fearful, achievement-oriented vs. nonachievement-oriented, approach-oriented vs. withdrawn, autonomous vs. suggestible, rebellious vs. dependable with adults, destructive vs. constructive, and alienated vs. trusting. Significance of factors was determined by employing the eigenvalue criterion. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 were considered significant, as were factors that accounted for 10% or more of the total variance (McKeown & Thomas, 1990). The initial factor analysis demonstrated that the majority of the significant items loaded on the first two factors, therefore another factor analysis was performed and constrained to a two factor loading which was used for further statistical analyses. Mean factor scores for items which loaded significantly were calculated for each group, then a Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon Sum W test was performed on the factor scores for these items (S. Pulos, personal communication, May 24, 1991).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The issue of determining if significant child outcomes existed in relation to the philosophy and methodology implemented within the public school kindergarten was the primary focus of this work. Specifically, this matter was studied in terms of rural, disadvantaged children that were randomly assigned to either an academic or developmental kindergarten program within their community. Developmental areas that were assessed included motor, conceptual, language, and total development. Writing progress and social competence were also evaluated in terms of each curricula treatment. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS/PC+ was used in the analysis of the data. The hypotheses were stated in null form; the .05 level of significance was used for testing all research hypotheses within this study. The results were reported in both narrative and tabular form.

Hypotheses Tested and Results

Hypothesis I: The child variables of motor development, knowledge of concepts, and languages as measured by the DIAL-R were not significantly different for 70 children

who participated in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those who participated in an academic kindergarten program. A fourth aspect of total or overall development was also calculated.

Upon the collection of the initial DIAL-T data, a t-test on the total development means was performed. These data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

T-test of Initial Between Group Mean Differences

Group	N	Mean	SD
Academic	51	65.294	9.615
Developmental	50	69.880	11.649
T = -2.16*			

*p < .05

The results of this analysis did indicate the developmental group mean was significantly higher based upon analysis of the mean for the total development score on the DIAL-R pretest which was administered prior to kindergarten instruction in September (T=-2.16, p < .03).

A post test administration of the DIAL-R was conducted in the first two weeks of May. During both the pre- and post-administration of this developmental assessment, identical data collection procedures were employed. There were 51 subjects in the academically oriented group and 50

comprised the developmentally appropriate group; both and post-data were available for all subjects. The descriptive statistics for the pre-post-DIAL-R data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for DIAL-R Developmental Data

Group	Area	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean
Academic	Motor	20.176	27.767
Developmental	Motor	21.540	27.900
Academic	Concepts	21.314	27.843
Developmental	Concepts	23.380	27.640
Academic	Language	23.804	27.922
Developmental	Language	25.360	28.240
Academic	Total	65.294	83.314
Developmental	Total	69.880	83.780

Based upon the examination of between-group differences, academic and developmental, pre-test/post-test data were analyzed using analysis of covariance procedures for the previously defined outcomes as assessed by administering the DIAL-R, to control for initial group differences. Table 3 presents the results of this procedure.

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance Summary Table for Developmental Outcomes on DIAL-R

Area	Source	SS	df	Adjusted SS	MS	F
Motor	Between	208.759	2	3.421	104.380	20.817
	Within	491.380	98		5.014	
	Total	700.139	100			
Concept	Between	290.973	2	19.172	145.487	33.600*
	Within	424.334	98		4.330	
	Total	715.307	100			
Language	Between	77.858	2	.002	38.709	10.718
	Within	353.949	98		3.612	
	Total	431.366	100			
Total	Between	1868.045	2	47.115	934.023	59.399
	Within	1541.004	98		15.725	
	Total	3409.050	100			

*$p < .05$

Results of this analysis indicates that statistically significant differences exist between groups on the area knowledge of concepts ($F=33.600$, $p < .04$) with the academically oriented group exhibiting a higher post mean ($M=27.84$). Also, the total development outcomes approached a level of statistical significance ($F=59.399$, $p < .08$). The developmentally oriented kindergarten mean was higher

for this measure (M=83.78). The areas of motor and language development were not statistically significant for either curricular group.

Hypothesis 2: The development of writing skills was not significantly different for children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program as determined within the WRITING TO READ system. This null hypothesis was examined by treating the data as ordinal levels of measurement using the Chi Square statistic. All teachers reported that each subject within the study began at the pre-writing stage of development which was coded as 0. The Kruskal-Wallis one way ANOVA was performed to determine statistical between-group significance. The results of this analysis did indicate statistically significant differences between the medians of the groups (Chi-Square = 5.05, $p < .03$). These data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance For the Development of Writing Skills

Group	N	Mean Rank
Academic	51	44.85
Developmental	50	57.27
Chi Square = 5.05*		

*$p < .05$

Hypothesis 3: The factors evidenced in the analysis of social competence items were not significantly different for children participating in the developmentally appropriate kindergarten program and those in the academic kindergarten program. Baumrind's (1968) Preschool Behavior Q-Sort was used to assess predominant factors within the total group, then factors scores for each group were calculated based upon significantly loaded items for each factor. Following the performance of the Q-sort by the classroom teacher for each student, a factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted.

Initial analyses revealed that most items and a large portion of the variance could be accounted for with a two-factor solution. Therefore, a subsequent analysis was done, constrained to a two-factor solution, to achieve greater clarity and include additional significant outlying items. The two factors accounted for 39.3% of the variance. Forty-seven of the 72 Q-sort items loaded on these two factors. Twenty-six items (using a criterion for factor loading of .40) loaded on factor 1 . Factor 1 loadings ranged from a low of .3935 to a high of .7739. The first factor denoted a composition of items that reflected positive traits of social competence especially, as they related to Baumrind's constructs of self-confidence, achievement orientation, dependable relationships with adults, constructive actions, and trusting behaviors. Twenty-one items, using the same criterion, loaded on factor 2. The range of loadings for

factor was from .3620 to .7872. This second factor was composed of items that were related to the constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, withdrawn, and suggestible behaviors as defined by Baumrind (1968). Evidence of the reliability of internal consistency of each factor structure was computed by using Cronbach's alpha. A reliability coefficient of .8988 for factor 1 was obtained, while factor 2 yielded a reliability coefficient of .8685. Therefore, the internal consistency of both factor structures was considered reliable and valid for use in further statistical analysis.

Following the analysis of the factor structures, factor scores were calculated for factors 1 and 2 for both the developmental and academically oriented kindergarten groups. A Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon Rank Sum W test was then performed. This statistical test compares the medians of the two groups for each factor. This was used instead of t-tests as the assumptions of homogeneity were violated due to the skewness of factor 2 data. The Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon Rank Sum W test analysis indicated there were no significant between-group differences on factor 1, but factor 2 was significantly different beyond the .05 level with the developmentally oriented group obtaining a higher median ($M = 56.95$, $p < .04$). Data and analysis for factor 1 are presented in Tables 5 and 6, with factor 2 information in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 5

Preschool Behavior Q-Sort Items and Loadings for Factor 1

Q-sort Items		Factor Loadings
Q3	Well-coordinated and agile	.3977
Q4	Willing to pursue tasks alone	.3964
Q6	Likes to learn new cognitive skills	.3935
Q7	Nurturant or sympathetic towards other children	.6342
Q12	Gives his best to work and play	.5425
Q16	Confident	.3941
Q18	Self-starting and self-propelled	.5092
Q21	Peer leader	.4793
Q23	Other children seek his company	.4945
Q24	Paid attention to by other children	.4117
Q32	Obedient	.5932
Q35	Helps other children carry out their activities	.5341
Q38	Communicates well verbally	.4550
Q41	Concerned about adult disapproval	.6064
Q42	Sets goals which expand his abilities, e.g., learning to pump on the swings, trying difficult puzzles	.4319
Q44	Actively facilitates nursery school routine	.7512
Q45	Seeks company of other children	.4585
Q47	Plans activities for other children	.4056
Q49	Has strong sense of self as positive force	.4556
Q52	Can be trusted	.6979

Table 5 (Continued)

Preschool Behavior Q-Sort Items and Loadings for Factor 1

Q53	Stretches to meet the situation when much is demanded of him	.4562
Q55	Understands other children's position in interaction or altercation	.4475
Q56	Content, cheerful attitude	.5119
Q58	Friendly attitude towards teaching staff	.4398
Q67	Hits only in self-defense or doesn't hit at all	.7739
Q69	Responsible about following standard operating procedure at school	.7198

Factor loading of .40 was the criterion used for assignment of items.

Table 6

Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W Test for Factor 1

Group	N	Mean Rank
Academic	51	52.61
Developmental	50	49.36

U = 1193.0

W = 2468.0

Z = -.5572

$p > .05$

Based upon this analysis of between-group medians for factor 1, there exists no significant between-group differences ($Z = -.5572$, 2-tailed $p > .577$). Since no between-group

differences were found, it was concluded that positive aspects of social competence were evident in both groups of subjects, academic and developmentally appropriate, as viewed by the teachers.

Table 7

Preschool Behavior Q-Sort Items and Loadings for Factor 2

Q-sort Items		Factor Loadings
Q10	Spectator	.7872
Q11	Suggestible	.4878
Q13	Timid with other children	.8393
Q15	Vascillates and oscillates	.3618
Q17	Lacking in curiosity	.5430
Q19	Disoriented in his environment	.4343
Q20	Does not become pleasureably involved in structured tasks	.4954
Q25	Dependent upon any one adult, especially mother	.5290
Q26	Easily frustrated or upset when an obstacle to task performance is encountered	.5026
Q30	Apprehensive	.3834
Q32	Obedient	.4518
Q34	Slow-moving and phlegmatic	.6931
Q36	Does not question adult authority	.3762
Q46	Avoids peer interaction by techniques such as seeking adult attention	.4218
Q50	Socially withdrawn	.7349

Table 7 (Continued)

Preschool Behavior Q-Sort Items and Loadings for Factor 2

Q57	Withdraws when faced with excitement or a great deal of activity	.6888
Q60	Typically in the role of listener	.4990
Q66	Stereotyped in his thinking	.4707
Q69	Responsible about following standard operating procedure at school	.4356
Q71	Nonintrusive	.4562

Factor loading of .40 was the criterion used for assignment of items.

Table 8

Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W Test for Factor 2

Group	N	Mean Rank
Academic	51	45.17
Developmental	50	56.95

U = 977.5

W = 2847.5

Z = -2.0214*

*$p < .05$

The between groups analysis of factor 2 indicates there is a significant difference between the academic and developmentally appropriate group ratings, with the latter achieving a higher median of 56.95 ($Z = -2.02$, $p < .04$). Based on the perceptions of the teachers, these findings

suggest the subjects within the developmentally appropriate kindergarten evidenced behaviors that were associated with Baumrind's (1968) constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, withdrawn and suggestible behaviors. Overall, these constructs define behaviors of a lower level of social competence, especially in the areas of self-confidence and autonomy.

Summary

Two types of kindergarten programs, academic and developmentally appropriate, were examined to contrast child outcomes in three major areas. These included development (motor, conceptual, language, and total), writing progress, and social competence. A quasi-experimental design was utilized with development being assessed by administering the DIAL-R in September as a pre-test and again in May as a post-test. Writing progress and development were monitored through the use of the WRITING TO READ system that charts progress from the pre-writing stage through six levels of advancement. The measure of social competence, the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968), was performed by each classroom teacher and was based on established perceptions of the subjects' behavior.

The developmental data were analyzed by using an analysis of covariance to control for initial between-group differences. No significant between-group differences were found in the areas of motor, language, or total development, although the measure for motor skills did approach

significance for the developmentally appropriate group. The academically oriented subjects evidenced a statistically significant higher mean in the area of conceptual knowledge on the DIAL-R measure. Therefore, this aspect of the null hypothesis was rejected. Statistical significance in the area of writing progress and development was achieved for the developmentally appropriate group. This null hypothesis was then rejected. Finally, the factor analysis of the q-sort items for preschool behaviors rendered a two-factor solution accounting for 39.3% of the total variance. Factor 1 was constituted of items that were related to positive social behaviors, especially in the areas of self-confidence, achievement orientation, dependable relationships with adults, constructive actions, and trusting behaviors. No significant differences existed for factor 1 based on the analysis of between groups factor scores. Analysis of factor 2 scores for each group exhibited a statistically significant difference between these groups, with the developmentally appropriate subjects displaying a significantly higher median for these factor items based upon the perceptions of the teachers of this group. This factor included items related to the established constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, withdrawn, and suggestible behaviors. Consequently, the null hypothesis for this aspect of study was rejected.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

The primary purpose was to assess child outcomes in various areas of development and behavior based upon the preferred philosophy and teaching methodology exercised by the kindergarten teacher within a public school program. This research focused on a rural, disadvantaged subject population. The major components that were examined included total development, as delineated by the areas of motor, concept, and language growth, writing progress and development, and social competence.

The DIAL-R was administered prior to the initiation of kindergarten instruction and again at the end of the school term to assess the aforementioned areas of development. The WRITING TO READ program was implemented in each school as part of the curriculum; therefore, the writing progression defined by this program served to evaluate progress in this area. Finally, the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort was performed for each child by his/her teacher; these data were then analyzed through factor analysis for the entire subject population and further statistical operations were performed

to determine between-group differences in the area of social competence and related behaviors. A summary of the findings, conclusions, implications regarding the significance of the findings, and recommendations for further study are given below.

The Summary of the Findings

The public school kindergarten programs examined included both academic and developmentally oriented classrooms located in a rural, disadvantaged area within three communities. This area and subject population were chosen because of the low-socioeconomic demographics displayed in each school, with a low income rate ranging from 72% to 84% of the total school population. Also, of the six kindergarten classrooms and teachers participating, three displayed and implemented a preference for the academically oriented philosophy and curriculum and the other three adhered to the developmentally appropriate design. One hundred one student subjects participated in this study, with 51 comprising the academic group and 50 participating in the developmental group.

To determine the child outcomes related to growth and development an administration of the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning--Revised (DIAL-R) (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 1983) was conducted at the initiation of the school year prior to instruction and again during the first two weeks of May. Examination of the scores for the pre-test indicated that a significant

between-groups difference existed with the developmental group exhibiting a higher mean; therefore, final analysis of the data was controlled for this variable. Three specific areas of development were evaluated, (motor, concepts, and language) and a total development score was also determined. Differences in the area of knowledge of concepts were found between groups following the analysis of pre- and post- test data, with the academic group scoring significantly higher in this area. No other areas of development demonstrated statistically significant differential outcomes, although the area of total skills approached significance level in favor of the developmental group.

The developmentally oriented kindergarten program manifested a highly significant difference in the area of writing progress and development. The writing progress of these subjects ranged from the pre-writing stage through Stage 4 or Simple Story Writing. Primarily, the academic group was limited to the lower stages of writing development, such as, Pre-Writing, Cycle Word Writing, and New Word Writing, with fewer subjects involved in Stage 3--Phrase/ Sentence Writing and Stage 4--Simple Story Writing.

Social competence and preschool behaviors were assessed through the use of the Preschool Behavior Q-sort (Baumrind, 1968) which was completed for each child by the classroom teacher. Initial analyses of the items revealed that the majority of items and a large portion of the variance from the study sample could be accounted for with a two-factor

solution. Therefore, subsequent analysis of these items was constrained to a two-factor solution in order to achieve greater clarity and include other significant outlying items. The two factors were defined by factor analysis and in terms of the constructs established by Baumrind (1968).

The first factor exemplified the positive social constructs of self-confidence, achievement orientation, dependable relationships with adults, constructive actions, and trusting behaviors. Upon an analysis of this factor in relation to preferred philosophy and curricular design, no between-group differences were demonstrated. Therefore, both groups possessed positive traits related to social competence and development. The second factor illustrated items related to the constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, and behaviors that were defined as withdrawn and suggestible. A between groups analysis of this factor evinced substantive differences with the developmental group displaying a higher relationship associated with these behaviors. Although the developmental group did manifest a higher degree of loading on this factor, it should be noted that both groups displayed positive traits of social competence. The lower level of competence exhibited in this factor could be due to extraneous variables and teacher sensitivity to circumstances beyond the scope and control of the school, classroom environment, and this study.

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

Overall, the findings based upon the DIAL-R data support the conclusions of Royce, et al. (1983) pooled analyses of 15 curriculum programs for low-income children. Program participants did evidence gains on a variety of related measures, but significant differences between programs were not demonstrated. The academic group did display significantly higher progress in the area of knowledge of concepts, but this finding supports the major focus of the program--academic learning. Other curricular comparison studies support this finding in relation to academic programs utilizing direct instruction for the purpose of skills mastery (Gersten & Keating, 1987). Development of the entire subject population appears to have progressed based upon the fact that approximately 20% of the total subject population displayed a potential problem for learning or development based upon the initial administration of the DIAL-R. Only two of these subjects were identified as such following a survey of the post-test data. This supports Lazar's (1981) conclusion that any type of well-designed, professionally supervised program of intervention within a stimulating environment promotes the development and growth of low-income children.

The significant development and progress in the area of writing evidenced by the developmentally appropriate group is further evidence that mastery of skills, such as letters and sound relationships has occurred, but also the

translation of these skills into practice has also been achieved. According to the definition associated with the develop-mentally appropriate philosophy and curriculum, the teachers would involve students in child-centered activities that would integrate many aspects of development--academic, motor, and social--and ultimately could facilitate child-initiated and directed learning experiences. Through the guidance of the developmental kindergarten teacher and experiences provided within the WRITING TO READ program, these students have developed skills within the context of literacy experiences which are now being translated into meaningful print. Although the academic group evidenced greater gains in the area of knowledge of concepts, this learning was not transferred into the process cultivating meaningful literacy experiences and consequently producing higher levels of writing within the context of the program design.

Analyses of the subjects' behaviors as assessed by the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort (Baumrind, 1968) indicates each group possesses and exhibits positive social competence skills in all constructs defined by the measure. The factor items were highly related to the constructs of self-confidence, achievement orientation, dependable relation-ships with adults, constructive actions, and trusting behaviors. No between-group differences were manifested for this first factor. Therefore, it can be concluded the behaviors exhibited by both groups based upon the

perceptions of the teachers were related to the positive development of social competence skills. The items that denoted the second factor were related to lower levels of social competence especially in terms of the low stress tolerance, fearfulness, and behaviors associated with the constructs of withdrawn and suggestible actions. The developmentally appropriate group of subjects did exhibit characteristics deemed as significantly higher on this factor. There appears to be a dichotomy of behaviors that were reported by the developmentally oriented teachers. This might possibly be explained based on how they perceive the children within the classroom environment separately from the home environment. The extraneous variables and information related to the teacher's understanding of the child based upon his/her home and family life may have created this dichotomy of perceptions. Within the school and classroom environment these teachers have focused on the development of positive social skills within the context of total developmental growth; these characteristics were explained within the first factor which was associated with positive social development. The knowledge these teachers have of back-ground experiences related to home life and other extraneous situations associated with the disadvantaged population may have made these teachers sensitive to other behaviors that occur outside the context of the classroom. Thus a dichotomy of social behaviors was revealed in the second factor. This explanation is highly

related to the philosophy and defined characteristics of the developmentally appropriate teacher, which is child-centered in nature and strives to understand the ecological context of each child's development.

These findings lend new support to former early childhood curriculum studies which have focused primarily on Head Start or other curricular models developed for early intervention rather than public school kindergarten. Early childhood programs for disadvantaged children from a low socioeconomic background can promote healthy development in all areas of learning. As in the academic preschool, kindergarten students participating in similar programs can master skills through practice and rote memory to a significantly higher degree. The data also lends support to the idea that mastery of skills is important only if they can be applied and transferred into new situations, such as meaningful print and writing activities. The developmental kindergarten students not only acquired prescribed skills, but applied them to the meaningful context of print. The WRITING TO READ program was part of both the academic and developmental kindergarten programs, but the manner in which it was implemented by the developmental teachers appears to have significant implications for instructional methodologies related to literacy experiences in early childhood programs. Apparently, the WRITING TO READ program was used as a vehicle not only to teach and reinforce skill acquisition, but also as a means of making practical applications

of this new knowledge. Writing experiences then served as an extension of the developmental kindergarten program, integrated within the context of the curriculum and not viewed as a fragmented content area to be mastered. For the academic kindergarten teacher, the WRITING TO READ system was utilized as another means of teaching and practicing the skills of letter recognition and phonemic memorization of letter sound relationships. Therefore, the potential outcomes associated with WRITING TO READ program may be diminished within the framework of the academic kindergarten.

Finally, the analysis of preschool behaviors within both kindergarten programs suggested that healthy social development and competent behaviors within the classroom environment were valued and cultivated within the context of both early childhood models. This finding lends new evidence that social development is still of primary importance in the kindergarten program even after it has been introduced into the public school context. This characteristic of kindergarten is one that has distinguished early childhood programs from the more structured academic goals of the elementary grades. Hopefully, this distinctive trait of kindergarten will be maintained even if more emphasis is placed on academics in the future. It was evident that the teachers of both curricular designs, academic and developmental, placed great emphasis on the development of social competence and viewed it as the infrastructure of learning

in all areas. This accentuation and value of social competence evident within the context of both programs may be related to the teachers' perception of how the process of education serves as a socializing agent, especially for this clientele of children. In addition to the positive social traits displayed by both groups, the developmental teachers recognized lower levels of social competence among their students primarily for items related to the constructs of low stress tolerance, fearfulness, and behaviors associated with withdrawn and suggestible actions. This dichotomy of significant behaviors evident within the two factors analyzed suggests that perceptions of the developmental kindergarten teachers may have been influenced by their knowledge of the children's ecological context both at school and at home. These findings have strong implications for early childhood programs and teachers in regard to the issue of home-school discontinuity. Apparently, the developmental kindergarten teachers were aware of this issue of discontinuity and designed their programs with this as a primary consideration. They also seemed to balance this awareness of somewhat negative social competence behaviors with the development and nurturance of positive social competence behaviors in the classroom environment by adopting a developmental philosophy and curriculum.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the literature review and the findings, it is recommended that further investigations be conducted

regarding developmental outcomes of various kindergarten programs as they relate to a more normal sample population which represents a variety of demographics such as socio-economic levels, rural and urban populations, and various racial and cultural groups. Also, future studies for all populations should focus on longitudinal development and achievement outcomes as associated with these instructional issues. Further in depth studies should be conducted in the areas of the development of literacy behaviors and writing progress as related to early childhood curricular models. These studies might employ qualitative and/or multi-method research designs to assess more accurate information concerning the process of the development of literacy and writing skills especially for the defined clientele within this study.

Finally, it is imperative that further research be conducted in the area of the development of social competence. Most educators recognize the mastery of social skills as a major component for success in all areas of learning and achievement not only in school, but throughout life. Other studies focusing on social competence issues might investigate the relationship of this area of development to future school achievement and life success. Few instruments have been developed that adequately evaluate this area of development for young children. Without valid and reliable instrumentation it is difficult to study this area of learning and therefore, limited practical

information is available to teachers to aid them in fostering social competence within their students. Also, future studies addressing questions related to the social compe-tence of young children should consider the numerous extraneous variables and dynamics present within the entire ecological context of development, such as the classroom, home, and other significant relationships and settings. The literature is replete regarding social competence and the early childhood curriculum as it is currently implemented.

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