QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RELIABILITY
OF THE NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

by

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ABSTRACT

HEATHER TAYLOR. Quality assurance and reliability of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process for early childhood educators. (Under the direction of DR. RICHARD LAMBERT)

The North Carolina (NC) Teacher Evaluation Process (TEP) is used to evaluate Pre-K – 12th grade teachers. Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who have obtained Birth - Kindergarten licensure are unique in that they work with children with and without disabilities and their families. Previous research has suggested that teachers may benefit from professional development and coaching support. The Early Education Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) office's conceptual framework includes strong, evidence-based coaching components to support ECEs who work in inclusive, Pre-K and Developmental Day early childhood classrooms in NC. This research project uses qualitative research methods to investigate ECE perceptions regarding coaching support received as well as quantitative methods to explore areas of the NC TEP that ECEs are making progress or not. The quantitative methods used in this study will further support information gathered during the qualitative phases of this research project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my hardworking husband, Rich, and incredibly talented, smart and beautiful son, Nate. Without your love and encouragement in all things, life just wouldn't be the same. Thank you for giving me another opportunity to "go for it."

I dedicate this work to my parents. Dad, you and mom constantly recited William Shakespeare's quote in Hamlet, "Above all else, to thine own self be true." I want you to know that this has never been forgotten. As you know, I use this quote with my own son now. I'm proud to have been true to myself in choosing a career in special education and I'm eternally grateful for the strong foundation of character you and mom instilled in me.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to my brother. Every step of the way, you're there for me. I am so proud to be your sister. You are the type of person that truly gives others hope for the future.

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Note: The researcher has hard copies of all color-coded data in a locked file cabinet at UNC Charlotte.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BTSP	Beginning Teacher Support Program
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
DD	developmental delay(s)
DEC	Division of Early Childhood
ECE(s)	early childhood educator(s)
ECPC	Early Childhood Personnel Center
EESLPD	Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NC	North Carolina
PD	professional development
Pre-K	preschool
TEP	Teacher Evaluation Process

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance evaluation in the United States has become increasingly focused on teaching *quality* rather than on teachers who are *highly qualified* (Martinez, Schweig, & Goldschmidt, 2016). In the state of North Carolina (NC), Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who have obtained or are working towards Birth - Kindergarten (B-K) licensure are evaluated using the NC Teacher Evaluation Process (NC TEP). Currently, 42 states, including NC, have public Pre-K programs (Barnett, Friedman-Krauss, Gomez, Horowitz, Weisenfeld, Brown, & Squires, 2016).

The NC TEP was developed by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (McREL, 2009) and was designed to be used as a growth model during the teacher evaluation process. Currently, there is no set standard of interrater reliability among evaluators in NC who use the rubric as part of the TEP with educators (Mazurek, 2012). This same evaluation instrument is used with all educators in NC who work with children in Preschool (Pre-K) through 12th grade. In the state of NC, ECEs who have obtained B-K licensure, are *unique* in that they work with both typically developing children and children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for Developmental Delay(s) (DD) and their families. This chapter provides information about the purpose and rationale for conducting this study. The research questions for this study, frequently used terms, and delimitations are also included at the end of this chapter.

In NC, ECEs who have obtained B-K licensure serve the Pre-K population in the state as both the special education teacher and the general education teacher for young

children and their families. Typically, these ECEs are trained at the pre-service level and receive Professional Development (PD) and support through the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) through the Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office. Because of the unique nature of the B-K license, ECEs in NC must be prepared to follow and adhere to standards and recommended practices set forth by organizations and leaders in fields that serve children in the age range of birth-five years, both with and without disabilities and/or at-risk for DD, and their families. Previous research suggests that teachers may benefit from the support of coaches and mentors by changing their teaching practices and applying Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and this support may also impact the teacher's decision to stay in the profession (Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, & Otrosky, 2009; Knight & Wiseman, 2005; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Kretlow, Wood, & Cooke, 2011; Sibley, Lawrence, & Lambert, 2010). Early childhood educators with or seeking B-K licensure may need a specialized type of coaching support to guide them to best meet the needs of young children in inclusive Pre-K settings.

Coaching models used with educators from both early childhood and school-age settings offer specific, individualized strategies (e.g., multi-tiered support) that increase with intensity and are followed-up with high-quality PD (Berg & Karlsen, 2007; Jablon, Dambro, & Johnsen, 2016; Kretlow et al., 2012; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Rush & Shelden, 2011; Snyder, Hemmeter, & McLaughlin, 2011; Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2015; Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, & Cleaver, 2016). These specific models offer support that is specialized based on the individual needs of educators and many are summarized in Chapter 2 of this paper. Mentors and evaluators that support ECEs in

inclusive classrooms may benefit from using the specific coaching strategies that are included in these models.

Numerous resources are available that include potential ECE practices to meet the needs of children in inclusive settings (e.g., Personnel Standards and Competencies: The Process for Alignment by the Early Childhood Personnel Center [ECPC], 2018; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2018; Recommended Practices of the Division of Early Childhood [DEC] of the Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2014). The ECE practices identified by DEC, ECPC, and NAEYC may be observable actions and behaviors exhibited by ECEs during observations/evaluations conducted using the rubric as part of the NC TEP. Birth through Kindergarten licensed ECEs must have a breadth and depth of training, PD, and specialized knowledge to work with children who are both typically developing and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. Although there have been many ECE behaviors identified that represent best practice, research that identifies specific strategies to initiate high-quality early childhood education programs across the U.S. is limited (Gordon, Fujimoto, Kaestner, Korenman, & Abner, 2013; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2009). Furthermore, although ECEs in NC serve as both the special and general educators with children in their classroom, prior research suggests that inclusive programming doesn't guarantee high-quality early childhood standards. Many teachers and other specialists, including those who work in-state initiated Pre-K programs, are not specifically trained to work with children at-risk for or diagnosed with DD and their families (Buysse, Wesley, Bryant, & Gardner, 1999; Guralnick, 2001; Odom et al., 2004).

There is little research and evidence indicating the specific strategies or measures needed to establish high quality state supported early childhood education programs (Gordon et al., 2013). Odom (2009) indicated that program quality across the education system in the United States involves assessment against identified quality indicators and improvements are driven by quality program standards (e.g., DEC Recommended Practices, 2014; NAEYC, 2018; Quality Rating and Improvement Standards, 2019;). Furthermore, this research suggests that structural components of early childhood education programs have predictors of quality such as (a) curriculum and (b) intentionality in facilitating instruction.

In 2014, President Obama called for expanding access to "high-quality" preschool programs during the State of the Union Address to the United States (White House, 2014). High-quality Pre–K programs enable young children to meet their developmental potential (Gordon et al., 2013). Prior research indicates that children who are given the opportunity to participate in high-quality Pre-K programs may have outcomes that lead to improvements in their future academic skills across all domains of development (Barnett, Jung, Young, & Frede, 2013; Peisner-Feinberg, Schaaf, Hildebrandt, Pan, & Warnaar, 2015).

Statement of the Problem: Justification for Exploring

Quality Assurance and Reliability of the

North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process Rubric for

Early Childhood Education Teachers

Professionals in the field of ECE as well as parents of young children with and without diagnosed disabilities continue to support community-based early education and care that is inclusive, but barriers exist due to limited availability of high-quality ECE programs (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse, & Wesley, 1998; Odom & McEvoy, 1990). Early childhood education and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teachers in NC, who have obtained or are working towards B-K licensure are unique in that they work as both a special educator and general educator in the Pre-K classroom with typically developing children and children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. Because of the unique nature of the B-K license, ECEs may need a specialized form of coaching to guide their teaching practices in inclusive Pre-K classroom that enables them to meet the needs of all children and families they serve. These teachers are evaluated using the rubric as part of the NC TEP, the same performance evaluation instrument used for all grades, Pre-K through 12th.

Odom et al. (2011) discussed a change in terms for young children who were placed with their general education peers in ECE classrooms, including infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children. Researchers discussed the continuing improvement efforts in the field of ECE such as (a) program quality, (b) early care, and (c) education. Other efforts suggest the need to define high-quality inclusion for the early childhood population. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997)

included the provision that children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for developing DD should be given the opportunity to learn in their natural environments and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The DEC of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the NAEYC jointly published a position statement on inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) indicating recommendations for providing inclusive practices to young children and families.

Main points in the inclusion position statement include promoting friendships and a sense of belonging for both typically developing children and those with or at-risk for DD. Recommendations in this position statement call for (a) requiring high expectations for every child, (b) developing a program philosophy on inclusion and the identification of quality inclusive practices, (c) establishing supports that reflect the needs of children with varying types of disabilities, (d) revising program and professional standards, (e) improving PD in all areas of ECE, (f) revising federal and state accountability systems to include more children with their typically developing peers, and (g) the need to improve the quality of inclusive programs for young children. The DEC/NAEYC joint position statement on inclusion suggests using a consistent definition in order to shape practices and policies that impact inclusive programs. Prior research suggests that benefits and gains in development occur for children with and without disabilities when placed in inclusive ECE settings (Guralnick, 2001; Odom et al., 2004; Phillips & Meloy, 2012). In NC, ECEs who hold or are working towards B-K licensure must understand the benefits of implementing high-quality inclusive practices for children with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their typically developing peers.

Early Childhood Education Quality Matters in NC

In the state of NC, The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant (2010) has enabled NC to improve high-quality education for children Birth-Grade 3. This grant has supported activities for children with high needs, including those who are infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD, to access high-quality early education, care, and inclusive programs. This grant allowed for the comprisal of the five domains of development (e.g., cognitive, social-emotional, physical, communication, adaptive) to be provided at kindergarten entry to better meet the needs of individual children once they enter school-age.

Furthermore, a grant entitled, NC's Early Learning Challenge (2018) invests in the ECE workforce by supporting PD opportunities and building on the knowledge and skills of ECEs. This grant has built on NC's capacity to support communities and improve collaboration and practice through university early childhood education programs and community college programs as well as the statewide Smart Start system. This grant works to increase the number of ECE professionals who complete college level coursework as well as enable ECE professionals to receive needed training to best support young children and their families.

In May 2018, as part of the Go Big for Early Childhood initiative, the NC General Assembly proposed a senate bill (Senate bill DRS35336-LUa-127A) to provide early childhood education to NC children from birth-five years (The North Carolina General Assembly, 2018). This bill proposes to increase Pre-K funding for 15 fiscal years. This proposed senate bill comes as a result of the continuous growth and need in the state of NC to support children aged birth -five years of age and their families. This is vital

funding that may create more opportunities for B-K licensed teachers to find employment in NC Pre-K and developmental day classrooms across the state to meet the needs of children and families. Due to the projected increase of children served in Pre-K and developmental day classrooms over the next 15 years, the need for teachers who have obtained a B-K license to support children and families may become greater. The requirement of ECEs participating in the NC TEP will most likely increase, as will their need for mentors and evaluators to support the work they do in inclusive settings.

In a seminal report entitled "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation," issued by the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015), issued an "urgent and important" need to unify the early childhood workforce and elevate the profession. Developing a consistent definition pertaining to the work and roles of ECE professionals is one of the unifying factors needed in the field of early childhood. Early childhood education is an important field that is currently undergoing a transformative process via NAEYC's "Power to the Profession" initiative (2019). This initiative includes national collaboration from early childhood researchers, educators, families, and other vested parties. Current goals of "Power to the Profession" include (a) building a framework that has standards that function across programs to unify the profession (e.g., knowledge-base, career pathways, qualifications, compensation) and (b) impacting policy and funding sources for implementation of this initiative. This initiative supports both current and future needs to unify the early childhood workforce and enable the best outcomes for children.

Using the NC Teacher Evaluation Process with Early Childhood Education Teachers

In NC, the NC TEP rubric is an evaluation instrument used to evaluate educators who teach grades Pre-K through 12. The evaluation of Pre-K teachers is mandated by the Early Education Branch of the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). The NC system promotes high-quality Pre-K classrooms for eligible four-year-old children. These programs must meet Child Care Rules set forth in NC (NC Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Being one of four states that meet all 10 benchmarks included in the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER, 2016), NC has high standards for ECE's as well as classroom practices. North Carolina Pre-K programs use established early learning standards and the NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations, 2013) as the standard course of study for Pre-K. All ECEs are required to meet educator licensure requirements provided by the EESLPD Unit.

In NC, early childhood educators who earn a B – K license do so in preparation to work with typically developing children and children with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD, in the age range of birth-five years, and their families. The B-K license was developed after the Education for Handicapped Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-457) was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990). In NC, this name change was met by a new licensure program (B-K) requiring teacher training to include three strands: (a) child development, (b) early childhood, and (c) ECSE (Myers, Griffin, Telekei, Taylor & Wheeler, 1998). This license is unique to ECEs in that those who obtain a B-K license are responsible for working with typically developing children and

children with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD(s), and their families, in inclusive settings. Holding a B-K license requires ECEs to have a strong knowledge-base of using Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) and recommended practices set forth by organizations and agencies that advocate for both typically developing children and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD (e.g., NAEYC, DEC, Head Start). Previous research has indicated the need for educators to have access to coaches or mentors to support and guide them with effectively providing EBPs (Cook & Schirmer, 2003). Due to the unique nature of ECEs who have or are working towards acquiring B-K licensure, a significant amount of support may be needed to help these professionals address the diverse needs of children and families they work with in the classroom.

The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators support teachers who have or are working toward obtaining a B-K license through the BTSP by using the NC TEP and evaluating ECEs based on five standards including (a) standard i - teachers demonstrate leadership, (b) standard ii - teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of children, (c) standard iii - teachers know the content they teach, (d) standard iv - teachers facilitate learning for their children, and (e) standard v - teachers reflect on their practices. Early childhood educators are evaluated and marked on his/her performance for all five standards by an EESLPD office evaluator in one of 5 rating categories (e.g., developing, proficient, accomplished, distinguished, and/or not demonstrated). All ECEs must reach a proficient level on their summary rating form in three of five standards after their first three years enrolled in the BTSP. Early childhood educators in NC are required to participate in all processes included in the NC TEP formal evaluation process (e.g., self-assessment using the rubric, pre-conference, post-

conference, development of a professional development plan) (McRel, 2009). Early childhood educators who hold, or are working towards, B-K licensure are responsible for serving typically developing children as well as those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD, and serve as both the special and general educator in Pre-K settings. These ECEs must have an understanding and vast knowledge-base of recommended practices to use in inclusive settings with typically developing children and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. Early childhood educators may need a variety of support (e.g. on-site support and guidance, PD, self-reflection and assessment) to meet the individual needs of all children and their families in inclusive Pre-K settings.

Significance of Exploring the Quality Assurance and Reliability of the Rubric Used as Part of the NC TEP for ECEs

There are many initiatives, national, state, and local, that support the need for high quality early childhood environments and ECEs (e.g., Go Big for Early Childhood Initiative, [The North Carolina General Assembly, 2018]; IDEIA, 2007; Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015; NAEYC's Power to the Profession, 2019; Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services], 2018). The NC TEP is used as a performance evaluation for all NC teachers who work with children in grades Pre-K through 12th, including ECEs who work in inclusive Pre-K settings. Early childhood education teachers who have obtained B-K licensure work with both typically developing children and children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. Early childhood educators in NC who have obtained B-K licensure serve the Pre-K population in the state as both the special education teacher and the general education teacher for young children and

their families. Cook and Schirmer (2003) indicated that special education is not in fact "special" if strategies used with children with disabilities are also effectively implemented by general educators without special education support.

Individuals who hold a B-K license are prepared and trained at the pre-service level to work in ECE environments that are inclusive and use specific strategies and recommended practices to work with typically developing children and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. At the pre-service level, B-K teachers participate in curriculum that prepares them to work both with and without children with disabilities. In the state of NC, ECEs with a B-K license serve as both the special education teacher and the general education teacher in inclusive Pre-K classrooms. Due to the specialized skills and breadth and depth of knowledge needed by B-K licensed ECEs, a significant amount of mentoring and coaching may be needed to support efforts to meet needs of all children in the classroom, including typically developing children and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD.

The Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office

The EESLPD Unit is a Statewide LEA located within the Early Education Branch of the DCDEE. The EESLPD offices supports ECEs, holding lateral entry, initial (formerly SPI) and continuing (formerly SPII) licensure who are employed in nonpublic NC Pre-K (formerly known as More-at-Four) schools and NC developmental day preschool classrooms. The EESLPD office hubs at East Carolina University (EESLPD office - Eastern Hub) and UNC Charlotte (EESLPD office - Western Hub) administer PD, mentoring and evaluation support services to teachers, as outlined by NC State Board

of Education policy. EESLPD office evaluators are responsible for using the NC Teacher Evaluation Process (NC TEP) to formally and informally observe ECEs. Evaluation, PD and guidance provided by both EESLPD office mentors and evaluators is intended to support ECEs through the licensure process.

Coaching and Professional Development Provided by the EESLPD office

Previous research has indicated that on-going PD is key in supporting and preparing the early childhood workforce (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI, 2008) indicates that coaching and training are considered two types of PD. The EESLPD office supports ECEs through hiring qualified mentors and evaluators that use a strengths-based approach. Previous research has indicated that using training and coaching with various forms of PD may build the confidence and competencies of ECEs when using evidence-based best practices to work with young children and their families (Snyder et al., 2015; Snyder, Hemmeter, & McLaughlin, 2011). Furthermore, PD can provide educators with specific skills and knowledge in preparation for implementing EBPs (Wood et al., 2016). The EESLPD office uses a coaching framework that provides a seamless system of PD to prepare ECEs to implement best practices in the classroom with children and their families (Taylor, Vestal, Saperstein, Stafford, & Lambert, 2017). The on-going PD offered by the EESLPD office supports teachers during the evaluation and licensure process while using the NC TEP rubric. The support offered by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators may promote the confidence and competence of ECE's when working with young children in the classroom.

This project is completed and met the intentions to explore (a) areas of the NC TEP that ECEs are making progress or are not making progress, (b) ECE responses regarding their needs for support from mentors and evaluators that aligns with the conceptual framework, and (c) the perceptions of teachers regarding supports provided to them by mentors and evaluators. The three areas explored in this project will inform future practices of EESLPD office mentors and evaluators when supporting ECEs to provide high-quality education and care to young children and families. Currently the EESLPD offices are in Phase II of a three-year grant funded interrater reliability and quality improvement project.

<center>**The EESLPD Office Conceptual Framework**</center>

The EESLPD office conceptual framework represents a prospective model of coaching used by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators to support ECEs through the licensure and evaluation process. The EESLPD framework's guiding principles are as follows: (a) ECEs must be respected as adult learners, (b) ECEs progress through developmental stages in their professional growth, (c) individualized strengths-based coaching supports professional growth and encourages the use of effective high-quality practices, (d) trusting relationships are fundamental to building an effective team, (e) fostering reflective practice is essential to effective teaching, and (f) research indicates that the teacher is the most crucial factor in the classroom (Taylor et al., 2017). Along with the guiding principles, the EESLPD office coaching framework, includes practices provided by EESLPD mentors and evaluators that are (a) relationship-based, (b) individualized, (c) knowledge-based, (d) adaptable, and (6) strengths-based (see Figure 1).
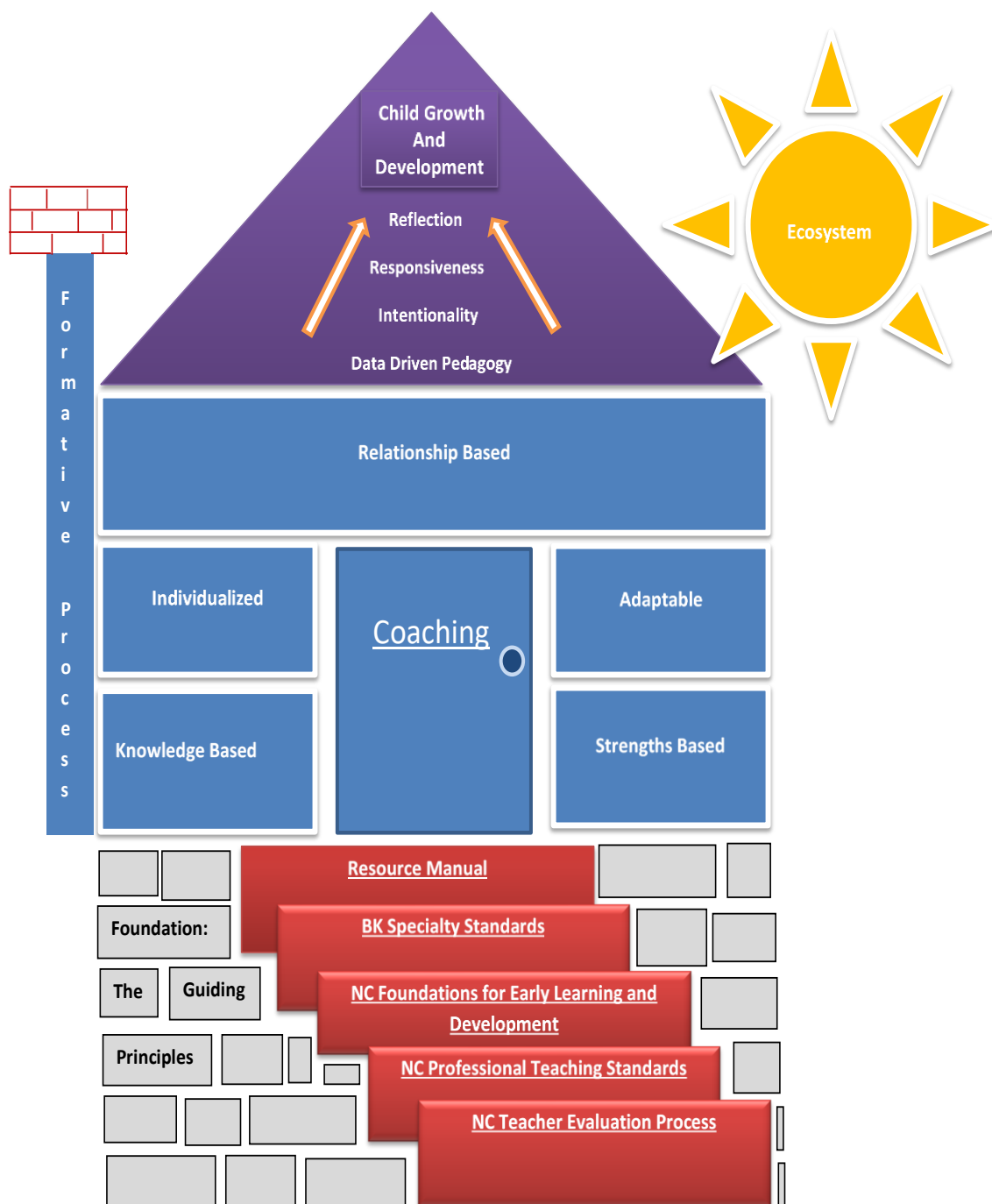
Figure 1: EESLPD Conceptual Framework (Taylor, Vestal, Saperstein, Stafford, & Lambert, 2017) Manuscript in progress.

Purpose of Exploring Quality Assurance and Reliability of the

Rubric Used as Part of the NC TEP Process for ECEs

The NC TEP is used as a performance evaluation tool for all teachers who work

with children in grades Pre-K through 12th. In NC, ECEs who have obtained B-K

licensure serve the Pre-K population as both the special education teacher and the general

education teacher for young children and their families. Typically, ECEs are trained at

the pre-service level to work in inclusive early childhood education settings and receive

PD and support as part of the BTSP through the EESLPD office. Because of the unique

nature of the B-K license, ECEs in NC must be prepared to follow and adhere to

standards and recommended practices set forth by organizations and leaders in fields that

serve children in the age range of birth-five years, both with and without disabilities

and/or at-risk for DD, and their families.

Early childhood educators who have a B-K license need a breadth and depth of

training, PD, specialized knowledge and skills to work with children who are typically

developing and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families, in relation

to the NC TEP rubric. Educators who work in inclusive Pre-K settings may need a

specialized form of coaching and mentoring to help guide their teaching practices to best

meet the needs of all children and families in inclusive Pre-K settings. Although there

have been many ECE behaviors identified that represent best practice, research that

identifies specific strategies to initiate high-quality ECE programs across the U.S. is

limited.

Previous research indicates that high-quality Pre–K programs enable young

children to meet their developmental potential (Gordon et al., 2013). Research also

suggests that children who are given the opportunity to participate in Pre-K programs of high-quality may have outcomes that lead to gains in all developmental domains as well as in future academics (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2015). Professionals in the field of ECE as well as parents of young children with and without diagnosed disabilities support inclusive community-based early education, but many factors contribute to the limited availability of high-quality ECE programs (Bailey et al., 1998; Odom & McEvoy, 1990).

Although ECEs in NC are evaluated using the NC TEP, there is no set standard of interrater reliability among evaluators who use the NC TEP to support and evaluate NC Pre-K teachers. Evaluators must rely on the use of recommended practices, their own professional judgement, inferences, qualitative information, teacher artifacts and other evidences when marking the NC TEP rubric. There may be inaccurate evaluation ratings if training is not provided to evaluate ECEs using the NC TEP properly. Reliability research states that when evaluators are provided with evaluation training, they need to meet agreement between 75% and 90% during training (Stemler, 2004). The minimum amount is 75% agreement as a "rule of thumb" according to the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) (Graham, Milanowski, & Miller, 2012). Furthermore, evaluator ratings and reliability must be analyzed so EESLPD evaluators can provide ECEs with accurate feedback to enable them to improve practice and meet the needs of young children and families they support. Prior research indicates that embedded career support that uses specific assistance, provides ECEs with opportunities to receive feedback and reflect on their performance (Snyder et al., 2015).

Information gathered as a result of this project will inform the development of a process of reliability among EESLPD evaluators and fidelity to the EESLPD office

conceptual framework (Figure 1). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators provide

individualized support to ECEs by promoting professional growth that impacts inclusive

classroom practices for the benefit of child and family development. As Taylor et al.

(2017) describes in the framework narrative, the conceptual model (Figure 1) is designed

as a home to showcase the vital role all collaborative team members (e.g., ECEs, mentor,

evaluator, child and his/her family, and site administrator) have in supporting ECEs to

influence and improve inclusive classroom practices that may lead to child and family

growth and development.

The components of the "home" as illustrated in the conceptual framework in

Figure 1 includes several components such as (a) the foundation - the guiding principles

(b) the steps (e.g., Resource Manual, B-K Specialty Standards, NC Foundations, NC

Professional Teaching Standards, NC TEP) (c) door - coaching (d) windows (e.g.,

knowledge-based, individualized, relationship-based, adaptable, strengths-based) (e) the

chimney - formative process (f) the peak (e.g., optimal child and family development)

and (g) the sun (e.g., Bronfenbrenner's exosystem) representing the ever-changing

conditions that surround the field of ECE (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The EESLPD conceptual framework and narrative (Taylor et al., 2017) includes a

potential model of coaching that has a strong emphasis on PD. Because of the

framework's strong emphasis on PD, this project may inform a process of reliability that

will contribute to the consistency of supporting ECEs in providing high-quality inclusive

early education and care for all children and families. This research project is complete

and investigated (a) areas ECEs are making progress or not on the NC TEP, (b) ECE

needs for support and how the support they receive aligns with the coaching components

of the EESLPD conceptual framework, and (c) the perceptions of ECEs who have made progress or not, regarding the supports they receive from their mentors and evaluators. Information collected as a result of completion of this study has informed future training and PD for EESLPD office staff and supports needed by ECEs in inclusive Pre-K classrooms.

Research Questions Used for This Study

(1) In what areas of the rubric used during the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (e.g. standards, elements, and indicators) are ECEs making progress or not making progress?

(2) How do ECE responses regarding needs for support and the support they receive from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the conceptual framework (e.g., knowledge based, individualized, relationship based, adaptable, and strengths based)?

(3) What are the perceptions of ECEs regarding the supports provided by mentors and evaluators?

Definition of Terms

Artifacts: Products developed as a natural by-product of a teacher's work (McREL, 2009).

Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP): Offered to beginning B-K teachers with central supports focused on EESLPD office mentoring, coaching, and evaluation. This process occurs in six phases over a three-year period. Continuing B-K licensed teachers (formerly known as SP II teachers) are evaluated during the five-year licensure cycle and not evaluated. (de Kort-Young et al., 2016).

Data: Information based on fact used to reasoning, planning, and/or discussion (McREL, 2009).

Developmental Day Center Program: This program serves children with disabilities aged 3 – 21 in developmental day centers licensed by the NC Department of Health and Human Services/Division of Child Development/Early Education. Funds for this program are available through the State Board of Education to provide special education and related services to eligible children placed in licensed developmental day centers by local education agencies (NC Public Schools, Developmental Day Programs, 2018).

Early Childhood Education: Early Learning and Development Programs including center-based and family child care providers (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Early Childhood Educators: Professionals who work in Early Learning and Development Programs, including family child care providers, and center-based programs. Professionals include those who work in fields of Early Intervention (EI), ECSE, and early childhood education (e.g., EI specialists, early childhood special educators, infant and toddler specialists, early childhood special educators, home visitors, related service

providers, administrators, Head Start teachers, Early Head Start teachers, preschool and other teachers, teacher assistants, family service staff, and health coordinators (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

EESLPD Unit: This Unit serves is a statewide LEA for nonpublic ECEs wo are eligible or hold, NC Birth-through-Kindergarten licensure. This unit provides services for teacher enrollment and licensure support. This unit includes two EESLPD office hubs to delineate field-based support to teachers. One of these offices is housed at UNC Charlotte (EESLPD office – West) and the second is located at East Carolina University (EESLPD office – East).

Evaluator: Person responsible for completing the teacher evaluation process. The EESLPD office serves as an LEA for Pre-K teachers and an EESLPD office evaluator completes evaluation rubrics for ECEs enrolled in the BTSP (de Kort-Young et al., 2016; McREL, 2009).

Evidences: Confirming a teacher's work by using documents as "evidences" the work of the person being evaluated (McREL, 2009).

Formal Evaluation Process: The evaluation process using all essential components (e.g., training, orientation, self-assessment, pre-and post-observation conferences, summary evaluation conference and summary rating form, professional development plan) (McREL, 2009).

Formal Observation: An observation lasting 45 minutes or entire lesson (McREL, 2009).

Informal Observation: An evaluator visits the classroom for a minimum of 20 minutes (McREL, 2009; de Kort-Young et al. 2016).

High-Need Children: Children from birth until kindergarten entry are from low-income families in need of support and/or assistance, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays. These children include those who are English learners, who reside on "Indian lands" as defined in Section 8013(6) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). These children are identified by the State (e.g., migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other identified children) (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965).

Inclusion: Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) joint position statement defines inclusion as high quality early childhood programs that provide access, participation, and supports to young children and their families, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad array of activities as full members of communities and society (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Part B (IDEIA, 2004): Federal legislation ensures children with disabilities, aged three to 21 years of age have access to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) offering special education and related services to meet their needs and prepare them for future independent living, education, and employment. Other purposes of Part B of IDEIA include: (a) ensuring the rights of children with disabilities and their families, (b) providing assistance to states, localities, federal agencies, and educational service agencies, for the provision of education for all children with disabilities (c) making sure that educators and families have access to tools necessary to improve the education of children with disabilities and (d) assessing the effectiveness of systems used to educate children with disabilities (IDEIA, 2004).

North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (NCTEP): This process is based on the framework for 21st Century Learning and the NC Professional Teaching Standards. This process assesses teacher's performance in relation to the NC Professional Teaching Standards to design a plan for professional growth (McREL, 2009).

Performance Rating Scale: The following components are used to determine evaluation ratings for NC Early Childhood Educators: (a) Developing – teacher demonstrated adequate growth but did not demonstrate competence on standards of performance, (b) Proficient - teacher demonstrated basic competence on performance standards, (c) Distinguished – teacher significantly and consistently demonstrated competence on performance standards (d) Distinguished – teacher exceeded competence on performance standards, and (e) Not Demonstrated (ND) - used to rate teacher performance when a teacher does not demonstrate growth or competence on performance standards. The LEA must provide a written description of why ND is marked on a teacher's evaluation rubric (de Kort-Young et al., 2016; McREL, 2018).

Program Standards: These standards define quality for early learning and development programs (e.g., tiered quality rating and improvement system). These standards define levels of quality for early learning and development programs. The standards include: (a) early learning and development standards, (b) a comprehensive assessment systems, (c) a qualified workforce, (d) successful strategies used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning (e.g., access to programs, ongoing communication with families, parent education), (e) health promotion practices, and (f) effective data practices (Department of Education, Early Learning Challenge, 2018).

Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating Teachers of Young Children (referred to as The Resource Manual): This manual is described as a "guide" developed for early childhood principals, administrators, teachers and others who are employed in both public and nonpublic settings who are involved in the implementation of high-quality preschool and kindergarten programs for young children. There are seven sections included in this manual including section VI, which was developed by professionals in the early childhood field. Section VI expands the generic language used in the NCTEP rubric and provides examples of high-quality early childhood professional practices (de Kort-Young et al., 2016).

Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers: A comprehensive matrix of performance standards, elements and descriptors found on the NC Professional Teaching Standards. (de Kort-Young et al. 2016; McREL, 2018).

Summative Evaluation Conference: The conference between the LEA and teacher to discuss components of the evaluation process (de Kort-Young et al., 2016; McREL, 2018).

Professional Development: Ongoing opportunities provided to those at all levels (policy makers, program directors, assessment administrators, practitioners) to understand the standards and the assessments and to learn to use the data and data reports with integrity for their own purposes (NRC, 2008).

Inclusion: Methods and procedures for ensuring that all children served by the program will be assessed fairly, regardless of their language, culture, or disabilities, and with tools that provide useful information for fostering their development and learning (NRC, 2008).

Opportunity to Learn: Procedures to assess whether the environments in which children are spending time offer high-quality support for development and learning, as well as safety, enjoyment, and affectively positive relationships, and to direct support to those that fall short (NRC, 2008).

Reporting: Maintenance of an integrated database of assessment instruments and results (with appropriate safeguards of confidentiality) that is accessible to potential users, that provides information about how the instruments and scores relate to standards, and that can generate reports for varied audiences and purposes (NRC, 2008).

Resources: The assurance that the financial resources needed to ensure the development and implementation of the system components will be available (NRC, 2008).

Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous monitoring of the system itself to ensure that it is operating effectively and that all elements are working together to serve the interests of the children. This entire infrastructure must be in place to create and sustain an assessment subsystem within a larger system of early childhood care and education (NRC, 2008).

Birth - Kindergarten Licensure: Early childhood educators who are licensed to work with children aged birth – five (or proper kindergarten age) and their families (Office of Early Learning, 2018).

Delimitations

The following delimitations of this study are listed below:

1. Results may vary depending on teacher, mentor, and evaluator demographic information (e.g., education level, race, ethnicity, setting, class population, mentor, evaluator, licensure status, year in BTSP, experience).

2. Results may vary based on a teacher's assigned mentor and evaluator.

3. Results may vary depending on an individual teacher's desire to participate in surveys and questionnaires pertaining to this project.

4. Results may vary based on the dynamics inherent in and across classroom settings (e.g., resources, child population, administration, class size, etc.).

5. Results may vary based on interpersonal affect of teacher and/or evaluator.

6. Results may vary based on pre- and post-observation conferences for individual teachers.

7. Results may vary based on the attrition of mentors, evaluators, and/or teachers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Early childhood educators in NC who have obtained or are working towards B-K

licensure are evaluated using the rubric (McREL, 2009) as part of the NC TEP, as are all

teachers in the state who teach Pre-K through 12th grades. The rubric is the tool that

accompanies the NC TEP and is used by evaluators to mark teacher progress

(Department of Public Instruction, 2018). Early childhood educators who have obtained

B-K licensure, are prepared at the preservice level to work with both typically developing

children and children with diagnosed disabilities or at-risk for DD and their families. In

NC, ECEs who have obtained B-K licensure serve the Pre-K population in the state as

both the special education teacher and the general education teacher for young children

and their families. This chapter reviews research-based literature and theoretical

perspectives that inform the EESLPD office conceptual framework for which this study

was based. This chapter begins with an introduction and explanation of why

ethnomethodology is used as a basis for this study. This description leads to the history of

inclusive early childhood education and an overview of the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), supporting research about the benefits of

inclusion, teacher evaluation, interrater reliability and evaluation, as well as evidence-

based coaching practices used with teachers, are also included in this chapter.

Ethnomethodology

The interpretive tradition used to inform this study is referred to as

ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). Qualitative research methods were chosen to

investigate two of the three research questions in the current study. These methods were

used due to the interest of the Lead Researcher (LR) in exploring ECE perceptions

regarding supports they receive from mentors and evaluators. Researchers who use qualitative methods may have a particular interest in exploring the authentic and complex experiences others have had (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004). The LR has many shared experiences as the individuals who were recruited for the present study. These shared experiences may have led to the interest on the part of the LR, to interview individual ECEs and use qualitative analysis to explore their personal perceptions regarding supports received.

Ethnomethodology is built on the sociological tradition referring to methods that people use to come to terms with events and interactions that occur in everyday life (e.g., ordinary events that may be underscored or taken-for-granted). This tradition is described as the exploration of underestimated and undervalued everyday life events and has many supporters in fields of sociology, communications, education, as well as organization and management (Prasad, 2005). Although ECEs work with children in educational settings, many of these classrooms are in nonpublic sites (e.g., community-based childcare, Head Start) and not located in public schools with school-age children (Odom et al., 2004). Due to this difference in classroom setting and environment from their public school counterparts, ECEs may be misinterpreted as "playing" or "babysitting" instead of providing educational opportunities to children within inclusive, early childhood environments. For example, ECEs may be in the floor with children guiding them by modeling positive peer interactions during center play or providing a cooking lesson as a way to explore physical science and measurement (Broderick, Aslinger, Hong, 2018; Hemmeter, Syder, & Fox, 2018).

Early childhood educators must be adaptable and often work in unpredictable environments with both typically developing children and children with or at-risk for disabilities and their families. These unpredictable environments may include working (a) with new staff and/or specialists, (b) with new children and families, (c) with children who have various abilities, and (d) in environments with changing organizational structures and/or curriculums (Odom et al., 2004). Boden (1990) has referred to ethnomethodology as viewing life as being in a constant state of disarray and chaos. The ethnomethodological perspective is such that people use particular methods to make sense of their world and their social interactions may be analyzed to better understand these constructs. Using this qualitative tradition may be a way to discover more about understanding ECE perceptions and needs for support when working in inclusive, early childhood classrooms (Sandall, Smith, McLean, & Ramsey, 2002).

The bioecological model, an extension of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), includes biological factors that impact a child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). This model indicates that interactions between factors in the child's life, including biological makeup, immediate family and community, and societal factors influence the development of young children. Prior research indicates that social supports and resources, including those from early childhood professionals, may influence the health of parents, which in turn, may positively enhance parenting styles having both direct and indirect outcomes that are favorable for the development of young children (Dunst, 1999; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 2011; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory has five components such as (a) the microsystem (e.g., layer closest to family, school, neighborhood, childcare environments)

(b) the mesosystem (e.g., layer providing the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem such as the relationship between the child's teacher and his parents) (c) the exosystem (e.g., layer includes the larger social system in which the child may not have direct contact such as mom/dad's work schedules and community-based family resources) (d) the macrosystem – (e.g., outermost layer in the child's environment including laws, cultural values, customs) and (e) the chronosystem – (e.g., the environmental circumstances that surround a child's life). These "systems" are particularly important in the development of a young child because as children get older, their reaction to environmental changes vary and they may be able to anticipate how changes will influence them.

Early childhood educators must be resilient under conditions that are ever-changing and evolving. Those ECEs who work with young children and families are impacted by external factors, many of which may be out of the realm of their control. Because of the often dynamic yet inconsistent working conditions in which ECEs function, the role of EESLPD office mentors and evaluators must be highly adaptable to best meet the specific needs of the teachers they support. A central presumption of ethnomethodology is the notion that although people may live under ever-changing circumstances that are often delicate in nature, strength may be acquired through the re-establishment of calm and order that is often derived from fragile experiences (Boden, 1990; Garfinkel, 1967; Prasad, 2005).

The ethnomethodological tradition of qualitative research is a natural fit for exploring ECE perceptions of support received by EESLPD office mentors and/or evaluators. Early childhood educators must be highly adaptable to be successful in

inclusive environments for young children and families. ECEs are constantly changing

strategies in the classroom based on needs to adapt to the variability of circumstances

faced in various learning environments (e.g., individual strengths/needs of children and

families, diverse backgrounds of children and families, resources and supports needed

and received). These educators may need a specialized form of coaching to guide their

teaching practices in inclusive Pre-K classrooms that enables them to meet the needs of

all children and families they serve.

EESLPD office mentors and evaluators have many shared experiences and

expertise as the teachers they support (e.g., similar education patterns, attainment of B- K

licensure, taught young children in inclusive Pre-K settings). The EESLPD office

incorporates a network of continuous and simultaneous mentor and evaluator support for

teachers in a coaching style that focuses on interactive modeling. Mentors and evaluators

implement interactive modeling that has components of (a) implicit modeling (e.g.,

actions mentors and evaluators use to support and respect individual ECEs) and (b)

explicit modeling (e.g., actions mentors and evaluators use to model best practice in the

Pre-K classroom for ECEs). Mentors and evaluators use this definition of interactive

modeling by alternating strategies, depending on the needs of an individual teacher.

A goal of the "model as coach/coach as model" approach is to guide teachers to a

place of self-awareness, which is a main attribute of a reflective practitioner. Once

teacher reflection emerges, the modeling and support demonstrated from mentors and

evaluators may influence teaching practices that occur in the early childhood classroom.

Through this self-awareness process, mentors and evaluators may, in turn, go through a

process of reflection that improves the support offered to the ECEs they support. This

reflective process may be mirrored by families, who have formed relationships with their young child's teacher, granting opportunities for them to have positive interactions with their children and learn about developmentally appropriate expectations for learning.

One strategy used to clearly define and describe the research-base and theories used in qualitative research design is the development of a concept map (Maxwell, 2005). The concept map in Figure 2 illustrates the reciprocal reflective process that may occur between ECE/ECSE teachers, children and their families, and their coaches. The five "windows" included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework are shown as an integrated circular pattern, referred to as "color bands" for the purpose of the concept map illustrated in Figure 2. The color bands and descriptors encompass reflective components and elements of self-awareness that occur as part of a continuous model of improvement, to implement high quality early childhood learning opportunities, as experienced by the teacher, child and family, and the coach. Maxwell (2005) suggests that arrows included in concept maps for qualitative research design methods may represent possible connections and/or relationships between circles and categories that are developed as part of qualitative research analysis. Figure 2 is meant to depict how each group included in the figure, informs and enlightens one another during this progression. A brief narrative with research supporting each band of the concept map is described below.
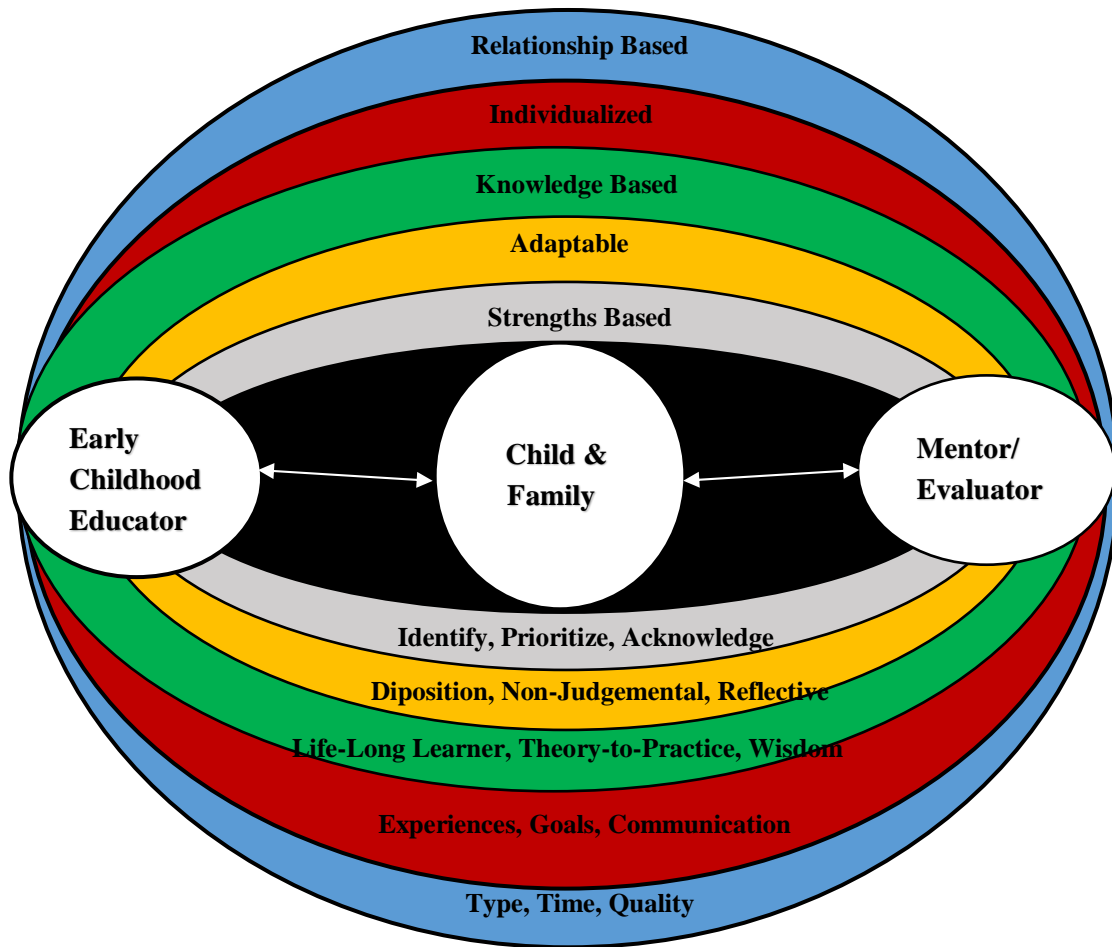
Figure 2. Concept Map of the "Ordinary Lives" of Early Childhood Educators: An Illustration of Shared Expertise, Experiences, and Supports that may Influence the Growth and Development of Young Children and Their Families (Taylor, 2018).

Relationship-based. The relationship-based component of Figure 2 is represented by a blue band with corresponding descriptors (e.g., type, time, and quality). These descriptors address the specific details associated with the relationship that is developed between the teacher, child/family, and coach such as (a) the *type* of relationship established, (b) the amount of time it takes to develop a relationship and/or sustain it, and (c) the quality of the relationship (e.g., level of comfortability with asking for help)? Building rapport and taking the time to get to know teachers is an important strategy to use in coaching models (Rush & Shelden, 2011). The *Coaching with Powerful Interactions* approach uses observations and thoughts to put educational practice into words, allowing both the coach and teacher to reflect and communicate (Jablon et al., 2016).

The time and intensity coaches may use with teachers may vary, but nonetheless, relationship-building is at the forefront of this supportive partnership. Throughout the literature the terms "mentor" and "coach" are often used interchangeably, there have been differences noted between the two in previous research (Sweeny, 2008). Mentors have been described in previous literature as a guide or tutor who helps his/her protégé extend teaching strategies while a coach assists in developing specific job-related skills by providing technical support (Sibley et al., 2010). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators gain information from teachers and follow through with guidance they provide throughout the entire time the teacher is served.

Mentors serve a challenging role in supporting teachers. It is vital that mentors seek to understand their mentee's motivations and communicate the necessity for the mentee to commit to the process as well as participate in ongoing PD and learning (Sibley et al., 2010). This literature suggests that a true partnership cannot form unless

the mentee reciprocates participation in the mentor relationship and actively takes part in the transformation process. While the EESLPD office mentors and evaluators may provide support that is relevant and individualized based on a teacher's needs, the educator needs to take an active role in implementing the agreed upon change in order to grow professionally and create opportunities for optimal child growth and development. This example indicates the reciprocal nature of relationship building and development needed between the ECE, child and family, as well as the coach.

Individualized. The individualized component of Figure 2 is represented by a red band with corresponding descriptors (e.g., experiences, goals, communication). Early childhood educators enrolled with the EESLPD office may need different levels of support to meet the diverse needs of young children. Early childhood educators who are supported by EESLPD mentors and evaluators need holistic support from coaches who are mindful of all the factors that encompass the ECE, child, and inclusive classroom environment. Odom et al. (2004) indicated several of these factors such as (a) class size, physical characteristics of the classroom, and teacher-child ratio (b) the use of developmentally appropriate curriculum (c) the children's developmental domains and various range of abilities and (d) the balancing act of employing both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Due to these factors and highly individualized nature of the work of ECEs, it is important that mentors and evaluators use well thought out approaches to support the individual needs of teachers. It is important that mentors and evaluators are able to name their coaching habits (e.g., self-judgment, social identity, projections, philosophical positions, emotional triggers, routines, distractions, expert mind) to best support individual teachers (Sibley et al., 2010). When mentors and

evaluators are aware of their coaching habits they are better able to support teachers individually, rather than generalizing information and strategies for all. Once coaching habits are identified, mentors and evaluators may be better able to model how to provide individualized support in the hopes that this modeling will influence future interactions with children and families.

Prior research suggests that professionals who work with very young children and their families should provide individualized and responsive interventions (Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Dunst & Trivette, 2005; James & Chard, 2010; McWilliam & Scott, 2001; McWilliam et al., 1998). Early childhood professionals who provide individualized and responsive supports may promote the family's ability to identify their own priorities, strengths, and needs. Individualized support provided by the EESLPD office may elicit an ECE's desire and ability to identify professional goals, strengths, and areas of need.

It takes time for coaches to get to know the teachers they support, just as it takes focus and attention for ECEs to get to know the children in their classrooms. Individualizing support by using the *Coaching with Powerful Interactions* approach means finding the "right fit." Coaches need to communicate with teachers in the manner that best suits the needs of the individual teacher (Dantonio, 1995). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators exhibits their own personal stance when working to support teachers. The *Coaching with Powerful Interactions* approach includes questions to help coaches in the ECE field to identify their own personal stance when supporting teachers. Some of these questions may include information about (a) communication, (b) interaction style (e.g., based on teacher strengths/needs or prescriptive), and (c) modeling strategies (Jablon et al., 2016).

By individualizing support, coaches are able to guide teachers through a process of viewing themselves as whole beings. They are given the opportunity to explore the internal and external factors that make-up who they are as educators. Previous research suggests that coaches are successful in supporting teachers when they are also provided with information that is based on their individual needs (e.g., resources and curricula) to address feedback provided to them (Crawford, Zucker, Van Horne, & Landry, 2017). Through this process, teachers may be able to better identify their own priorities that will later benefit their professional practice as well as children's growth and development.

Knowledge-based. The knowledge-based component of Figure 2 is represented by a green band with corresponding descriptors (e.g., life-long learner, theory-to-practice, wisdom). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators have early childhood education backgrounds and must use specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities they have acquired to best support the teachers they serve, such as knowledge of (a) child development and application of theory, (b) adult learning theory and EBPs in designing and delivering effective professional development, (c) specific program requirements, (d) technical knowledge, (e) how to build collaborative partnerships, (f) interpersonal skills, and (g) the facilitation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

EESLPD office mentors and evaluators are expected to have teacher competencies identified by NAEYC (2006) such as (a) an understanding of the range of influences on child development, (b) a respect for relationships with all families, (c) knowledge of effective assessment strategies, (d) content knowledge in all learning areas, and (e) assets such as being self-motivated, reflective, and using critical thinking skills to solve problems. Professional judgement of coaches should also be exercised consistently

by effective coaches. Sibley et al. (2010) suggests three main elements of professional development that guide the professional judgment of teachers including (a) establishing qualifications for those in the profession, (b) assigning roles and responsibilities to those in the profession, and (3) creating a system of self-regulation among professionals in the field (e.g., service delivery, ethical standards, principles to acquire high-quality practice).

The application of high-quality learning standards and EBPs is also exercised by effective coaches. The concept of high-quality early learning programs is based on a long standing and strong research base (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, 2001; NIEER, 2007; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2015). In a position statement regarding developmentally appropriate practice, high-quality early learning programs should consider the age of the child as well the individual appropriateness of practices for each child (NAEYC & National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 2002). These two areas emphasize that while there may be predictable growth sequences that happen in early childhood development, each child has his/her own individual growth pattern than may deter from the predictable sequence of others. Individual children follow a linear pattern of growth and development that may include periods of alternating regressions and progressions (Brazelton, 2000). Furthermore, the DEC/NAEYC joint position statement on inclusion (2009) suggests components to improve teaching practices in high-quality, inclusive early learning programs such as (a) the provision of opportunities for every child to reach his or her full potential, (b) an established system of services and supports, and (c) an integrated inclusion philosophy and policy.

Finally, wisdom is said to have no one definition that encompasses all attributes of the term (Jeste et al., 2010). However, wisdom is generally known to be the application of knowledge. The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators consistently provide support to teachers by applying and implementing their knowledge of coaching identified in NAEYC's *Coaching with Coaching with Powerful Interactions Stance* (Jablon et al., 2016). These principles have been modified for the purposes of addressing how EESLPD mentors and evaluators provide support to teachers and include: (a) knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice to support teacher implementation of best practice in the classroom, (b) a commitment to sharing the responsibility of being a life-long learner and (c) motivating ECEs to improve their teaching practices.

Adaptable. The adaptable component of Figure 2 is represented by a gold color band with corresponding descriptors (e.g., disposition, non-judgmental, and reflection). Coaches who work with ECEs must be adaptable for many reasons with one of which being the high turnover rate that occurs in early childhood settings (Odom et al., 2000; Rush & Shelden, 2011). Prior research on dispositions in ECE settings suggests that children do not acquire dispositions through instructional processes, but dispositions are modeled for them as they experience people who exhibit them (Katz, 1993). Jablon et al. (2016) suggests that modeling in ECE settings influences child outcomes, and coaches should model behaviors that positively influence the interactions between teachers, children, and families. The individualized, strength-based coaching style used by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators is needed to inspire teachers to evolve to a level of professionalism that requires independent reflection and a reliance on the support and expertise of colleagues. Mindfulness has been described as a disposition because it can be

described as a way to gather and process information in a flexible, yet alert way (Langer, 1993; Langer, 2009). The EESLPD office coaching style uses mindfulness as a strategy to remain present with teachers and to intentionally think and make decisions to best support them.

The idea of using a non-judgmental approach when supporting ECEs comes from the initiation of family-centered assessment practices in the field of EI (Dunst et al., 1988, 2011; Turnbull, Turbiville, & Turnbull, 2000). When coaches use a non-judgmental approach when guiding ECE practices, the coach is developing a working condition that includes trust, a nonhierarchical approach, and one that allows for partnership during the learning process. Rush and Shelden (2011) suggested a series of coaching practice indicators included in their *Early Childhood Coaching Handbook*. One such indicator includes interacting in a non-judgmental manner to elicit constructive dialogue between the coach and coachee. Guiding ECEs through a process of self-awareness and reflective practice by using non-judgmental approaches may best meet teachers where they currently are in their profession, just as family-centered practices are meant to meet families where they are to best meet the needs of their child and build parenting confidence and competence.

A professional can be defined as a reflective practitioner who works independently, applies specialized knowledge, uses professional judgment, and is accountable for his/her conduct and professional growth (Harvey, 2003). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators must use professional judgment daily in their work with individual teachers. Adult learners participate in learning new information when the information is related to current experiences and the learner is able to actively engage in

the learning process (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Based on the many diverse needs of teachers and the children they serve in their classrooms, mentors and evaluators must meet teachers "where they are," much as teachers do with the young children and families they support. EESLPD office mentors/evaluators are active participants in guiding teachers through the feedback loop including modification, action, and reaction.

Strengths-based. The strengths-based component of Figure 2 is represented by a gray color band with corresponding descriptors (e.g., identify, prioritize, and acknowledge). The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators focus on validating what's going well in the classroom before providing suggestions to improve practice. Peterson and Valk (2010) indicate that in their practice with teachers, focusing on teacher strengths is one way to build trusting relationships. The *Coaching with Powerful Interactions* approach uses a strengths-based perspective by identifying what teachers do well and coaches use this as the basis for future learning (Jablon et al., 2016). Early childhood educators want their efforts validated. By having the proper support from mentors and evaluators that emphasize strengths and capacity-building, the self-confidence of teachers served may be positively impacted. Just as teachers need support from coaches who use a strengths-based approach, children need their strengths acknowledged by teachers who use their capacities as a foundation to develop future learning goals. Circumstances that occur both within and outside the family unit may greatly influence child and family strengths. Prior research encourages practitioners to use an ecological systems framework and family systems theory, to work with very young children with special needs and their families to benefit the developmental potential of young children (Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 2011). As EESLPD office mentors and evaluators work to

support teachers, it is important to keep these previous findings in mind. Mentoring and coaching teachers using a strengths-based approach may influence teachers to use positive teaching practices with children (Gardner & Toope, 2011).

The concept map of the "Ordinary Lives" of Early Childhood Educators: An Illustration of Shared Expertise, Experiences, and the Supports that may Influence the Growth and Development of Young Children and Their Families (Taylor, 2018) in Figure 2 represents possible connections between the ECE, child and family, and mentor/evaluator as well as relationships between the means of support offered. The concept map also highlights the process of self-awareness and reflection that may occur during a continuous model of improvement, to implement high quality, inclusive early childhood settings. Ethnomethodology, is used as a basis for this study and describes the "ordinary lives" of ECEs and how perhaps, their lives aren't ordinary in the slightest. The teacher-student arrangement that occurs in public schools across the United States, may look quite different from those inclusive early childhood education classrooms that have ECEs serving as the lead teacher. A large variety of factors (e.g., child and family characteristics, classroom environment/location, materials/resources available, quality of interactions) (Odom et al., 2004). These factors need to be consistently juggled and balanced by ECEs in early childhood classrooms or the quality of teaching and learning that occurs may be impacted. This juggling act can be summarized as being anything but "ordinary." In order to understand the complexities involved in the history and ongoing mission of developing high quality, inclusive programs for young children, it is important to know where the early childhood field started and how it has evolved today.

Review of the Literature

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

Historical legislation has heavily impacted the implementation of state ECE programs across the United States. Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Public Law No. 99-142 (1975), children with disabilities were not guaranteed a viable education and were often institutionalized. For example, prior to P.L. No. 99-142, approximately 200,000 individuals with disabilities resided in state institutions (U.S. Department of Public Education, 2018). Public Law (P. L.) 99-142 afforded children with disabilities between the ages of 5 – 21 years, a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) as well as protected the rights of children and their families. Furthermore, this law provided incentive funding for states that established programs serving children with disabilities in the age range of 3-5 years (Part B) and offered support programs to families and children aged birth – two years. An amendment to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, (P. L. 99-457, 1986) required the development of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) as part of IDEA, Part C, for eligible infants, toddlers and their families in lieu of waiting to create an Individual Education Program (IEP) for those children at-risk for developing delays or disabilities at school age. Public Law 101-476, a reauthorization of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act Amendments, was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990 (IDEA, 1990).

In 1991, P. L. 102-119 of IDEA combined and amended P. L. 99-142 and P. L. 99-457 to include several substantial revisions such as (a) the need to ensure smooth transitions for children served in EI programs who are entering preschool programs,

including the development of an IEP if eligible (b) the development of a comprehensive delivery system including inclusive support for children aged 3-5 years with disabilities and (c) the provision of FAPE to children who turn 3 years old during the school year. In Section 8 of P. L. 102-119, under "Early Education for Children with Disabilities," two important insertions were added such as (a) children at-risk for DDs were included with provisions made for children with disabilities and (b) the provision of outreach programs were added to identify minority, rural, low-income populations who had children in the age range of birth – five years, not served adequately by Parts B and H. Lastly, this legislation included a support provision in conjunction with state plans to serve infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in integrated environments instead of separate environments.

The 1997 IDEA Amendments, P. L. 105-17 had relevance regarding the identification of young children (aged 3 – 9 years of age) as DD. This amendment gave permission to states to use this category at the state's discretion for young children experiencing delays in development. A reauthorization of IDEA was signed by President George Bush on December 3, 2004 (IDEIA, Public Law 108-446, 2004). A major provision of this legislation included information pertaining to the *need* for "highly qualified" special education teachers, effective immediately upon the President's signature. This legislation noted that State Education Agencies (SEAs) should begin and maintain the proper training and preparation of personnel to serve children with disabilities. Also included in this legislation was the provision that states require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to take steps to recruit, hire, prepare, and maintain personnel considered to be "highly qualified" to work with children with disabilities.

Furthermore, Section 612 of IDEIA, Part B (2004), indicates that all children who live in a state (e.g., homeless children, wards of the state, children in private school settings) be identified, located, and evaluated for special education and/or related services through identification (e.g., child find) processes. These processes include provisions such as (a) the equitable participation of children with disabilities (b) the provision of activities in inclusive, nonpublic settings provided by the LEA and (c) the duration of services and completion of such services to be comparable for both children with and without disabilities (IDEIA, 2004).

Recent amendments to IDEIA (2004) occurred through Public Law 114-95, in December 2015. Congress noted that individuals with disabilities make contributions to society and that disability is a natural part of being human (U.S. Department of Public Education (a), 2018). The stated purpose of IDEIA included six components for children with disabilities such as (a) providing FAPE (b) meeting unique needs (c) protecting the rights of children and their families (d) enabling states (e.g., federal, state, local educational agencies) to provide education for all children with disabilities (e) ensuring that families and educators have the tools necessary to improve educational outcomes (e.g., research efforts, personnel preparation and training, technical assistance) and (f) the provision of assessment and effectiveness efforts (U.S. Department of Education (b), 2018). This information is important to consider when supporting ECEs who work in inclusive settings.

IDEA, Part B Eligibility Criteria

Children aged 3 - 9 years or a subgroup of this age (e.g., 3 – 5 years) may be evaluated and found eligible to receive special education services at the individual state's

discretion through federal legislation in Part B of IDEIA (2004). Eligibility criteria

includes children in the aforementioned age range having a DD in one or more

developmental domains (e.g., physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional,

and/or adaptive domains). Children that fall under eligibility criteria may need special

education and/or related services due to delays in one or more of the developmental

domains listed above and states must follow regulations set forth by P. L. 105-17 (IDEA,

1997).

North Carolina's policy regarding the use of DD as an eligibility category to

receive Part B of IDEIA pertains to children aged three - 7 years or until their 8th

birthday. North Carolina's age range for Part B eligibility criteria concurs with DEC's

(2008) recommendation of using DD as an eligibility category appropriately for children

aged 3 – 8 years. Some concerns have arisen from parents, administrators, and ECEs

about the use of DD as a disability category. As identified by the DEC (2008), two

concerns of using the eligibility category of DD are (a) that this category may shield

families from their child's true disability and/or, (b) the category may inhibit the use of

proper services provided to eligible children who otherwise may receive supports needed

if categorized under a more specific disability category. While DEC does not disagree

with the use of DD as an eligibility category as intended by IDEIA (2004), DEC does not

recommend that all young children (aged 3-5 years) found eligible for special education

services be placed under the DD category. Specific disability categories (e.g., visually

impaired, deaf-blind, traumatic brain injury, etc.) allow for eligible children to be

provided with the most qualified professionals, as well as additional public and/or private

funding that may benefit the child (DEC Concept Paper, Developmental Delay as an

Eligibility Category, 2008). If properly followed, legislation provided by IDEIA (2004)

suggests that families of eligible children are important members of the IEP team.

Families are to be involved in all decisions regarding eligibility, service delivery, and the

individualization of services for their child, regardless of eligibility category.

Furthermore, families should have a part in deciding the best supports needed for their

child, based on the specific eligibility category.

Inclusion

The support of inclusive programming is evident through research, recommended

practices and joint positions on inclusion (e.g., DEC/NAEYC, 2009; U.S. Department of

Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). Legislation

included in IDEIA (Parts C and B, 2004) calls for young children with DD and/or at-risk

for disabilities to be placed in natural environments (IDEA, Part C, 2004, §303.26) and

the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

The LRE (IDEIA, Part B, 2004, §300.11) is defined as a setting where children

with disabilities will participate with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent

appropriate. The LRE for preschool aged children who have an IEP would be any setting

that their typically developing peers would participate. The law, according to IDEIA

(2004), states that a justification must be written in the child's IEP to include why the

eligible child will not be included with his/her typically developing peers. The act of

placing a child eligible for IDEIA, Part B services in a separate setting, other than with

his/her typically developing peers, is deemed appropriate only if the nature of the child's

disability is so severe that an inclusive placement in the LRE would not be beneficial to

the child's development. Furthermore, if adaptations and modifications cannot be made

in the LRE to meet the needs of the eligible child, only then is it suitable to separate the child from his/her typically developing peers. Those ECEs in NC who have attained or are working towards a B-K license either work with or will work with young children in inclusive early childhood education classrooms. It is vital for ECEs to understand how to effectively develop adaptations and/or modifications for individual children who may need the additional support to fully participate with peers. Developing modifications gives all children in the classroom opportunities to actively participate with peers by (a) adjusting routines, (b) making changes to the environment, and (c) modifying activities and materials (Milbourne & Campbell, 2007). Early childhood educators are successful at creating learning opportunities that are participation-based when they embed adapted materials and activities in the daily routine so that every child can participate (Campbell, 2004). If adaptations and/or modifications are not created by ECEs for children who need them in early childhood inclusive classrooms, there be unnecessary referrals that include the removal of children from natural settings where they may learn alongside their peers.

A specialized form of coaching and mentoring may be helpful for ECEs regarding making adaptations and/or modifications in the classroom. Since EESLPD mentors and evaluators have a shared knowledge base with the ECEs they support (e.g., B-K license, four-year degree, or advanced degree in early childhood education) they are in a position to offer suggestions and advice to ECEs based on their own experiences of working with young children. The mentoring experience has been described as one in which mentors describe their personal experiences in the effort to add value to the professional growth of mentees (Ives, 2008).

Currently, across the United States, there is important emphasis on early learning. While an abundance of research exists indicating the relevance of inclusion in promoting the development of typically developing children and children with or at risk for DD or disabilities, barriers still exist in providing high quality early childhood programs that are truly inclusive. Previous research suggests that while continuity of services between Parts C and B may be less of a concern than once thought, the implementation of policies that govern this legislation, including service systems beyond IDEA, must be examined carefully to best meet the needs of children and families (Danaher, Shackelford, & Harbin, 2004). Mentors and evaluators may be in a position to provide high caliber individualized support to ECEs who work in inclusive, early childhood environments. Having knowledge of the legislation that impacts educators and the children and families they work with is an important component to providing high-quality, inclusive Pre-K programs. Educators who are supported in meeting the needs of various learners in their classroom may be able to better meet, and go beyond the requirements set for them by performance evaluation measures, such as the NC TEP.

On September 14, 2015, Secretary Duncan of the U.S. Department of Education and Secretary Matthews of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services showed support for the implementation of inclusive practices by referencing the strong research base and legal foundation for providing these practices to children with and without disabilities. The Secretaries issued a letter encouraging States, teachers, private and public early childhood programs and schools, professional organizations, families and other advocates to expand access for all children to participate in inclusive early

childhood programs that are of high-quality (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).

This joint letter describes "high quality" early childhood programs as being inclusive of children with disabilities and their families, and that proper funding, policies, and practices should provide for the full participation of all children regardless of ability. The joint letter suggests that all early childhood programs (e.g., public and private preschool settings, Head Start, and the IDEA) are vital in building a comprehensive system and culture that meets the individual developmental needs of diverse learners and their families. This letter is meant to inform the practices of SEAs, LEAs, and schools as well as provide recommendations for inclusive programming. Furthermore, the letter indicates that inclusive early childhood programs should hold high expectations for typically developing children as well as children at risk for DD or with a diagnosed disability.

Early childhood educators who are evaluated using the rubric as part of the NC TEP are supported by EESLPD mentors and evaluators. These ECEs are required to provide learning activities that are inclusive and meet the individual needs of all children. They are also required to implement EBPs with children in their classrooms. The joint letter described above includes suggestions for inclusive programming such as (a) early childhood settings should intentionally promote the participation of all children in the classroom during both learning and social activities (b) individualized needs should be met for all children and (c) EBPs should be used by ECEs to promote all children's development, encompassing the five domains of development (e.g., cognitive, emotional-social, language/communication, motor, and adaptive). This joint letter refers to the

constructs of inclusive programming that is suitable for both typically developing children and those with mild and/or significant disabilities in inclusive early childhood settings.

Odom et al. (2004) noted that in early childhood education programs, ECE use of 'developmentally appropriate practice' is considered of high standard. In NC, early childhood educators use *Foundations for Early Learning and Development* (North Carolina Foundations Task Force, 2013) as the standard course of study for Pre-K. The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators support ECEs in completing *Foundations* training modules required of them as well as guide them to meet proficiency on the rubric as part of the TEP. Foundations training incorporates all domains of development into the PD modules and describes goals for children's learning and development that is embedded in developmentally appropriate practice.

Universal Design for Learning

There has been a movement to combine fields of early childhood education and special education to meet legislative demands, including equity and inclusion. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can support access to various settings in inclusive education by removing structural barriers. This design can help with educating all young children in multiple learning environments. Darraugh (2007) referred to both inclusion and natural environments as representing a philosophy, rather than "places," to guide ECEs in supporting equity for all children. She indicated that while all children have unique needs that must be met individually, many training programs for ECEs include separate areas to learn about typically developing children and children with special needs (e.g., separate sections embedded within text about disabilities/special needs,

inclusion, and/or accommodations). She further describes the notion of promoting early childhood environments that emphasizes the unique abilities of all individual children in the classroom as a means to focus on equity of equality for young children. Five components of the UDL include children having opportunities to (a) access high quality education and care, (b) have several means of support offered by ECEs, (c) engage with peers, (d) express themselves, and (d) share in learning experiences that support equity in the field of early childhood education.

Research by Hurley and Horn (2010) indicates that early childhood education program philosophy and support, as well as personnel beliefs regarding inclusion, may lead to variability of participation during classroom activities. The Universal Design for Early Childhood Education (UDECE) uses a design based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model (1979) and emphasizes that all children should bring their unique abilities to their learning environment as well as have their individualized needs met in a common setting. These researchers indicated that full participation of *all* children was one of the most valued characteristics in inclusive settings and that the goals of UDECE should be met by focusing on standards and accountability of programs that serve all young children and their families. However, it is important to note that not all inclusive programs are created equal, and families should help choose the setting for their child that is most suitable for their child's ability level (e.g., separate, self-contained, inclusive, integrated) and their choice should be respected and valued as important members of the team (DEC, 2008). Researchers suggested valued characteristics of inclusive programs such as (a) having a caring staff, (b) providing a full range of adaptations and accommodations for young children with disabilities, (c) providing opportunities for

collaboration among family members and professionals, (d) hiring professionals who will work with young children with disabilities, and (e) creating opportunities for children with disabilities to be independent.

Inclusion/EESLPD office

There is an abundance of research that supports inclusive practices provided by ECEs when working with young children and families. The work of the EESLPD office supports inclusive practices described in joint position statements and letters (e.g., DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Department of Education/Department of Health and Human Services, 2015) by providing support to ECEs who work in inclusive settings with typically developing children, children considered "high risk," and children diagnosed with DD or other disabilities. The work of the EESLPD office mentors and evaluators serves to provide a supportive coaching role through consultation and evaluation with ECEs through the licensure process. Buysse, Wesley, and Able-Boone (2001) discovered in previous research that consulting with teachers may be a vital first step in creating high-quality inclusive programs (e.g., receiving information, sharing strategies, providing support). This research also found that consulting and collaborating with families as well as professionals may serve to expand inclusive programs for all children, those with and without disabilities, in ECE settings and the community at-large.

The primary focus of the work of the EESLPD office is to support ECEs as they strive to meet the individual needs of children and their families, in the preschool classroom. The common theme listed in the recommendations for using the DEC/NAEYC joint position statement on inclusion (2009) is to have a collective and consistent definition of inclusion used among agencies and a spectrum of inclusive

programs. Having a collective and consistent definition of inclusion is important and can

be used to create the necessary high expectations of young children enrolled in these

programs. Using a consistent definition of inclusion can be used to shape the policies and

practices that govern inclusive programs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004)

requires that young children be given the opportunity to participate as much as possible in

the same setting as their same age peers. Both the DEC and NAEYC recommend that

learning environments for young children should take place in natural environments and

the LRE, which include both home and community settings. A defining feature of the

term inclusion, according to Guralnick (2001), defines inclusion as the "…planned

participation…" of children with and without disabilities in developmental and/or

educational programs and the community.

Research Supporting the Impact of Early Childhood Education on Young Children

Early childhood education may be instrumental in closing gaps pertaining to

socialization factors and academic achievement leading to positive outcomes for children,

families, and communities. Prior research has indicated that preschool education has

positive long-term effects for young children such as (a) higher scores on achievement

tests, (b) lower rates of grade repetition, (c) lower rates of children referred to special

education, (d) improved social and emotional behavior leading to less delinquency and

crime later in life, and (e) higher earnings upon entering the workforce in adulthood

(Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Young

children who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds may be considered "high risk" or

"at-risk" for educational disadvantage. High quality early childhood learning programs

may be in a position to produce significant impacts to the growth and development of young children and their families.

The Abecedarian Study and the Perry Preschool Study are both research studies that show positive effects for early childhood programs (Belfield, Milagros, Barnett, & Schweinhart, 2006). These studies used control groups that were randomly assigned. Children were primarily African-American and from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These studies followed children into adulthood (e.g. approximately age 40) to analyze progress. Children who were part of the early childhood programs had positive outcomes through the teenage years and eventually into adulthood. These children were less likely to quit school or become involved in risky behaviors that lead to incarceration when compared with the control group (e.g., those who did not attend the half-day early childhood programs) (Haskins, 2016; Ramey, Sparling, & Ramey, 2012). Findings also indicated that children who participated in the early childhood programs were more likely to graduate high school and go to college than their control group counterparts. Effects from these studies show that early childhood programs may have immediate positive effects and long-term gains for children.

Although marginalized populations have shown both short-term and long-term performance improvements, previous research indicates that all children benefit from being enrolled in preschool education (Haskins, 2016). Practices considered developmentally appropriate for the education and care of young children are based on what is known about (a) child development and learning (b) child interests, strengths, and needs and (c) the cultural and social environments in which a child inhabits (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Head Start was one of the first programs the federal government invested in with 500,000 children from low socioeconomic environments enrolled in the program's inaugural year in 1965 (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, & Lavelle, 2010). About 950,000 children are currently enrolled in Head Start with approximately 1.38 million children enrolled in state Pre-K early childhood programs (Haskins, 2016). Currently 42 states, including the District of Columbia, have public Pre-K programs (Barnett et al., 2016).

Federal and state funding for preschool programs has continued to increase since 1965 with current funding totaling approximately $34 billion annually (Haskins, 2016; Burchinal et al., 2010). While more public funding has become available over the last several decades, many barriers exist in expanding access to early care and education programs for children such as (a) reaching all of those children and families who receive median-income or are at poverty level, (b) various funding streams susceptible to large-scale cuts due to differing priorities, and (c) the availability of high-quality learning programs for all populations of young children (Barnett & Hustedt, 2011). The 2016-2017 State of Preschool Report Card (NIEER, 2017; Squires, 2017) found that some state-funded preschool programs had improved regarding funding provided, while others had not or even fell behind. While overall increases in state funding have occurred over time (e.g., 2004 = $2.4 billion vs. 2017 = $7.6 billion), a decrease has occurred in investments per child (e.g., 2002 = $5395 per child [equivalent number from $3,458 projected for 2017] vs. 2017 = $5,008). Since state spending per child is a predictor of program quality, this decrease is a concern regarding the amount funding provided for high-quality early care and education (NIEER, 2017).

A recommendation put forth by Barnett and Hustedt (2011) is to provide opportunities for early childhood programs (e.g., Head Start, community-based programs, private early care and education) to work in more coordinated ways with a focus on performance and outcomes. These researchers suggest that focusing on educator practices and outcomes for children may impact program quality, rather than implementing strict monitoring and compliance structures. Having EESLPD mentors and evaluators support ECEs through the growth model incorporated within the NC TEP may be one way this recommendation can be met in order to improve quality in early childhood programs.

Importance of High Quality Early Childhood Education in North Carolina

In 2012, The National Center for Children in Poverty reported that nearly half (11.4 million) of the 24 million children under the age of six living in the U.S. live in low-income or poor families. This number includes 12% of children under the age of six living in extreme poverty. Living in poverty is 1 of seven risk factors listed in the *Young Child Risk Calculator* that may negatively impact long term health and academic outcomes for children (The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York, National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), 2012).

In NC and according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), approximately 572,468 NC households received SNAP (food stamps). Between the years of 2008 and 2012, 12.4% of all families in NC lived at or below poverty level for at least one year (American Community Survey). Demographically, it is estimated that in 2012, Hispanics (34.2%) made up the majority of residents living in poverty with American Indians (29.8%), African Americans (27.1%), and Caucasians (12.9%) making up the remainder of those families living in poverty. Families who have children are at a much higher risk

for poverty and for families with children under 5, risk factors increase (e.g., families who have children aged 18 and under = 19.8% risk vs. families with only have children under 5 = 21.2% (Dukes & Leslie, 2005).

According to the NC Pre-K (2015-2016) Executive Summary published by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, the NC Pre-K Program served approximately 29,000 children in 2015-2016 in over 1,900 classrooms across the state. The majority of children served in NC Pre-K classroom were from low-income families. Children eligible to participate in NC Pre – K is based on the child's age (4 years old) and family income (75% of state median income). Children whose families earn more than the median income are eligible for enrollment if at least one of the following risk factors exists: (a) identified disability, (b) chronic health issue, (c) limited English fluency, (d) education needs, and/or (e) a parent who is actively serving in the military (Peisner – Feinberg, Mokrova, & Anderson, 2017; Shore, Shue, & Lambert, 2010). Eligible children are served in classroom-based educational settings (e.g., public Pre-K programs, Head Start, private childcare and Pre-K programs). In accordance with state requirements, NC Pre-K funding provides eligible children a 6 ½ hour school day over 180 days/year that has a variety of curriculum program standards as well as ongoing child screening and assessment methods. Teachers who work for NC Pre-K are required to hold a B - K license in order to work with eligible children and their families.

A Brief History of Pre-Kindergarten Programs in North Carolina

The information provided in this next section includes a brief history of NC Pre-K programming described in the Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating Teachers of Young Children (de Kort-Young et al., 2016).

Originally through the More at Four (MAF) Pre-K Program (2001), NC has provided state-funded Pre-K programs for four-year old children. The program was moved from the NC of Public Instruction (NC DPI) to the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) during the 2011-2012 school year via the NC General Assembly. This move did not change the high standards set forth with the original MAF program.

Early childhood educators who worked in nonpublic settings (e.g., developmental day, Head Start, child care centers) were not offered the same licensure support that was available to MAF early childhood educators who taught in public programs prior to 2007. At that time, the needs of ECEs who taught young children in nonpublic settings were recognized and the NC State Board of Education (NCSBE) approved the NCDPI, Office of Early Learning request to support ECEs who work in nonpublic schools through the Teacher Licensure Unit (TLU). Approved by the NCSBE, the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (PKKTPAI) (Lambert et al., 2008) was used with all licensed ECEs to measure performance evaluation. The PKKTPAI was used until 2010-2011, when all NC teachers began being evaluated using the NC TEP. In 2011, the NC Pre-K program (originally MAF) was renamed by the NC General Assembly and all operations moved to the NC DCDEE, including support for ECEs who taught in nonpublic sites through the EESLPD Unit.

EESLPD Unit

The EESLPD Unit is a statewide LEA located within the Early Education Branch of the DCDEE. The EESLPD offices support ECEs, holding lateral entry, initial (formerly SPI) and continuing (formerly SPII) licensure who are employed in nonpublic Pre-K sites, including developmental day preschool classrooms. The EESLPD Unit

developed regional hubs at two institutions of higher education in 2014-2015 (e.g., East

Carolina University [ECU – Eastern Hub], and University of NC at Charlotte ([UNC

Charlotte – Western Hub]). The EESLPD office hubs administer PD, mentoring and

evaluation support services to ECEs, as outlined by the NC State Board of Education

policy. The EESLPD office evaluators are responsible for using the NC TEP to formally

and informally observe teachers.

Guidance provided by both EESLPD office mentors and evaluators is intended to

support ECEs through the licensure process. The cycle of coaching used by EESLPD

mentors and evaluators to support ECEs during the Beginning Teacher Support Program

(BTSP) is heavily rooted in forming relationships by using a strengths-based approach

that is both individualized and holistic. The completion of this project has informed a

process of reliability among evaluators and fidelity to the EESLPD office framework to

consistently support ECEs in providing high-quality education and care that positively

impacts child and family growth and development (Taylor et al., 2017).

EESLPD Office Statewide and Local Partnerships

Each school year approximately 1,000 ECEs who work in nonpublic early

childhood settings in NC are actively served by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators

(de Kort-Young et al., 2016). According to a 2016-2017 EESLPD office hubs update, the

EESLPD offices reported that 128 partners (e.g., professionals from Head Start and

Smart Start, classroom teachers, community college instructors, four-year college/

university professors, site administrators, and principals) were working with the EESLPD

office to support ECEs. This indicates quite an increase in just two years from only 87

partners working to support ECEs across NC during the 2014-2015 school year.

In 2000, the NC Demonstration Classroom Project was developed as an expansion of *The Power of Kindergarten Teacher Leader Initiative* (NC DPI, 2007) as an emergent literacy model using best practices to teach NC Pre-K children with special needs. Currently, as a further expansion of Phase 2 of the *Power of K* there have been twelve new demonstration sites established. These demonstration sites represent both Pre-K (n = 6) and kindergarten (n = 6) classrooms across the state.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Pre-K Programs. The EESLPD Unit has had a ten-year, long-standing collaborative partnership with CMS Pre-K programs. Currently, 50 of 56 ECEs who teach children in nonpublic Pre-K sites in the Charlotte area, are provided evaluation and/or mentoring support services by CMS staff, serving as EESLPD partners. Because of the self-sustaining program, the EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte is able to serve many more ECEs in surrounding counties in NC. During the 2017-2018 school year, the EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte served close to 400 ECEs who work for 217 different early childhood programs. The EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte serves ECEs in another 80 programs through partnerships with qualified early childhood personnel serving a total of 297 sites located in 45 of 54 NC counties in the western part of state.

The Pyramid Model Institute. A Project of NC's Healthy Social Behaviors Initiative (CCRI) – is an example of a second collaboration that is emerging with the EESLPD office – West hub. During the 2017- 2018 school year, EESLPD office mentors and evaluators who have not been previously trained, attended Pyramid Model Training. This training includes concepts related to working with young children such as social-emotional competencies, challenging behavior, protective risk factors, brain development, and kindergarten readiness. This training is offered to EESLPD office

mentors and evaluators to prepare them with strategies to support ECEs in their efforts to promote healthy social-emotional development of the children they serve in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. Mentor and evaluator support to ECEs is directly related to criteria within the standards on the rubric used as part of the NC TEP during informal and formal observations.

Effects for Children Enrolled in NC Pre-K

During the 2015-2016 NC Pre-K evaluation study, long-term effects were examined regarding children's participation in NC Pre-K at the end of kindergarten (Peisner-Feinberg, Mokrova, & Anderson, 2017). The sample for this evaluation study included children (n = 512) who attended Kindergarten during the 2015-2016 school year. The sample consisted of children who participated in NC Pre-K (n = 255) as well as children not enrolled in NC Pre-K (n = 257). The overall sample included a subsample (n = 119) children who were consider dual language learners (DLLs) and were from Spanish speaking families. This evaluation study explored the effects of NC Pre-K participation on children's development (e.g., language, math, literacy, behavior, executive function skills) at the end of the Kindergarten year. The subsample which included the DLL children, examined developmental skills using both English and Spanish measures. Surveys were also distributed to families to gather other pertinent study information (e.g., demographics, classrooms characteristics, NC Pre-K Program characteristics). Findings indicated effect sizes showing positive effects for children who participated in NC Pre-K for math (.16-.22) and executive function skills (full sample = .17 and DLL subsample = .39) at the end of Kindergarten. The results of the DLL subsample are important to note as the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has reported that states

continue to lack proper support for DLL children in Pre-K programs (NIEER, 2017) and this is a growing concern due to the ever increasing DLL populations in the U.S.

In 2007, the National Education Agency (NEA) indicated that 39 states had state-funded Pre-K programs (NEA, 2007). Since that time, that number has grown to 42 states that have developed Pre-K programs (Barnett et al., 2016). Executive summary reports by NIEER suggests that NC Pre-K has remained stable since the program began and that NC is only one of 5 states in the U.S. to meet all ten NIEER benchmarks for Pre-K in 2015 (NIEER, 2015). In 2017, NIEER made some changes to the quality benchmarks and NC was 1 of six states to meet 9 out of the ten standards. Only two states met all ten new benchmarks during 2017 (e.g., Alabama, Rhode Island).

While NIEER has quality standards benchmarks to assess states' Pre-K program policies and how they compare to high quality Pre-K for young children, these benchmarks do not measure experiences of children enrolled in Pre-K. In 2017, NIEER reported that 34 Pre-K programs over 39 states use some form of program evaluation. Many of the states that report using evaluation processes are leaders in quality as assessed by NIEER's quality standards benchmarks, including NC. Furthermore, NIEER has recommended that a representative study, including state- and locally-funded Pre-K programs and Head Start, be conducted to develop a national report card of quality that would inform policy and benefit the lives of eligible children and their families

North Carolina is considered to be a leader in providing quality Pre-K to children and families by NIEER (2017). The state also uses an evaluation tool (NC TEP) to evaluate ECEs, as indicated by NIEER to be an important mechanism for collecting data regarding quality. Information collected from NC regarding Pre-K practices and the

quality of practices exhibited in the classroom by ECEs who teach in NC Pre-K

nonpublic sites, would help inform a national representative study that could provide

information enabling the improvement of Pre-K practices in NC, as well as programs

across the nation.

High Quality Early Childhood Educators in NC

While exploring NC Pre-K's historical information for the 2015-2016 NC Pre-K

Evaluation study, Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2017) reported that teacher education and

licensure levels has continually improved and increased over 10+ years. Furthermore, the

evaluation study indicated that there has been a significant decrease in ECEs not having

proper credentials to teach in Pre-K classrooms over the last 13 years. These researchers

reported that in 2015-2016, nearly all NC Pre-K teachers (>99%) who worked in both

public and private settings had a bachelor's degree and the majority also had a B-K

license. The EESLPD office provides a streamlined system of PD to ECEs and office

staff. Professional development as noted by the NAEYC (2009) helps ECEs to meet the

high standards set for them and contributes to positive child and family outcomes.

The EESLPD office evaluates ECEs using the rubric as part of the NC TEP while

support them through the implementation of the coaching framework and narrative found

in Figure 1. Evaluators and mentors use an abundance of tools to support ECEs, including

the "Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating

Teachers of Young Children" (de Kort-Young et al., 2016). This manual, commonly

referred to as the "Resource Manual" by EESLPD staff as well as ECEs, was originally

developed in response to requests for resources from administrators and principals

responsible for conducting evaluations (Lambert, Rowland, Taylor & Wheeler, 2010).

The revised version of the manual incorporates the original resources found in the "Resource Manual" as well as introduces new information gathered from professionals throughout the state of NC who have been involved in the NC TEP. It is important to note that the "Resource Manual" is not a replacement for the NC TEP process. This manual is merely a resource used by administrators, principals, and ECEs as they strive to meet proficiency on the NC TEP and implement evidence-based, recommended practices that lead to high quality early education programs.

EESLPD Office Support and the NC TEP

The development of community partnerships with the EESLPD offices enables hubs at ECU and UNC Charlotte to support more ECEs who work in nonpublic Pre-K classrooms in NC. Early childhood educators who work in nonpublic NC Pre-K classrooms are evaluated using the same evaluation instrument as teachers in public sites for Pre-K – 12th grade. The NC TEP is the performance evaluation instrument and components are defined by the NC State Board of Education. The NC TEP is a performance evaluation instrument required for all teachers who are licensed by NC DPI, and is described as a growth model that includes five standards such as (a) standard i - teachers demonstrate leadership, (b) standard ii - teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students, (c) standard iii - teachers know the content they teach, (d) standard iv - teachers facilitate learning for their students, and (e) standard v - teachers reflect on their practice (McREL, 2015).

Section II of the Resource Manual (de Kort-Young et al., 2016) describes the evaluation process used to implement licensure requirements for ECEs who work in nonpublic NC Pre-K and developmental day sites across NC. Since licensure is managed

by the EESLPD Unit in Raleigh, the EESLPD office hubs provide all field-based services to teachers enrolled in the BTSP. During the 2017-2018 school year, nearly 800+ ECEs were supported and/or waitlisted to be served across NC through both the EESLPD office hub mentors and evaluators at ECU – East and UNC Charlotte – West.

The NC Pre-K program is conducted through the NC DCDEE and requires that NC Pre-K teachers either have or be working toward a Birth – Kindergarten License (BK) Continuing License (formerly known as the Standard Professional II License). Since the EESLPD Unit is the LEA for nonpublic Pre-K, they must provide ongoing licensure requirements such as, (a) performance evaluation using the NC TEP, (b) mentoring, (c) PD, and (d) documentation through the NCEES (Home Base) online system. The EESLPD offices hire mentors and evaluators to support ECEs through the evaluation and licensure processes who have expertise in the field of early childhood education and/or ECSE. A unique aspect of the mentors and evaluators hired by the EESLPD offices at ECU and UNC Charlotte, is that these professionals have vast experiences and a strong knowledge-base in fields of early childhood education. Each university hub offers training and supervision to staff in order to form a cohesive team, including site administrators, to best support ECEs who work in nonpublic NC Pre-K and developmental day classrooms (de Kort-Young et al., 2016).

The NC State Board of Education requirement for providing a statewide system of support to educators who must maintain a NC professional educator's license includes many components such as (a) initial evaluation training, (b) annual orientation, (c) teacher self-assessment, (d) the development of a Professional Development Plan (PDP), (e) mentor support, (f) conducting a pre-observation conference, (g) formal and informal

observations (e.g., four formal observations for NC lateral entry and B-K initially

licensed teachers and three formal observations for teachers who hold holding a

continuing license), (h) conducting post-observation conferences, and (i) a summary

evaluation conference. Mentors and evaluators work together to best support ECEs

through licensure and evaluation processes by implementing a cycle of coaching that is

individualized and strengths-based.

A goal of the current study was to explore interrater reliability among evaluators

when using the NC TEP to support ECEs through the licensure and evaluation process.

Findings discovered through the investigation of this project has informed an interrater

reliability process among evaluators. These discoveries have informed a process to ensure

future reliability when marking the NC TEP rubric as well as ensuring fidelity to the

EESLPD office framework. Information acquired from this project has helped provide

correct and useful information to mentors and evaluators that will be helpful when

supporting ECEs. (Taylor et al., 2017).

Teacher Evaluation and Interrater Reliability

Although teacher evaluation can be a powerful catalyst for improving the quality

of practices in the classroom, it has often been a neglected tool because many lack

credibility when measuring teacher performance (Toch, 2008). There are many

evaluation instruments that are intended to measure teacher performance, but little have a

process of interrater reliability to ensure that evaluation outcomes are consistent despite

who is conducting the evaluation. There is a vested interest in identifying what makes

early childhood settings of high-quality and principals and administrators are seeking

information about what the best strategies are for mentoring and evaluating teachers

(Shore et al., 2012). Some prior research recommends that raters who conduct evaluations use mechanisms that help to improve their observation skills which may lead to a higher quality of rater performance and consistency (Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, McKellin, 1993).

Prior research has indicated that rater demographic characteristics (e.g., personal affect, variables impacting cognition, etc.) may influence performance evaluation ratings (Park, Sims, & Motowildo, 1986). Since all raters are unique in the way they present interpersonal affect to others as well as how they cognitively process information, the individual being evaluated may not receive adequate or fair performance ratings without a dependable process of interrater reliability. Previous research suggests that while rater affect shouldn't influence ratings given while evaluating specific criteria, a phenomenon known as "liking" may contribute to inconsistent ratings based on a ratee's performance. (Murphy & Cleveland, 1991).

Zajonc (1980), described "liking" as either feeling positive, negative or without bias towards another person. Antonioni & Park (2001) investigated the impact that evaluation time had on influencing ratings given. The researchers found that while more time to conduct an evaluation allowed a rater access to more information to designate ratings, having more time to conduct evaluations may multiply rater affect by influencing what the rater actually observes and possibly confirming a rater's opinion towards a ratee.

A feature that all professions have in common includes the ability to determine who enters and stays in the field through the individual's qualifications, required trainings needed to perform the job, and performance evaluations (Lambert, Sibley, & Lawrence, 2010). Given the research base, it may be discerned that without an

appropriate interrater reliability process while using evaluation systems, professionals in the field of ECE may not be given the opportunity to grow to their professional potential. As previously stated, the field of ECE needs highly-qualified educators due to legislative demands, a growing population of diversity in the U.S., and ultimately to benefit the lives of all children and families (IDEIA, 2004; NIEER, 2016).

The National Research Council (NRC, 2008) has recommended that an element of preparation and planning be implemented for all assessments and/or evaluations, even for those that may not directly involve children (e.g., evidences/artifacts, teacher rating forms, classroom observations, etc.) as such actions may place a burden and further responsibility on those professionals being assessed and/or evaluated. The NRC also suggests that acceptable levels of validity and reliability, deemed acceptable for the chosen instrument, are established for the populations being assessed and/or evaluated with clear steps to proceed productively and follow-up based on the acquired information. Finally, The NRC's "Guidelines on Systems," highly recommends that teacher support include information about access to resources that is carefully collected to best meet their needs and that the failure to do so unfairly sanctions them by a system created to support them.

The EESLPD Coaching Framework

The EESLPD office coaching framework (see Figure 1) represents a prospective model to support ECEs through the NC TEP process. This framework is based on research-based findings regarding best practices for using coaching to support teachers. A brief summary of the EESLPD conceptual framework is described below.

Coaching Framework Studies

Coaching models used with educators from both early childhood and school-age settings offer specific, individualized strategies (e.g., multi-tiered support) that increase with intensity and are followed-up with high-quality professional development (Berg & Karlsen, 2007; Jablon et al., 2016; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Kretlow, Wood, & Cook, 2009; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Rush & Shelden, 2011; Snyder et al., 2012; Snyder et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2016). These specific models offer support that is specialized based on the individual needs of educators and many are summarized below. Mentors and evaluators that support ECEs in inclusive classrooms may benefit from using the specific coaching strategies that are included in these models.

An abundance of literature exists regarding the use of evidence-based coaching strategies to improve the practices of professionals in business and education fields (Berg & Karlsen, 2007; Jablon et al., 2016; Rush & Shelden, 2011). Rush and Shelden (2011) describe coaching for ECE professionals who work with young children and families as a means to become a life-long learner on the part of the coachee, as well as acquire the confidence and competence to participate in reflective practice, self-correction and the implementation of new skills. The EESLPD office conceptual framework for coaching uses a thorough research-base with the intention to best support ECEs in their work with children and families.

Snyder et al. (2015) described the key components of a coaching framework entitled, Practice-Based Coaching (PBC). The PBC framework was developed to support preschool teachers of young children who had disabilities or who were at risk for developing DD and/or disabilities. Teaching practices that were supported through PBC

focused on the social-emotional development and behavior of children. The PBC framework has components such as (a) shared goals and action planning, (b) focused observation, and (c) reflection and feedback. The PBC framework is also described as a cyclical process and is used in collaboration with the coach and coachee.

Multi-level coaching, a model described in an article by Wood et al. (2016), is noted to be comparable to a multi-tiered supports framework used with students who are at school-age. Components included in the multi-level coaching framework include: (a) PD that is of high caliber, (b) "follow-up" and supervisory coaching, and (c) side by side coaching. Among all levels of support, authors indicate that teacher performance is measured and data-based decisions are used during the coaching process.

Palsha & Wesley (1998) described an individualized, data-driven model of coaching heavily rooted in consultation. This model has been expanded upon in the present article from a previous model that was effectively used to improve quality for infants and toddlers in Part C programs (Wesley, 1994). Palsha & Wesley's work was to expand the initial model to provide coaching to those individuals who work with the Part B population, by training community-based early childhood professionals. This model used a collaborative method, between the coach and coachee, with multiple steps to the approach such as (a) establishing a relationship, (b) providing training, (c) jointly assessing needs, (d) developing a plan through conducting a needs assessment, (e) implementing the plan, (f) evaluating changes, (g) writing a final report including an evaluation of the consultant, and (h) identifying future needs of the consultee.

Narrative Description of the Conceptual Framework for the Early Educator

Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office

The conceptual framework for the EESLPD office can be found in Figure 1. The framework components describe the supports and resources provided by the EESLPD office for B-K Initial and Continuing License ECEs in nonpublic Pre-K and developmental day settings in NC. The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators use a cycle of coaching that is relationship-based, individualized and holistic, and is intended to support ECEs through the licensure and evaluation processes as well as lead to best practice in Pre-K settings (Taylor et al., 2017). The components of the EESLPD conceptual framework are briefly described below.

As Taylor et al. (2017) describes in the framework narrative, the conceptual model is designed as a home to indicate the importance of the collaborative work of team members (e.g., ECEs, mentor, evaluator, child and his/her family, and site administrator) to support ECEs in order to influence and improve classroom practices that may lead to child and family growth and development. The components of the "home" as illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 1 include the following components: (a) the foundation - the guiding principles (b) the steps - resource manual, b-k specialty standards, NC Foundations, professional teaching standards, the NC TEP (c) the door - coaching (d) the five windows - knowledge-based, individualized, relationship-based, adaptable, and strengths-based (e) the chimney - formative process (f) the peak - optimal child and family development and (g) the sun - Bronfenbrenner's exosystem representing the ever-changing conditions that surround the field of early childhood education Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Coaching. The EESLPD office mentors and evaluators have been described as collaboratively providing individualized support to ECEs by promoting professional growth that impacts classroom practices for the benefit of child and family development (Taylor et al., 2017). Authors of the conceptual framework narrative describe the coaching style of EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as interactive through the use of both implicit and/or explicit modeling. Mentors and evaluators who support ECEs with B-K licensure must have specialized knowledge of recommended practices to use with typically developing young children and those with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD.

As noted previously in this literature review, mentors and evaluators hired through the EESLPD office are unique in that they all have early childhood education degrees and have previous experience working with young children and their families. The EESLPD office uses research-based coaching practices included in *NAEYC's Coaching with Powerful Interactions* (Jablon et al., 2016) that reflect specific behaviors when working with teachers (e.g., being present and intentional, personally connecting, and extending teachers learning). The coaching practices used by the EESLPD office have the potential to include favorable dispositions (e.g., leadership, modeling, independence/ interdependence, mindfulness, etc.). The door depicted in the EESLPD office conceptual framework (Figure 1) has five evidence-based coaching components that are (a) knowledge-based, (b) individualized, (c) relationship-based, (d) adaptable, and (e) strengths-based.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The intent and purpose of this project was to inform a process of reliability among EESLPD evaluators and fidelity to the EESLPD office framework. Information gained from this study since completion has helped inform future training and PD so that mentors and evaluators are able to consistently support ECEs in providing high-quality education and care that positively influences children and families. This research explored (a) areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP that ECEs are making progress or not, (b) ECE needs for support and how the support they receive aligns with the coaching components of the conceptual framework, and (c) perceptions of ECEs regarding the supports they receive from their mentors and evaluators.

Research Questions for this study were:

1. In what areas of the rubric that is used during the NC TEP (e.g. standards, elements, and indicators) are ECEs making progress or not?

2. How do ECEs responses regarding needs for support and the support received from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the EESLPD office conceptual framework (e.g., knowledge-based, individualized, relationship-based, adaptable, and strengths-based)?

3. What are the perceptions of ECEs regarding the supports provided by mentors and evaluators?

Method

Research Design

An abundance of research in fields of health, medicine and early education has been conducted that includes both qualitative and quantitative research design methods (Abujilban, Sinclair, & Kernohan, 2014; Hargis, Cavanaugh, Kawali, & Soto, 2014; Hickeya, McGilloway, O'Brian, Leckey, Devlin, & Donnelly, 2018; Koster, Baars, & Delnoin, 2016; Motoyama & Mayer, 2017; Sandall et al., 2002). This study was exploratory and foundational and used qualitative research design methods as well as the incorporation of a quantitative component. To answer the first research question, quantitative methods were used and descriptive statistics were analyzed to inform the remaining two research questions in this study. To answer the second and third research questions for the current study, qualitative research methods were used.

To limit researcher bias and reactivity, two validity threats when conducting qualitative research, the Lead Researcher (LR) for this study developed a subjectivity statement at the onset of recruiting participants. To address the threats of bias and reactivity, it is not possible to eliminate the researcher's viewpoint of theory and beliefs during qualitative studies, but it is important to understand the influence, as well as the appropriateness of the influence, a researcher contributes to a study (Maxwell, 2005). The LR's initial subjectivity statement was revised to include more detailed information regarding experiences with mentoring at the advisement of a faculty member at UNC Charlotte, who also served as the assistant moderator during the focus group interviews. The Graduate Assistant (GA) who reviewed interview transcripts for this study, revised a

previous subjectivity statement to meet the needs of the current study. Both subjectivity

statements can be found in their entirety below, under the heading "Validity."

A secondary analysis of NCEES/Homebase data (e.g., a large-scale database that

houses ECE evaluation data) was conducted. Descriptive statistics were collected from

this database as a means to further support data, information, and themes derived from

the qualitative research components of this study. The qualitative portions of the study

were conducted through (a) reanalysis of data collected from the EESLPD End of Year

(EOY) survey for ECEs (2017-2018) to identify potential participants for the current

study and (b) the implementation of focus group interviews with ECEs. Focus groups are

typically comprised of interviews that take place in groups where researchers use

communication between participants as a means to collect rich data and has been

effective in exploring the needs and attitudes of staff members (Denning & Verschelden,

1993; Kitzinger, 1995).

Ethnomethodology is the framework used for this study. The philosophy of this

framework can be summarized by the following quote (Prasad, 2005, p. 63):

> Although we are rarely explicitly aware of the highly organized nature of
>
> our social lives, we tacitly participate in this organization and seem to
>
> have a solid battery of skills that enable us to do so.

Ethnomethodology uses interviews and storied accounts of participants' everyday life

events to empower, predict, and preempt change within organizational structures (Boje,

1991). Using this design for the present study, the LR described commonalities that

participants shared about being supported by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as

part of the NC TEP. Ethnomethodology, previously described in chapter 2, combines

other qualitative designs (e.g., phenomenology as related to social order) to form the

social categories developed from the lived, ordinary and typical experiences of people

(Garfinkel, 1967; Holstein & Gubrium, 1993). This tradition is sociological in nature and

refers to ways that people organize daily, ordinary life events.

Ethnomethodology is described as a controversial, qualitative tradition that

explores undervalued life happenings and is used in several fields (e.g., sociology,

education, communications) (Prasad, 2005). Ethnomethodology is appropriate for this

study due to the "ordinary" duties associated with teaching young children in early

childhood settings. However, these "ordinary" actions often represent dynamic

responsibilities of ECEs that may have lasting, life altering outcomes for children and

families.

Previous research indicates a correlation between a lower rate of child

achievement when teachers provide instruction using inconsistent methods (Furtak et al.,

2008; Kovaleski, Gickling, Morrow, & Swank, 1999). The ECEs supported by the

EESLPD office have a consistent system of PD that provides education and specialized

training. Prior research suggests that PD plays an important role in minimizing the

research-to-practice gap and links have been identified indicating that practitioners

implement EBPs with sustainable competence and confidence when a strong system of

PD is provided (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015; Kretlow &

Bartholomew, 2010; Snyder et al., 2011; Snyder, et al., 2012; Snyder et al. 2015). Early

childhood educators are consistently needing to be flexible and adapt strategies that they

use with children and families. The framework used for this study analyzed the social

interactions that take place when people strive to organize and make sense of their

everyday lives, even with constant change. Mentors and evaluators may support ECEs during ongoing, natural and unnatural changes that occur in early childhood classrooms.

Participants

A non-probability, convenience sampling method was used to acquire participants for the current study. Some previous research has noted convenience sampling has limitations such as selection bias and sampling error (Fishleder, Gum, King-Kallimanis, & Schonfield, 2016: Wan, Chen, Chou, Hsueh, & Hsieh, 2013). For this particular study, this form of sampling is appropriate to allow the researcher to control group characteristics. Previous findings suggest that researchers who work with individuals in the target population are most likely to identify information that leads to results that are valid and applicable (Messick, 1995; O'Donnell, Lutfey, Marceua, & McKinlay, 2007). The target population for this study included ECEs who (a) had acquired or were working towards B-K licensure (b) were enrolled in the BTSP and receiving mentor and/or evaluator support through the EESLPD offices (c) had responded that they would like to participate in follow-up research by indicating their contact information on the EESLPD survey for ECEs (2017-2018) (d) worked in a nonpublic early childhood education site in NC (e.g., NC Pre-K, developmental day classroom) (e) had a licensure status of provisional (SP I and/or lateral entry) or continuing (SP II) and (f) were considered current or active in the NCEES/Homebase system.

Participant Recruitment. Using qualitative methods, this study used focus groups, a research technique used by behavioral and social researchers to gather information (e.g., opinions, attitudes, needs, thoughts) during group interviews (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UNC Charlotte approved a revision to the

original protocol for this study and individual interviews were also conducted. The

rationale for conducting individual interviews in addition to a focus group, was lack of

participation for the second focus group scheduled. Conducting a focus group and

individual interviews may be beneficial for researchers by having the opportunity to gain

more in-depth information during individual interviews rather than only holding focus

groups alone (Kitzinger, 1995).

A sampling frame of eligible participants was obtained by recruiting ECEs from

the state of NC who were currently supported by EESLPD office mentors and/or

evaluators. These participants indicated on the EESLPD survey that they would like to

participate in follow-up research regarding support received by their mentor and/or

evaluator. Participants were employed as an NC Pre-K or developmental day teacher

during the data collection period in one of several early childhood education sites (e.g.,

NC Pre-K only, Head Start/NC Pre-K, developmental day/NC Pre-K, Head Start only, or

developmental day only). These are examples of possible nonpublic sites where ECEs

work while being supported by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators during the NC

TEP. The site examples listed above provide NC Pre-K educational services to young

children and employ prospective participants who met eligibility criteria for this study.

These nonpublic Pre-K programs provided access to participants for the recruitment

purposes of the present study. Eligible ECEs represented nonpublic sites from both

EESLPD office hubs (e.g., ECU - East and UNC Charlotte – West, together serving

approximately 98 counties).

Prospective participants who responded that they would like to participate in

follow-up research were asked to include their contact information on the EESLPD

survey. Early childhood educators who provided their contact information and indicated

interest in volunteering to participate in other research were the sample of participants

recruited for the focus group and individual interview portion of this study. After a

reanalysis of the 2017-2018 survey data was completed, the LR identified the individuals

who indicated voluntary participation in follow-up research. The LR explored and

validated that ECEs who volunteered to participate were currently employed by

nonpublic sites (e.g., NC Pre-K, Head Start, developmental day classroom) and were

supported by mentors and/or evaluators. This process was conducted by cross checking

EESLPD assignment lists for the current 2018-2019 school year. If ECEs were not

currently being served by the EESLPD office, they were removed from the volunteer list

for participation in focus groups/individual interviews. If prospective participants were

currently served by mentors and/or evaluators through the EESLPD office, the LR

contacted them via the contact information the ECE originally provided on the survey

(e.g., email, phone).

Procedures

To answer the first research question, the LR reanalyzed data from ECE

summative evaluations housed in a large-scale data-base (e.g., NCEES/Homebase). Three

years of ECE summative evaluation data was included in the reanalysis (e.g., 2015-2016,

2016-2017, 2017-2018). The NCEES/Homebase data system was developed by True

North Logic and houses NC teacher evaluation data. Information available via

NCEES/Homebase includes data from all four observations through the school year and

summative evaluations for all current and active teachers who teach Pre-K through 12th

grade.

To answer the second research question, secondary data was gathered and reanalyzed from the EESLPD survey. Early childhood educators who taught in nonpublic sites (e.g., NC Pre-K and developmental day classrooms) and supported by EESLPD office mentors and/or evaluators were asked to complete a survey at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. A survey link was sent to all ECEs listed on the EESLPD assignment spreadsheet and included questions about supports received during the school year. Data from four open-ended questions answered by ECEs on this survey was re-examined to answer the second research question in this study. This question explored how ECE responses regarding needs for support and support received from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the EESLPD conceptual framework (e.g., knowledge based, individualized, relationship-based, adaptable, and strengths-based) The concept map located in Figure 2 was also used as a way to define components within each category. The answers that ECEs provided regarding four open-ended questions included in the EESLPD survey were reanalyzed by the LR for this study. A re-examination of this data was used to provide information about the sample and recruit participants to answer the third research question for this study. A reanalysis of the EESLPD survey information (e.g., data exported from SurveyShare to excel spreadsheets) included identification of potential participants. As mentioned previously, participants had to provide their own name and contact information to participate in follow-up research.

The third and final research question for this study explored ECE perceptions, regarding the supports provided to them by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators. Responses to this question were added to other data collected during this research project.

Research was conducted for the present study through a focus group and individual

interviews with participants and data collected was used to answer the third research

question. A flier (Appendix D) including information about the focus group and

individual interviews was emailed to potential participants as well as a letter of interest

(Appendix E). Eligible ECEs recruited to participate in the focus group and individual

interviews were asked a variety of semi-structured interview questions. The questions

were asked by the LR via WebEx, a video conferencing mechanism that allows for the

recording of images and voices (WebEx, 2019). Prospective participants represented both

the western and eastern parts of the state of NC and were given the opportunity to enter in

a drawing to receive a $50.00 e-gift card for participation.

Semi-structured interview questions were asked to ECEs to gather their

perceptions of supports provided by their mentors and evaluators. Qualitative research

methodology that incorporates focus group inquiry may involve (a) gaining information

from multiple perspectives, (b) acquiring an in-depth understanding about specific

phenomena, and (c) respondent interactions that influence the questions asked by

researchers (Brotherson, 1994; Patton, 1990). Semi-structured interview questions were

useful for this study because they are organized, but guided by the participants

understanding of the questions and their environment (O'Keefe, Buytaert, Mijic,

Brozovic, & Sinha, 2016; Ellis & Chin, 2013). These authors indicate that this form of

questioning can provide detailed, in-depth data that is both time and cost-efficient, in an

open platform.

A focus group and individual interview protocol/topic guide for the present study

can be found in Appendix F. Prior to implementation of the focus group and individual

interviews, the LR asked participants to complete an optional demographic information form (Appendix G). The semi-structured interview questions were reviewed by an expert review panel (e.g., two university faculty members/researchers, two EESLPD office staff members, including the program coordinator and a mentor/evaluator). After feedback was received from members of the expert review panel, the LR made minor revisions to the questions and submitted these revisions to the IRB. The LR spoke with an IRB official, who considered the revisions to be minor and the LR began scheduling the focus group and individual interviews with participants. Revisions made to the semi-structured interview questions were approved by the IRB at UNC Charlotte.

Previous research from the field of EI indicates that six to 7 participants is appropriate for focus groups, but a larger number may be more effective (Brotherson, 1994). Another study suggests that between four to 8 people is an ideal number for focus groups (Kitzinger, 1995). For this particular study, five participants were included in the focus group and supported by the EESLPD's western hub. Four individual interviews were conducted with ECEs from the EESLPD's eastern hub. The focus group lasted between 60-90 minutes and the individual interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes. The LR moderated the focus group and individual interviews using the protocol or topic guide (Appendix F). A protocol, consisting of questions and interview steps is a resource to use during focus group interviews to keep interviews consistent (Brotherson, 1994).

The ECEs who were recruited for this study preferred to use a web-based method (e.g., WebEx) to participate in the focus group and individual interviews. Once participants were identified and the interview method was confirmed, they were sent a notification and reminder via email of the focus group and individual interview sessions

time/date and the WebEx address. Participants chose to only have their voices heard and recorded and not to be viewed during the WebEx interview sessions. All participants were asked to sign an informed consent form by responding in an email affirming consent (Appendix K) prior to beginning the focus group and individual interviews. During all interview sessions, the researcher exhibited suggested interviewer characteristics such as (a) being able to simultaneously think and listen, (b) being reflective, (c) asking the right questions, (d) incorporating a 5-second pause to allow for participant interaction, (e) developing rapport with interviewees without guiding their responses, and (f) keeping the identities and responses of interviewees confidential (Brotherson, 1994; Krueger, 1988).

Early childhood educators were given the contact information of the LR conducting focus groups/individual interviews (e.g., identified on the recruitment flier and letter of interest in Appendix D and E). Interested ECEs who responded to and/or contacted the LR following retrieval of the study recruitment ad, served as the sampling frame for which the focus group and individual interviews were formed. Once participants were recruited for the study, the LR mailed electronic copies of the study abstract (Appendix I) with a brief description of the purpose of the study, and a letter of interest (Appendix E).

The letter of informed consent included information about the LR's request for voluntary participation, ensured the confidentiality of responses, and supplied the contact information of the LR. The letter of interest included the purpose of the study and why conducting the study was important. Early childhood educators were informed that while their participation was strictly voluntary, information provided through study participation could greatly impact their professional goals as well as the lives of the

children and families they serve in inclusive settings. Exploring how to best support

ECEs during the NC TEP when working with both typically developing children and

children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for DD may greatly influence teaching

practices used in the Pre-K classroom.

Several methods of communication were made to prospective focus group and

individual interview participants in the same manner that survey participants were

recruited for the EESLPD survey. As Dillman (2007) suggests, during survey research,

multiple contacts to participants may be necessary to increase the response rate. To meet

this recommendation for recruitment of ECEs to participate in focus groups/individual

interviews, prospective participants were contacted a total of four times. The purpose and

form of the communications used with participants follows:

1) A preliminary email and an information packet were sent to prospective

   participants upon contacting the LR at the recruitment phase. The information

   packet included a cover letter and abstract of the study. The cover letter

   included the purpose of the focus group/individual interviews, what was being

   asked of respondents, why, and the end date for completion.

2) Focus group/individual interview participants were asked to RSVP their

   intention to attend and participate by emailing the LR by a predetermined date

   so that the researcher was aware of how many individuals would be

   participating.

3) The LR sent two electronic reminders to the email addresses of participants

   with the time/date and WebEx address of the focus group/individual

   interviews.

4) Lastly, a post letter (Appendix J) was sent to thank those who participated. The data analysis began once the end date for participating in the focus group/individual interviews had occurred.

The LR tracked participants for the focus group/individual interviews and sent reminders to prospective participants who had not yet responded with an RSVP. Data collected and coded by hand was kept confidential in a locked file cabinet in the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation (CEME) in the Department of Educational Leadership at UNC - Charlotte. All other data (NCEES) was kept securely on a university-based computer in CEME. The LR conducting the study as well as an office GA had access to the NCEES data, but only the LR conducting this study had access to the qualitative data.

As mentioned previously, all interviews were audio-recorded using WebEx in order to clearly record each participant's response. The LR moderated the questions and an assistant moderator was available during focus groups to assist in providing credibility of the interviews by debriefing with the moderator immediately after the focus group sessions (e.g., to discuss insights, perceptions). The LR asked all participants to create a pseudonym and they all willingly did so. Creswell (2013) indicates that participants need protection from researchers at all stages of research (e.g., including during data collection and analysis) and that pseudonyms may be a good way to respect participants' privacy. The assistant moderator contributed to probing questions asked to participants during the focus group. Responses of focus group participants were transcribed from the audio recordings in their entirety, including both verbal and nonverbal sounds (e.g., words, sighs, outside noises, pauses, interruptions), although the LR was mainly focused on

words that were being said, not the way they were said (Polkinghorn, 1995).

Transcription occurred via word processing and the LR converted the audio recorded

sounds to text. Following transcription of the data, all recordings were deleted to secure

the anonymity and confidentiality of focus group and interview participants.

Data Analysis

Data collection and data analysis using qualitative methods via focus group

interviewing may parallel one another (Brotherson, 1994; Kitzinger, 1995). Member

checks were completed following transcription of the interviews as a way to add to the

validity of this study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The LR sent electronic copies of

individual responses to participants and requested that they review the transcripts and

notify the LR if any changes were needed. Participants did not request changes be made

to the transcripts. During the interviews, the LR asked new interviewees if topics of

interest in a previous group were also important to them. While questions did not need to

be revised as a result of sharing topics of interest with new participants, ECEs did

elaborate on their own experiences regarding these topics.

Once all focus group sessions were completed, the LR transcribed verbal

responses to written words using Microsoft Word. Per recommendations for transcribing

audio-recorded interviews, responses were sorted, refiled, and placed in text-based files

(Seidman, 1998). The LR highlighted areas of interest pertaining to the current study in

the transcript and placed brackets around other areas of interest, that were not necessarily

related to this study's research questions. By hand, the LR underlined and circled key

elements identified in the focus group/individual interviews. The LR repeated this

process several times by hand, then used Microsoft Word to develop tables and

categorize themes and subthemes by using a method of color-coding. Themes and sub-themes identified during analyses of data is described in more detail in chapters 4 and 5. A description of all six steps, adapted from Braun and Clarke's framework for conducting a narrative analysis (2006), can be found in Table 1 and includes examples used for steps to analyze focus group/interview data. Included in Table 2 is a description of how Braun and Clarke's framework was used for conducting a narrative analysis of the EESLPD survey responses from four open-ended questions.

Table 1

Steps for Conducting a Narrative Analysis: Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Six Steps	Examples Used in this Study
Step One: Familiarize oneself with the data	Step One: The LR initially reviewed the data three times on three separate occasions. The GA reviewed the interview transcripts twice and shared information discovered with the LR.
Step Two: Begin initial coding.	Step Two: The LR began a process of open-coding by circling, underlining, and bracketing interest areas in the transcript by hand. The LR also wrote notes in the margin throughout the review process. The LR then highlighted transcripts and areas of interest that pertained to the study using the multiple

color-coding options available with Microsoft Word. The LR reviewed the transcripts at least five separate times and placed brackets around other interest areas (these areas did not necessarily relate to the research questions but were possible areas to investigate in the future).

Step Three: Locate themes

Step Three: Themes were identified by the LR during the initial coding process in step two. Originally a large number of themes (n = 35) were identified. Through a winnowing process, themes were reduced substantially (Kitzinger, 1994). Themes were descriptive and identified based on their significance in answering the research questions for this study. The LR investigated codes that clearly related to one another and formed themes (e.g., communication with mentors/evaluators was connected to type = phone, text, email while feedback was connected to = positive, negative, open).

Step Four: Review themes

Step Four: The LR created tables using Microsoft Word and headings for each table

cell were derived from theme titles that were identified. The LR used the color-coded transcripts to identify codes, connect them together, and develop themes. The LR then copied themes (identified from responses in transcripts) and pasted the proper sections into the corresponding cell that had been named distinct theme titles.

Step Five: Define themes

Step Five: While main themes that were identified overlapped somewhat, the LR subsequently developed sub-themes to differentiate specific elements described for each main theme. The LR identified three main themes with each having 3 sub-themes as well as defining indicators for each (e.g., Responsiveness [communication, feedback, specific support], Comfort Level [asking questions, reaching out, contacting others], Support Needs [should be offered, ECE as mentor, more guidance]. A thematic map developed by the LR can be found in chapter 4 to display the refinement of themes and

connections found between the themes that were used in this study (Figure 17).

<u>Step Six: Write-up dissertation</u>	<u>Step Six:</u> The LR for this study included the data analysis and summarized information gathered for this study in chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation report.

Table 2

Steps for Conducting a Narrative Analysis: Survey Responses

<u>Six Steps</u>	<u>Examples Used in this Study</u>
<u>Step One:</u> Familiarize oneself with the data	<u>Step One:</u> The LR initially reviewed the data from responses on the 2017-2018 survey based on four open-ended questions. The LR initially reviewed the responses a total of two times on two separate occasions.
<u>Step Two:</u> Begin initial coding.	<u>Step Two:</u> The LR began coding by circling, underlining, and bracket interest areas in the transcript by hand. The LR also wrote notes in the margin throughout the review process. The LR then highlighted transcripts by hand as particular patterns began to stand out from others.

Step Three: Locate themes

Step Three: Themes were identified by the LR during the initial coding process in step two. Themes were descriptive and identified based pattern identified that relation to the five coaching components in the EESLPD framework (e.g., relationship-based (RB), strengths-based (SB), adaptable (A), individualized (I), knowledge-based (KB)). The LR investigated areas that related back to the coaching components and assigned each component a specific color. The color-coding to identify themes was completed by hand using 5 different color highlighting pens. The coaching components and corresponding highlight colors used for each, includes mentor/evaluator support that is: (a) relationship-based/blue: type, time, quality (b) individual/pink: experiences, goals, communication (c) knowledge-based/green: life-long learner, theory-to-practice, wisdom (d) adaptable/orange: disposition, non-judgmental , reflection and

	(e) strengths-based/black underline: identify, prioritize, and acknowledge.
Step Four: Review themes	Step Four: The LR used the color-coded transcripts to make connections and identify patterns from responses.
Step Five: Define themes	Step Five: Themes that were identified during responses from participants and related to EESLPD coaching components overlapped at times. The LR used the defining components for each color band (including the individual coaching components), to decide on which color to highlight responses, based on themes identified.
Step Six: Write-up dissertation	Step Six: The LR for this study included the data analysis and summarized information gathered for this study in chapters four and five of this dissertation report.

During a review of the interest areas identified for this study, the LR developed themes and subthemes and looked for thematic connections during this process (see Figure 16). A thorough description and summary of themes and sub-themes identified in this study can be found in chapters 4 and 5. The LR coded themes and all responses from participants were de-identified and kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used during the interviews and real names were never shared. Tolich (2010) indicates that with researchers being responsible for the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, the use of pseudonyms are a good practice in conducting research. The LR did have the email addresses of participants, since they volunteered to participate in follow-up research. However, after thank you cards were sent electronically and the drawing for the $50.00 e-cards had been held, email addresses of participants were deleted. Figure 16 illustrates how the LR developed categories from the transcribed interview data (e.g., Responsiveness = R, Comfort Level = CL, and Support Needs = SN) and sub-categories (e.g., R = communication, feedback, specific support provided; CL = asking for help, reaching out to M/E, contacting others; SN = support should be provided by M/E, ECE as mentor, more guidance) while coding the transcriptions including the information received during the focus group/individual interviews (Maxwell, 2005). Kitzinger (1994), referred to this process of reducing text during focus groups as winnowing. This winnowing process allows for essential topics and text to be pronounced to the researcher during data analysis (Brotherson, 1994).

Triangulation of data from all three data sources (e.g., secondary data analysis from NCEES/Homebase, reanalysis of the EESLPD survey, and the focus group/individual interviews) occurred. Triangulation is defined as a process of using

different methods, theories, and inquiries to analyze data, with the researcher being at the center of this process and ultimately describing the results of each analysis in the triangulated data (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). During analysis of all the three data sources that were collected, the LR reviewed areas that appeared to connect between them. Particular standards and elements that related to survey and interview responses were further analyzed to find meaning and discover patterns and interconnections. A detailed description of each pattern/connection identified during the LR's data analyses, using triangulation, was summarized in both chapters 4 and 5.

Data analysis included a compilation of quantitative data trends that showed improvements as well as areas ECEs were slow to move through the marking progressions in the rubric for Standards I – V during the NC TEP. The LR had license and access to the previously acquired ECE data through NCEES/Homebase, which was previously exported during the 2017-2018 school year from the database to excel spreadsheets. The information from excel was then transferred to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (IBM SPSS, 2015). This software package is often used for statistical analysis of data.

This previously acquired information served as a secondary source of data to inform and support the qualitative analysis conducted in this study. Secondary data collected from NCEES/Homebase provided descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency [F], percent [%]). This data was analyzed to summarize and identify associations found between other data collected and informed answering the research questions for this study. All ECE information for this study was de-identified. Once data was retrieved, all identifying information (e.g., name, teacher ID, email addresses) were separated from the

analysis and numeric codes were established in their place. Therefore, there was no way to trace participants' names back to any of the collected data in this study.

During the reanalysis of the EESLPD survey, associations and relationships between survey responses to four open-ended questions and the coaching components included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework were explored. Themes derived from responses to open-ended questions included in the survey were analyzed by the LR and included as part of the qualitative data analysis. Information that ECEs provide in the open-ended questions format of the survey and focus group/individual interviews are included in the results and discussion portion of this dissertation.

Validity

Measures were incorporated to protect the validity of the current study. Content validity was established by the expert review panel who reviewed the semi-structured interview questions. Each semi-structured interview question was assessed as well as the accuracy of how each question was asked and what it was intended to ask as it pertains to the purpose of the study. Each question was analyzed for word selection and clarity via expert panel review. The panel members analyzed the questions and provided feedback to the LR. The LR revised the questions based on feedback received from the panel and the revisions were subsequently approved by UNC Charlotte's IRB. Information received during the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and themes were developed based on information received from participants.

During the focus group/individual interview meetings, the LR moderated the questions and the assistant moderator (e.g., UNC Charlotte faculty member) was present at this time. The LR took measures to ensure the validity of the study (e.g., reflect on how

shared experiences may alter data interpretations, have an open perspective of the

experience being explored) (Moustaka, 1994). As previously mentioned, the assistant

moderator was available during focus groups to assist in providing credibility of the

interviews as well as minimize any potential researcher bias and reactivity. Reactivity or

reflexivity, as referred to by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), is described as the

occurrence of the interviewee's responses being influenced by the interviewer, due to the

latter's experience in the environment being researched. The assistant moderator

discussed the interviews with the moderator immediately following the focus group

sessions and provided feedback regarding some perceptions and insights to minimize

reflexivity threats. A GA reviewed the focus group interview transcript themes and

provided additional perspectives to the LR to minimize researcher subjectivity. The GA

who provided feedback for the current study, recently defended her doctoral dissertation

in the Department of Counseling at UNC Charlotte. She has participated in qualitative

research studies in the past and completed a subjectivity statement for the current study.

Efforts to Minimize Researcher Bias

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) reveal that while researcher subjectivity should be

strongly considered regarding how the researcher's influence may interfere with

collecting and/or analyzing data, they suggest that subjectivity could be viewed as having

value, rather than as a detriment. A procedure used to reduce threats to bias and reactivity

in qualitative studies is for researchers to be aware of and disclose personal beliefs,

assumptions and potential experiences that lead to biases (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Subjectivity statements written by the LR for this study and the GA who reviewed and

provided feedback on the interview transcripts are below.

Researcher's Subjectivity Statement

"Validity in qualitative research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity" (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 108). Writing a subjectivity statement for the qualitative portion of my dissertation research has been a true exercise in self-reflection. As I examined the ways in which my past experiences with mentors and mentoring may relate to how I perceive and analyze the responses of participants I interviewed for my study, it is vital that I am akin to my own biases and/or projections. My subjectivity statement includes personal experiences and as I journey through this cycle of self-awareness, I understand the importance of identifying and acknowledging how I may identify with potential responses of ECEs. Maxwell (2005) emphasized the need for researchers to "…recognize your personal ties…[and]…be aware of how your personal goals may be shaping your research."

One of my main goals in conducting this research is to fulfill requirements expected to complete my Ph. D. in Special Education. It is not unique to many, and as a doctoral student, I have battled with imposter syndrome. For me, I have caused this syndrome to be, at times, unmerciful. The imposter is actually just me, playing out some past experiences without giving myself credit for being resilient. I am the right person at this moment, to conduct qualitative research with ECEs. In fact, I believe my life experiences are a benefit rather than a hindrance to research of this nature.

A second primary goal of conducting this research is to learn how to better support ECEs. I know exactly how I came into the field of working with young children and families. From a very young age, I was keenly aware that my mother was the only one of 7 siblings who graduated from high school. Over half of her siblings were married

by 17 years of age, many of them with children. My mother helped with her siblings' children often. As a child myself, I remember this being a daunting task for her, but also a main priority that continued throughout her life. I too, have comfortably entered into roles that continue this legacy of providing support to others.

My mother, Sue, was my first mentor and is still the most prominent role model I have had in my life. She was a self-motivated person with a fiery personality. She managed to take a few community college classes after she graduated high school. My mother married a man named, Michael, when I was two years old, soon after she had been widowed by my father. Michael became the 2nd most influential person in my life and took on the role of being my new parent with pride. Michael had been a student at Virginia Tech, but was drafted during the Vietnam War and subsequently left the university.

Both of my parents, Sue and Michael, placed a very high value on education. They worshipped college professors and had a very romantic idea about universities. My school teachers became idols to me and participating in school activities felt like a privilege. However, at times I felt those experiences were not available to me or some of my peers and we were often referred to in my community as "the kids from the apartments." We lived in an apartment complex the majority of my childhood, and although there were challenges, I have very fond memories of the experiences I had growing up there.

I was raised by parents who placed a huge emphasis on education, perhaps in part, due to a college education not being afforded to them for long. I have, for the most part, found myself able to relate to nearly every person I meet. I contribute that adaptability as

something I learned from growing up around so many diverse people at the apartments. I find that being adaptable as a mentor in working with ECEs is essential. I am someone who is very comfortable adapting to new people and situations, although my preference is to keep some sense of sameness in my life. This may also be due to having grown up in an apartment complex as a child. People were always coming and going, for a multitude of reasons.

My first work experience after graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, VA was at a group home for teenage girls. My experiences at the 11th House group home were profound. The girls were typically court appointed and often entered the group home pregnant. Working with teenage mothers, who often times were giving birth to infants considered "at-risk," prompted me to return to college to earn a Master's degree in ECSE. My supervisor, Trish, was an incredible mentor to me. She allowed me the freedom to be creative and start new programs at the group home to better support the teen residents (e.g., parenting program, aftercare coordinator). Her mentor style was similar to many professors I have worked with at UNC Charlotte. Trish always set a high standard for me and encouraged me to get an advanced degree. Her mentoring style was supportive and patient, yet she wanted results. After four years of working at the group home, I transitioned to a teaching position in the public school system.

I worked in many public school classrooms over six years serving children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for DD and their families. My experience with mentors at public schools I worked in over the years included a broad spectrum of either extreme micro-management or utter invisibility. Often, I would be evaluated by

individuals who had no experience in ECSE or I would have no one enter the mobile unit I taught in all year. I have always needed to define my career for others (e.g., friends, family members, fellow teachers, principals) and explain that early education and care is not daycare. When I do explain why my career is important for children and families, responses from others are often comments like, "you have such a good heart" or "you are so sweet." Fields of early childhood education and ECSE are fields of study with support from quite a large evidence-base.

All of my experiences with mentors has influenced the way that I support others in their work today. However, I need to be particularly aware of my own reaction to ECE responses during interviews conducted as part of the current study. There are several areas that I may make assumptions due to my own experiences, such as (a) economic status (b) children considered "at-risk" (c) specific ECE needs that are personal in nature (e.g., feeling underpaid, undervalued) and (d) specific environmental factors. Strategies I will use to combat my own biases and limit threats to validity include strategies suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000) including collecting rich data, conducting member checks, using multiple types of data to analyze results (quantitative and qualitative), and making notes of personal interpretations of research findings.

Writing my subjectivity statement for this study has helped me to be more aware of assumptions, beliefs, and biases that I may have when collecting and interpreting data. Re-visiting past experiences with mentors and mentoring has helped me to become more self-aware and understand the importance of acknowledging how I may identify with ECEs. My intention of developing this subjectivity statement is to clearly indicate that threats to validity have been taken seriously in this study (Maxwell, 2005).

GA's Subjectivity Statement

Peshkin (1988) suggests that one's subjectivity is an inevitable part of one's research endeavor, where "we all are—and unavoidably belong: in the subjective underbrush of our own research experience" (p. 20, Peshkin, 1988). Therefore, it is essential for me to consider my presumptions and personal and professional experiences that may positively and negatively influence the inquiry into issues related to mentoring and coaching. Through examining my positionality, I seek to make my subjective "I's" explicit to ultimately consider their role in this research study.

Although I have never served as a coach and mentor to developing teachers, my lens is profoundly shaped through my experiences as a professional counselor working with children and families. I began my journey working in mental health as behavioral aide in a behavioral day treatment program serving children and adolescents in a school setting. These children and adolescents were often considered to be the "bad kids" in school and at home, despite these behaviors being reactions to experiences of significant trauma, abuse, and poverty. The day treatment program was designed to "rehabilitate" these children and adolescents by helping them learn skills and behaviors that would allow them to rejoin their peers in traditional school settings. Although well-intended, this program lacked resources, trained professionals and teachers, appropriate mental health services, and the administrative support needed to meet the needs of these struggling children and adolescents. More often than not, these kids never successfully reintegrated into public school settings and often ultimately ended up in juvenile detention centers. It was because of this professional experience that I became a professional counselor.

Since then, I have continued to serve children, adolescents, and adults working in a variety of counseling settings, including school-based mental health settings, employee assistance, and outpatient services. My experiences working as a mental health counselor in an inner city, public charter school shape my understanding of the teachers' experiences in the current study. Having worked one-on-one with teachers through my role as a counselor, I strongly identify with the teachers' experiences in the current study. I have witnessed many similar struggles of teachers firsthand: trying to meet the developmental needs of students while lacking the needed resources or administrative support to address these needs. My experiences in this setting resurface when hearing similar struggles among teachers served by the EESLPD office.

My experiences providing mental health services have profoundly shaped me personally and professionally, thus there is no doubt that they exist in the underbrush of this research (Peshkin, 1988). My professional experiences have generated preconceived notions of teachers' experiences with students and administration and may unconsciously prompt me to seek information that confirms my experiences. It is possible that my personal connection to the current study might make me overly sympathetic or critical of participants' stated experiences. Therefore, it is likely that my own experiences will shape my review of the data analysis, and I will need to take steps to bracket these experiences when possible.

Instrumentation

The LR moderated interview questions to participants during the focus group and individual interviews. The focus group/individual interview protocol found in Appendix F was used. An optional demographic questionnaire (Appendix G) was provided for all

participants at the beginning of each session. Participant completion of the brief,

demographic questionnaire was optional and voluntary, as are all participant components

of this research. The qualitative, semi-structured interview questions used during the

focus group and individual interviews are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3

ECE Focus Group/Individual Interview Questions

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1. What successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

    a. How have your successes been acknowledged and/or celebrated?

2. What challenges have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

    a. How have your mentor and evaluator helped you during the challenging times in the classroom?

3. What particular areas of your teaching do you feel you need help?

4. Describe ways in which your mentor/evaluator may or may not be responsive when you request help.

5. Tell me about your comfort level regarding asking your mentor/evaluator for help.

    a. Tell me about reasons you may not reach out to you mentor/evaluator for help and support.

6. Tell me about the experiences you've had with coaching and mentoring.

7. How would you describe the coaching style of your mentor?

8. What are ways in which your mentor/evaluator has been able to support you?

    a. What kinds of support should be offered by your mentor and evaluator?

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The first research question for this study explored the areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP (e.g. standards, elements) that ECEs are making progress or not. The rubric includes five standards that ECEs are evaluated on such as (a) standard i: teachers demonstrate leadership, (b) standard ii: teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students, (c) standard iii: teachers know the content they teach, (d) standard iv: teachers facilitate learning for their students, and standard v: teachers reflect on their practice (McRel, 2009). Early childhood educators are evaluated and are provided marks on their performance in one of 4 categories (e.g., developing, proficient, accomplished, and distinguished). Evaluators also have options to mark the rubric as Not Demonstrated (ND) or Not Looked For (NLF). An evaluator may mark ND for an ECE who did not perform a particular teaching practice included in the rubric during the observation and may mark NFL if the evaluator did not seek to observe a particular practice(s).

A cross-sectional analysis of all five standards and corresponding elements was conducted. Evaluation data was collected from NCEES/Homebase over a three-year time period. This time period is representative of school and/or academic calendar years (e.g., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018). A cross-sectional reanalysis of data includes trend and pattern changes related to ECE summative ratings for the three years specified. A summary of the information gathered from a secondary analysis of data, included collecting descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency [F] and percentages [$\%$]) from marked rubric areas of Standards I – V in the rubric as part of the NC TEP. Specific corresponding elements of the Standards I - V that illustrate unique features found in the

data are described. Other tables and figures not described in this section for standards and elements can be found in Appendix A and B. It is important to note that all information shared in this section refers to the cross-sectional analysis of summative evaluation data collected for specified years. This analysis does not follow any individual ECE growth over time. The overall analysis for all five standards in the NC TEP, over the three-year period, shows a pattern of ECE proficient markings in the rubric.

Demographic information of ECEs is not available for all three years (2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018) included in this cross-sectional reanalysis of data. The NCEES/Homebase system that houses all NC teacher summative evaluations, is a current system and only has demographic information for ECEs available during the year in session. This information was gathered during the 2017-2018 year, but not for the previous years from which this data was originally collected, therefore wasn't available as part of the reanalysis. The LR for this study proposes that demographic information may not be vastly different from year to year as ECEs enter the BTSP program and receive support from EESLPD mentors and evaluators over a three-year period (e.g. for initially licensed teachers [SP I]) or five years (e.g., during the renewal process for a continuing license teachers [SP II]). A summary of 2017-2018 demographic ECE information follows. It is important to note that due to teacher attrition, statistics provided most likely changed during the program year, from the time this demographic information was originally collected. All tables and figures not displayed in this section, that represent demographic information during 2017-2018, can be found in the appendices.

Descriptive data collected during the 2017-2018 academic year indicates that the majority of ECEs worked in NC Pre-K classrooms on both EESLPD hubs (East = 287, 77%; West = 293, 70%) followed by developmental day programs (East = 11%; West = 5%) (Figure 3). Of ECEs served by the EESLPD office, the majority are considered continuing license teachers (SP IIs) on both sides of the state (East = 179, 48%; West = 195, 46.5%) (Figure 4). The majority of ECEs served by the EESLPD office by both hubs are females (East = 366, 98.1%; West = 413, 1.4%) followed by few males (East = 7, 1.9%; West = 6, 1.4%) (Table 4). Regarding the race of ECEs, both the east and west hubs showed similar diversity on both sides of the state. Demographic information collected for race indicated that ECEs enrolled in the BTSP and served by the EESLPD office hubs are primarily Black or African American (n = 347) and White or Caucasian teachers (n = 399) (Table 5). Some ECEs (5.2%) had earned Master's degrees across the state with 94.8% of all ECEs served having obtained a Bachelor's degree (Table 6). It should be noted that not all advanced degrees earned by ECEs in this population are in the early childhood field. Eastern and western hub ECEs have similar years of experience noted on their license. Mean scores for these are included in Table 7 (East = 7, West = 8). Mean ages of ECEs across the state are also very similar (East = 42, West = 41) (Table 7). In both East and West hubs, ECEs in their first year of the BTSP and served by the EESLPD, were much less in numbers overall (East = 21, West = 21) as compared to ECEs in their 2nd year (East = 67, West = 88) and 3rd years of being served (East = 70, West = 69) (Figure 5). All years for ECEs working in particular settings and years in the BTSP are located in the appendices.
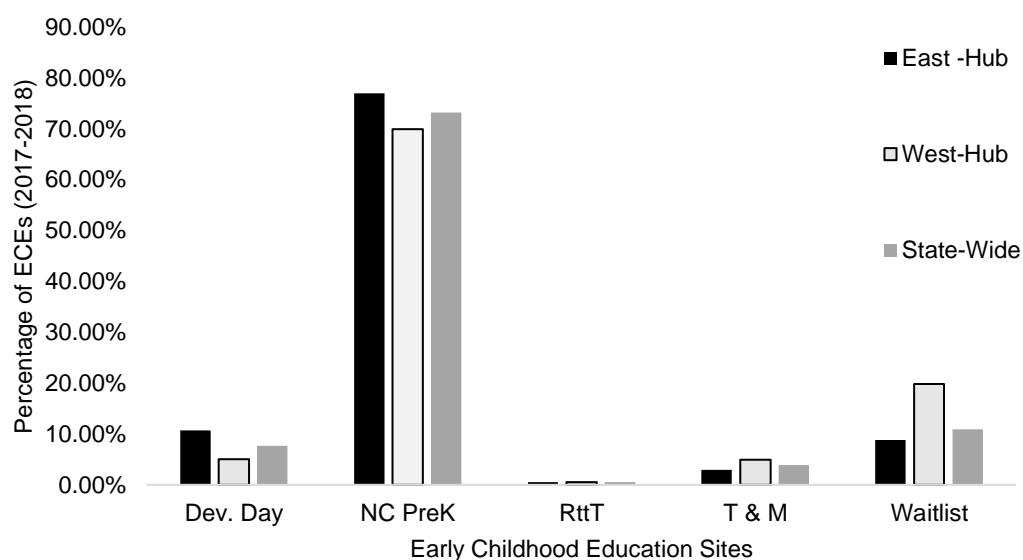
Figure 3. This figure includes information about the percentage of ECEs who work in specific early childhood education sites. The vast majority of ECEs served children and families in NC PreK programs followed by developmental day settings. Of ECEs included in the demographic information from the NCEES/Homebase database for 2017-2018, a small percentage served as both a teacher and a mentor at their site.
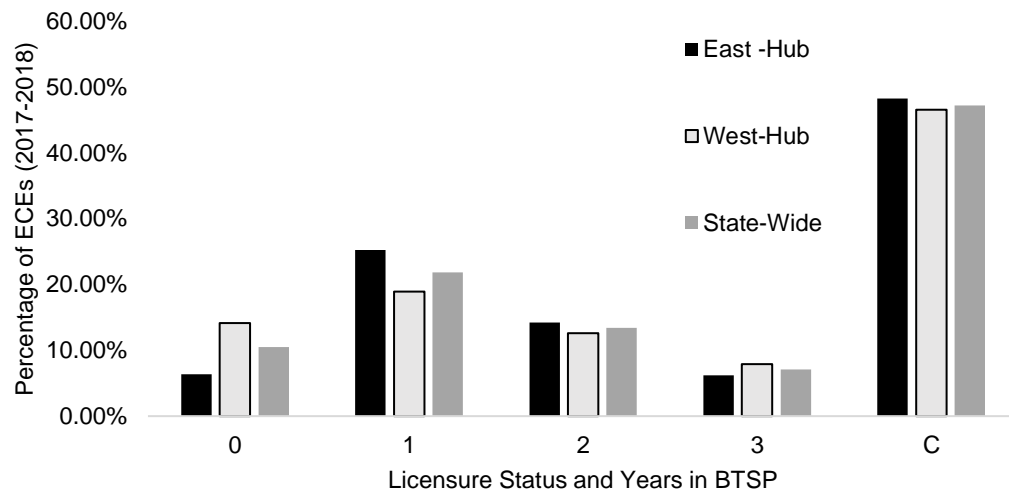
Figure 4. Of ECEs served by the EESLPD office, the majority are considered continuing license teachers (SP IIs) for both East and West hubs. Following having a continuing license are ECEs in their first year of the BTSP.

Table 4

Gender of ECEs (2017 - 2018)

	East Hub		West Hub		State-wide	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Female	366	98.1	413	98.6	779	98.4
Male	7	1.9	6	1.4	13	1.6
Total	373	100.0	419	100.0	792	100.0

Note. The vast majority of ECEs serving young children and families while being

supported by the EESLPD office are women as shown in the table above.

Table 5

Race of ECEs (2017 - 2018)

	East Hub		West Hub		State-wide	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Black	182	48.8	165	39.4	347	43.8
White	165	44.2	234	55.8	399	50.4
Other Race	26	9.4	20	4.8	46	5.8
Total	373	100.0	419	100.0	792	100.0

Note. ECEs enrolled in the BTSP and served by the EESLPD office hubs are primarily

Black or African American and White or Caucasian teachers. The "other race" category

makes up the following: (a) American Indian or Alaska Native, (b) Asian, (c) Black, (d)

Black American Indian or Alaska Native, (e) Black, White, (f) Hispanic/Latino, Black,

(g) Hispanic/Latino, (h) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and (i)

Hispanic/Latino, White.

Table 6

Highest Degree Earned (not necessarily in B-K) (2017 - 2018)

	East Hub		West Hub		State-wide	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Bachelor's	360	96.5	391	93.3	751	94.8
Master's	13	3.5	28	6.7	41	5.2
Total	373	100.0	419	100.0	792	100.0

Note. The vast majority of ECEs had earned a Bachelor's degree in early childhood while

some from both hubs has also earned an advanced degree. However, it is noted that not

all ECEs who had earned an advanced degree received a Master's degree in a field

related to educating young children and families.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics: Experience and Age (2017-2018)

	East Hub					West Hub				
	N	Min.	Max.	$\bar{x}$	SD	N	Min.	Max.	$\bar{x}$	SD
Exp. License	373	--	36	6.6	6.7	419	0	37	8.1	7.13
Age	373	22	72	42.1	11.4	419	22	71	41.4	11.1
Total	373					419				

Note. The mean age of ECEs from both the East and West hubs is extremely similar as noted in the table.
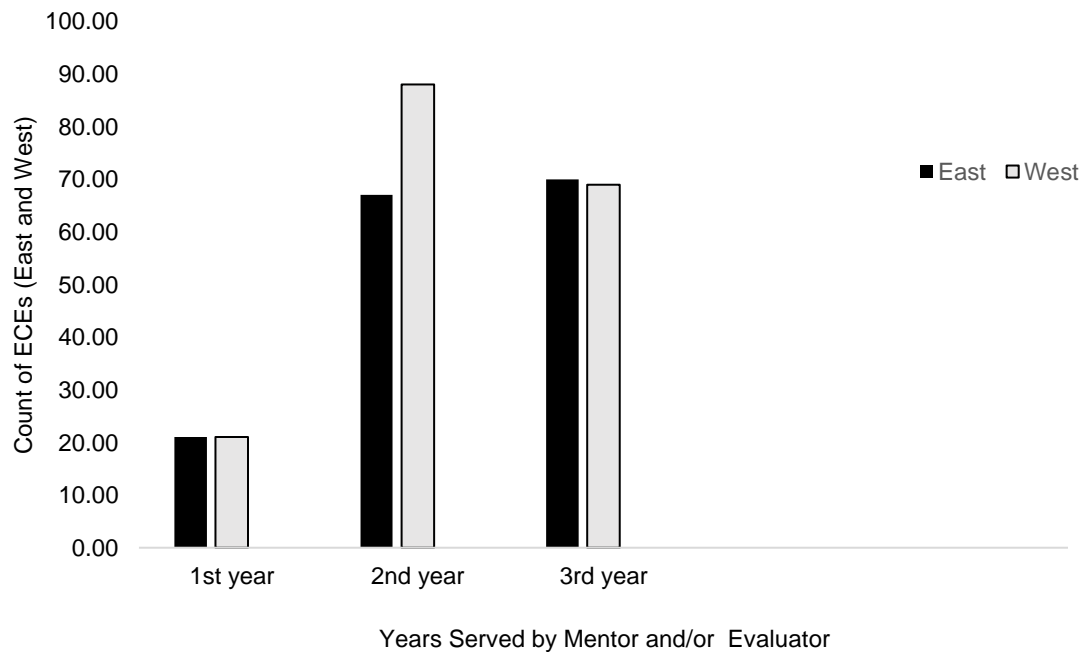
Figure 5. In both East and West hubs, ECEs in their first year of the BTSP and served by the EESLPD, were much less in numbers as compared to ECEs in their 2nd and 3rd years of being served.

An Overview of the Reanalysis of Data for Standards I-V

This reanalysis of data includes a summary of the information gathered from a cross-sectional secondary analysis of ECE summative evaluation data, including collecting descriptive statistics from marked rubric areas for Standards I – V in the NC TEP. The original data from these summative evaluations was collected from NCEES/Homebase and the data was transferred to SPSS. Once reanalysis of this data took place, all data was then converted to Excel and the LR for this study developed tables and figures. Specific elements of standards that show features unique to the data, regarding ECE areas of proficiency and moving along the rubric continuum are described. It is important to note that the overarching reanalysis for the five standards in the NC TEP, over the three-year period, shows stable ECE proficiency in this marking category of the rubric.

Standard I: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership

A general analysis of Standard I indicates (see Table 8, Figure 6) that between the academic years of 2015-2016 to 2017-2018, ECEs showed consistency in the proficient marking area of the rubric. The LR's cross-sectional analysis is not representative of the same group of ECEs or of an individual ECE. Data shows that ECEs were marked at the accomplished level between 2015-2016 (57.9%) and 2016-2017 (30.5%), but a decrease in accomplished markings occurred during the 2017-2018 school year (27.4%). The distinguished marking area shows a similar trend with a higher percentage of ECEs earning this level during the 2015-2016 year (6.4%) than in the previous year of 2015-2016 (5.2%) and a decline in ECEs earning the accomplished marking during the 2017-2018 school year (2.4%). While accomplished and distinguished levels were less

prevalent in rubric markings over the three-year period, proficiency levels increased over time (2015-2016 = 57.9%, 2016-2017 = 59.1%, 2017-2018 = 65%). It is important to note that while there is a decline shown in the accomplished and distinguished marking areas over the three-year period, there was also an increase in proficiency for Standard I, which is the marking area in the rubric that ECEs are expected to reach on all five standards included in the NC TEP to be eligible for a continuing license.

Table 8

Standard I: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	32	8.0	18	4.1	28	5.2
Proficient	232	57.9	260	59.1	349	65.0
Accomplished	115	28.7	134	30.5	147	27.4
Distinguished	21	5.2	28	6.4	13	2.4
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard I over a three-year period (e.g., 2016-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018) indicates an overall increase in ECEs being marked in the proficient category.
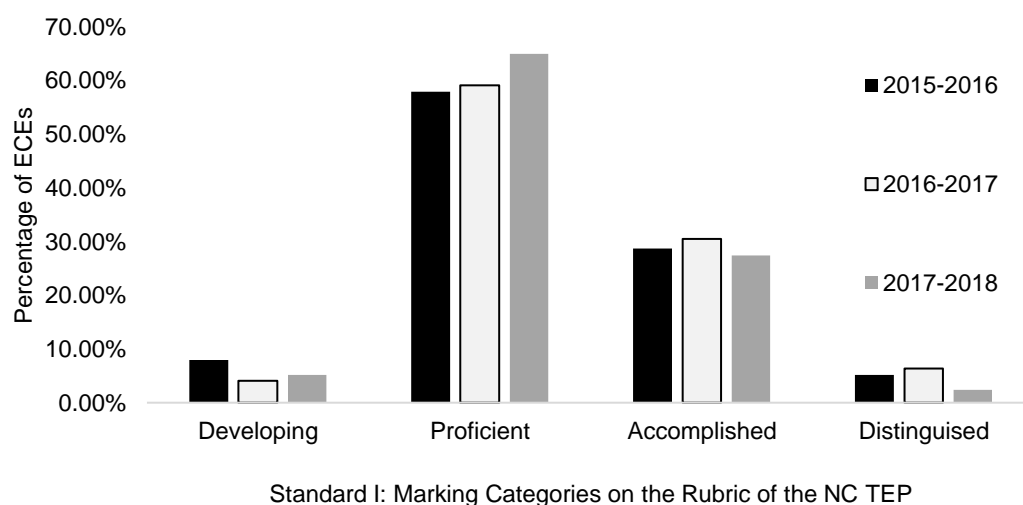
Figure 6. While a reanalysis of the data shows a decrease in the accomplished and distinguished marking areas, an increase in proficiency for Standard I is also shown over time. The proficient category is the marking area ECEs are expected to reach on Standards I-V to be eligible for a continuing license.

Standard I, Element D: Teachers Advocate for Schools and Children

A reanalysis of Standard ID, shows that this element may be one in which ECEs have a more challenging time moving beyond the proficient marking category into the accomplished or distinguished areas. Through a visual analysis of the data, the LR notes that ECEs have high rates of proficiency and substantially lower rates of accomplished and distinguished markings (Table 9, Figure 7) over the three-year period. Early childhood educators may want to include advocacy components in their work to meet rubric criteria as part of the NC TEP (de-Kort Young et al., 2016). There are many ways to incorporate advocacy in the early childhood classroom such as (a) attending IEP meetings, (b) knowledge about the referral and IEP process, and (c) taking a leadership role in Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.

Table 9

Standard ID: Teachers Advocate for Schools and Children

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	2	0.5	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	42	10.5	39	8.9	42	7.8
Proficient	246	61.4	267	60.7	380	70.8
Accomplished	99	24.7	111	25.2	104	19.4
Distinguished	11	2.7	22	5.0	11	2.1
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard ID seems to be an element on the rubric that ECEs have a challenging

time moving along the continuum of the marking categories. ECEs have high rates of

proficiency and lower rates of accomplished and distinguished markings. ECEs may have

a more difficult time moving along the markings continuum in Standard ID.

Standard ID: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
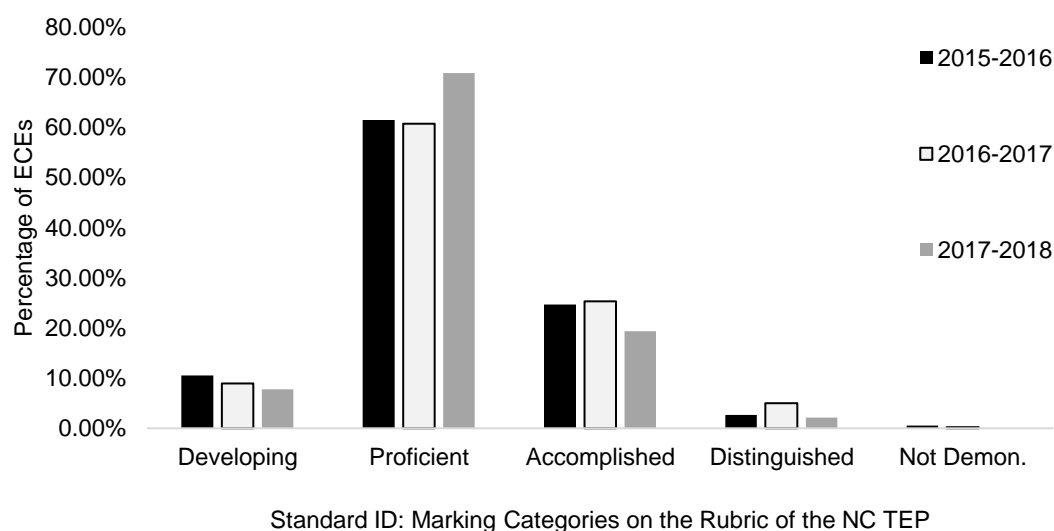
Figure 7. Standard ID seems to be an element on the rubric that ECEs have a challenging
time progressing along the continuum marking areas (e.g., moving from proficient to
accomplished or distinguished levels).

Standard II: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse

Population of Children

A reanalysis of Standard II (see Table 10, Figure 8) indicates that ECEs remained

stable at the proficiency marking area during the three-year time period (2015-2016 =

55.1%, n = 221; 2016-2017 = 54.8%, n = 241; 2017-2018 = 55.1%, n = 221). Other

marking areas, including developing, accomplished, and distinguished areas also

remained stable during the three years. While the proficiency marking area increased

from the 2016-2017 year (54.8%, n = 241), to the 2017-2018 year (57.5%, n = 309) the

distinguished marking area dropped from 6.8% (n = 30) in 2016-2017 to 4.5% (n = 24)

during the 2017-2018 year. Once again the proficiency category is the area that ECEs are

required to achieve to reach continuing license status.

Table 10

Standard II: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Children

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	20	5.0	11	2.5	20	2.8
Proficient	221	55.1	241	54.8	309	57.5
Accomplished	136	33.9	158	34.9	136	35.2
Distinguished	24	6.0	30	6.8	24	4.5
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	401	100.0

Note: While there was a slight decrease in accomplished and distinguished areas marked

by raters, over half of ECEs rubric data that was analyzed had reached overall proficiency

for this standard during the 2017-2018 school year.

Standard II: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
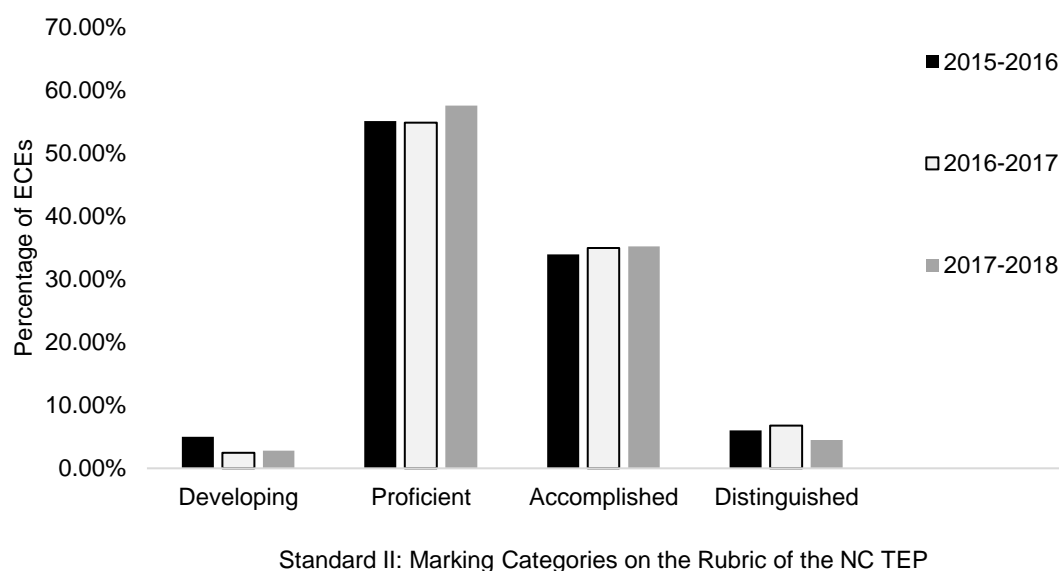
Figure 8. A reanalysis of data regarding Standard II indicates that ECEs earned stable proficiency rubric markings from raters during the academic years of 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018.

Standard II, Element A: Teachers Provide an Environment in which Each Child Has a Positive, Nurturing Relationship with Caring Adults

During the reanalysis of Standard IIA, it was discovered that this element within Standard II is among one of the easiest for ECEs to move along the marking continuum from proficient to accomplished and distinguished categories. This element specifically addresses the classroom environment established by ECEs for children. The Resource Manual (de-Kort Young et al. 2016) includes components that ECEs may incorporate in their classrooms to address this element such as (a) creating a culture in the classroom that connects home and community, (b) encouraging positive interactions through modeling, and (c) creating an environment where children feel comfortable to express themselves. As shown in Table 11 and Figure 9, when rates of proficiency go up, the

accomplished and distinguished marking areas go down, although these categories appear

to be easier to reach in Element A than in other elements included in Standard I.

Table 11

*Standard IIA: Teachers Provide an Environment in which Each Child has a Positive,
Nurturing Relationship with Caring Adults*

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	13	3.2	18	4.1	10	1.9
Proficient	34	8.5	174	39.6	238	44.3
Accomplished	174	43.4	208	47.3	255	47.5
Distinguished	34	8.5	38	8.6	34	6.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Proficiency markings increase over the three years in this element and it appears to

be easier for ECEs to move along the marking categories in Standard IIA. ECEs are

expected to reach proficiency on Standards I-V to be eligible for a continuing license.

Standard IIA: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
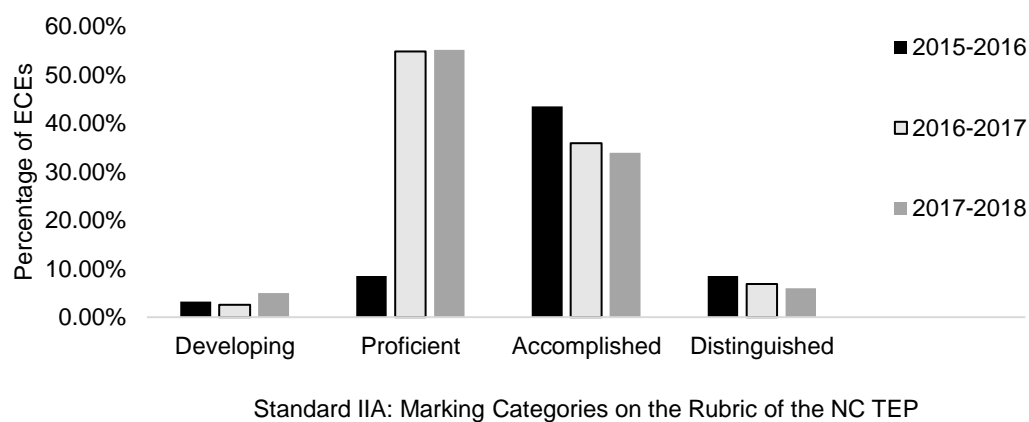
Figure 9. Standard IIA appears to be one of the elements ECEs move from the proficient
category to the accomplished and distinguished marking areas more readily than other
elements. Element IIA may be an area that is not quite as challenging for ECEs as other
areas on the NC TEP.

Standard III: Teachers Know the Content They Teach

An analysis of Standard III (see Table 12, Figure 10) indicates that the majority of ECEs had gradual increases in proficiency markings earned over the three-year time period. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 57.1% (n = 229) of ECEs had reached proficiency, while 60.5% (n = 266) earned proficient markings during the 2016-2017 academic year. Finally, during the school year of 2017-2018, 62.8% (n = 337) of ECEs earned proficiency markings.

Table 12

Standard III: Teachers Know the Content They Teach

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	51	12.7	32	7.3	54	10.1
Proficient	229	57.1	266	60.5	337	62.8
Accomplished	107	26.7	120	27.3	135	25.1
Distinguished	14	3.5	22	5.0	11	2.1
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A reanalysis of data shows ECE proficiency markings in Standard III consistently increase during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 academic years.

70.00%

Standard III: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
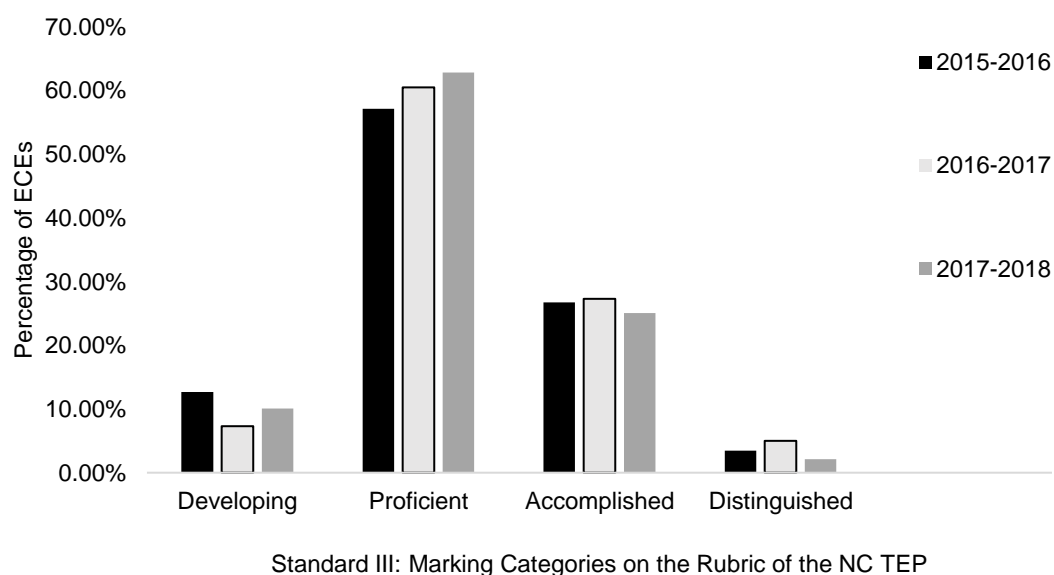
Figure 10. A reanalysis of Standard III rubric data indicates that 62.8% of ECEs earned proficiency markings during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Standard III, Element C: Teachers Recognize the Interconnectedness of Content Areas/Disciplines

A reanalysis of Standard IIIC shows that ECEs may not have as much difficulty moving into the accomplished marking area as other elements in the rubric. However, IIIC would still be considered a moderately difficult area for ECEs to move along the continuum of marking categories, and not considered an easy element to move beyond proficient (Table 13, Figure 11). The Resource Manual (de Kort-Young et al., 2016) includes the following suggestions that ECEs may incorporate in their classroom practices to meet proficiency requirements such as (a) involving children in reviewing what they've learned, (b) using a graphic organizer to connect developmental domains, and (c) implementing scaffolding strategies with children.

Table 13

Standard IIIC: Teachers Recognize the Interconnectedness of Content Areas/Disciplines

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	69	17.2	55	12.5	8	1.5
Proficient	228	56.9	227	51.6	334	62.2
Accomplished	91	22.7	129	29.3	118	22.0
Distinguished	11	2.7	27	6.1	8	1.5
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A review of frequencies and percentages for this Standard and Element shows that IIIC, may not be particularly challenging for ECEs to move from the proficient to the accomplished category. During 2017-2018, proficiency growth is noted from previous years, which is the goal of ECEs enrolled in the BTSP and evaluated using the NC TEP.

Standard IIIC: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
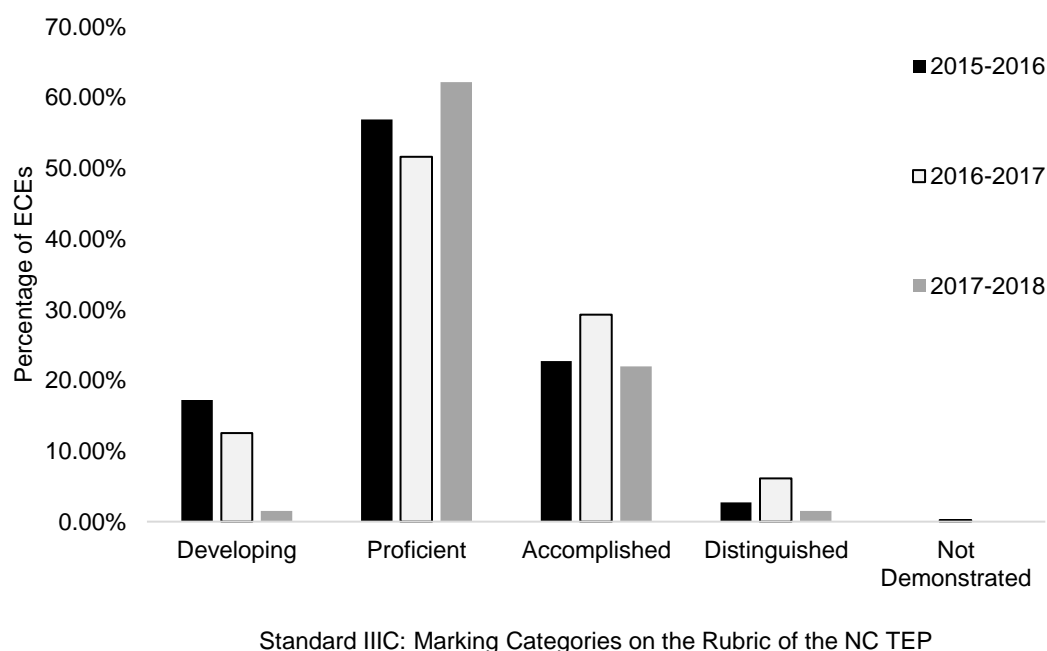
Figure 11. A visual analysis of Standard IIIC indicates that this element may not be particularly challenging for ECEs to move from proficient to accomplished, although increases in the accomplished category does decrease from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. However, progress made in the proficient category increases during the 2017-2018 year, which is one of the goals of ECEs supported by the EESLPD.

Standard IV: Teachers Facilitate Learning for Their Young Children

Descriptive statistics gathered as part of a reanalysis of Standard IV (see Table 14, Figure 12) indicates a pattern, as was prevalent in Standards I and III, that proficiency levels for ECEs gradually increased over a period of three years. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 54.9% (n = 263) of ECEs earned proficiency with 59.8% (n = 220) of ECEs earning proficient markings a year later (2016-2017). An increase in proficiency (n = 334, 64.1%) was earned by ECEs during the 2017-2018 year. Developing and accomplished areas of the rubric decreased from the academic year of 2015-2016 (13.5%, n = 54; 28.7%, n = 115) to the year of 2017-2018 (8.6%, n = 46).

Table 14

Standard IV: Teachers Facilitate Learning for Their Young Children

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	54	13.5	42	9.6	46	8.6
Proficient	220	54.9	263	59.8	334	64.1
Accomplished	115	28.7	117	26.6	138	25.7
Distinguished	12	3.0	18	4.1	9	1.7
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard IV indicates that a steady growth pattern is prevalent with

ECEs earning a proficiency marking over time.
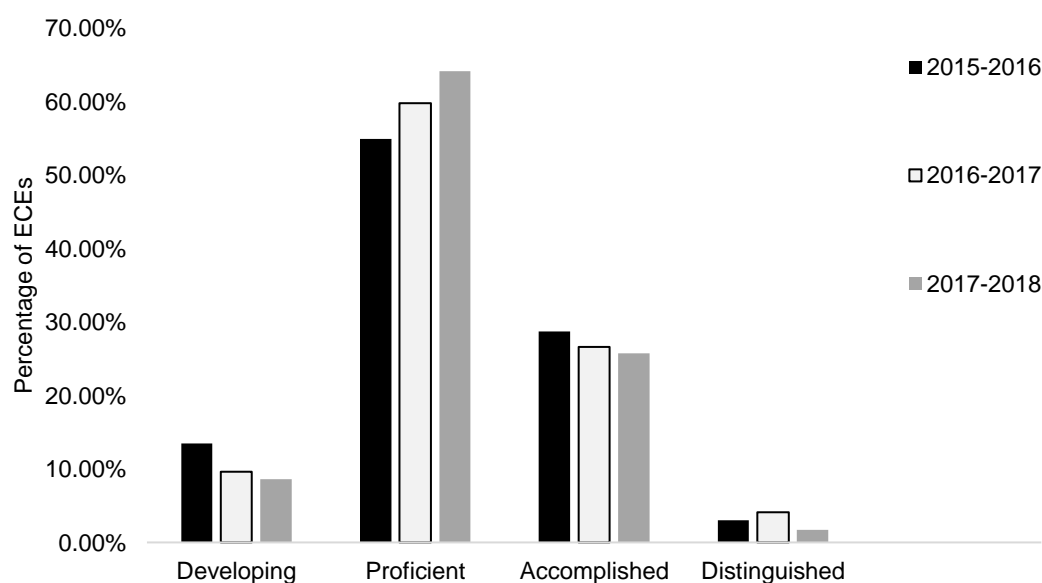
Standard IV: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 12. An analysis of ECE data on Standard IV shows that while the developing and accomplished marking areas decrease over a three-year period, ECEs earned a proficient marking on Standard IV and this increase occurred over the same three years (54.9%, n = 220; 59.8%, n = 263; 64.1%, n = 334).

Standard IV, Element H: Teachers Use a Variety of Method to Assess What Each Child Has Learned

A reanalysis of Standard IVH shows that this element may not be as challenging as some other elements for ECEs to move from proficient to accomplished, but not easy. Standard IVH would be considered a moderately difficult standard to move from proficient to accomplished given the frequencies and percentages over the three-year period. During 2017-2018, an increase in proficiency growth is noted from previous years (Table 15, Figure 13). This is one of the goals of ECEs enrolled in the BTSP and evaluated using the NC TEP. Included in the Resource Manual (de Kort-Young et al., 2016) are ideas that ECEs may incorporate in the classroom to meet the proficiency marking in the rubric such (a) reviewing observation notes to identify behavior patterns, (b) assessing children's abilities and skills, and (c) giving children opportunities to report what they understand and have learned.

Table 15

Standard IVH: Teachers Use a Variety of Methods to Assess What Each Child Has Learned

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	2	0.5	1	0.2
Developing	70	17.5	55	12.5	81	15.1
Proficient	229	57.1	266	60.5	334	62.2
Accomplished	86	21.4	98	22.3	110	20.5
Distinguished	14	3.5	19	4.3	11	2.0
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A review of frequencies and percentages for this Standard and Element shows that IVH may be a moderately challenging element for ECE's to move from proficient to

accomplished. During 2017-2018, an increase in proficiency growth is noted, which is

one of the goals of ECEs enrolled in the BTSP and evaluated using the NC TEP.
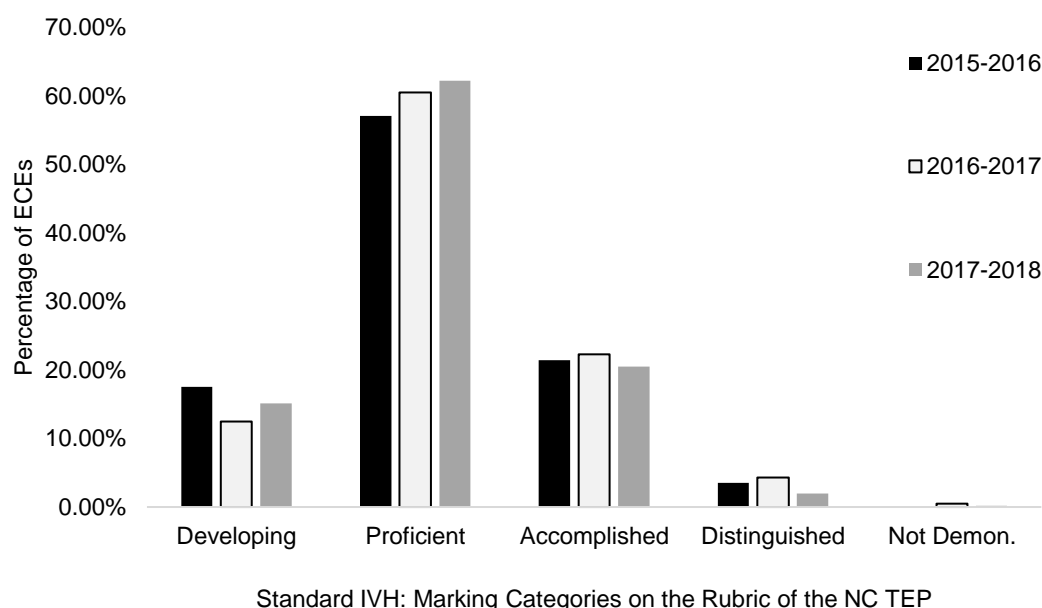
Figure 13. An analysis of ECE data on Standard IVH shows that the proficient marking
steadily increases over three years. This may indicate ECEs overall, increase in the
proficient marking area over time in Standard IVH.

Standard V: Teachers Reflect On Their Practices

A reanalysis of descriptive statistics gathered for Standard V (see Table 16,

Figure 14) indicate a pattern of ECEs earning proficient markings in 2015-2016 (57.6%,

n = 231) to 2017-2018 (68.5%, n = 368). Early childhood educators received less

developing ratings in 2016-2017 (5.5%, n = 24) and 2017-2018 (6.7%, n = 36) than in the

initial year this data was collected (2015-2016 = 6.7%, n = 36). There was also a slight

decrease over the three-year period of ECEs earning accomplished markings by raters,

met with a pattern of proficiency markings during the same three years.

Table 16

Standard V: Teachers Reflect On Their Practices

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	49	12.2	24	5.5	36	6.7
Proficient	231	57.6	284	64.6	368	68.5
Accomplished	104	25.9	107	24.3	119	22.2
Distinguished	15	3.7	25	5.7	14	2.6
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard V shows a pattern of ECEs earning proficient markings

during the three-year time period, with slight decreases in accomplished areas noted over

the same three-year period.

Standard V: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
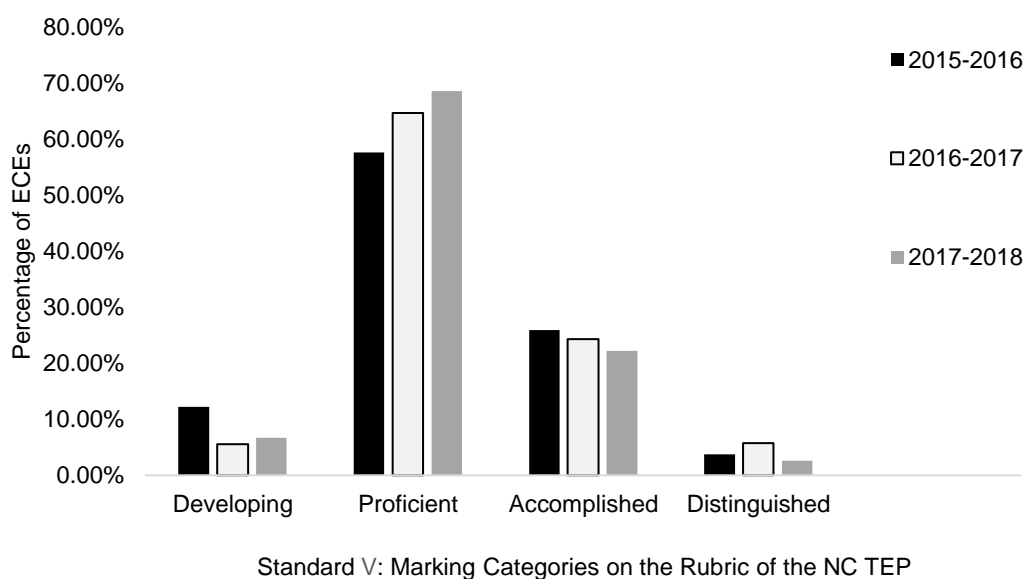
Figure 14. An analysis of descriptive statistics collected for Standard V shows a growth
pattern of ECEs earning proficiency markings during the three years this data was
collected.

Standard V, Element B: Teachers Link Professional Growth to Their Professional

Goals

During the reanalysis of Standard VB, data indicates that the proficient marking

area during the 2017-2018 year shows a substantial increase (67.4%, n = 362) when

compared to the previous years (2015-2016 = 56.4%, 2016-2017 = 59.3%). This may

indicate that ECEs had a more difficult time moving to the accomplished or distinguished

marking categories, from the proficient area during the 2017-2018 year, but for previous

years moving along the markings continuum may not have been as challenging (Table 17,

Figure 15). There are many potential ways ECEs may meet proficiency in this rubric area

according to the Resource Manual such as (a) developing a comprehensive PDP, (b)

participating in trainings and PD that aligns with PDP goals, and (c) locating online

resources and experiences from around the world and incorporating them in the early

childhood classroom (de Kort-Young et al., 2016).

Table 17

Standard VB: Teachers Link Professional Growth to Their Professional Goals

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	2	0.5	---	---	---	---
Developing	37	9.2	30	6.8	30	5.6
Proficient	226	56.4	261	59.3	362	67.4
Accomplished	114	28.4	118	26.8	122	22.7
Distinguished	22	5.5	31	7.0	23	4.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard VB shows a pattern of ECE progress earning proficiency markings for

linking professional growth to their professional goals.
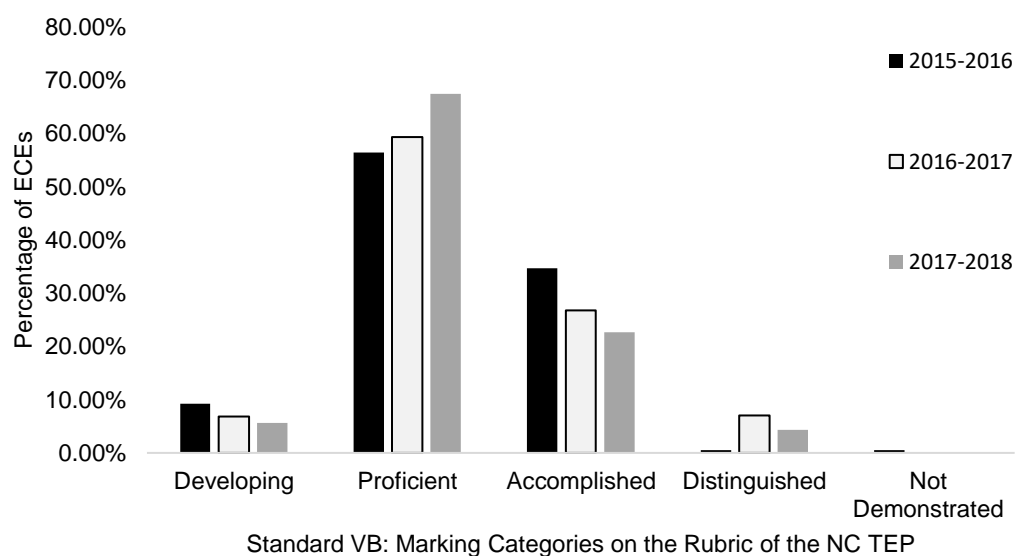
Figure 15. An analysis of descriptive statistics collected for Standard VB shows a pattern of ECEs earning proficiency markings during the three years this data was collected. For this particular standard and element, ECEs may be able to progress to the accomplished level with less difficulty than other elements in the rubric.

Summary of the Quantitative Analysis

In answering the first question and through the reanalysis of ECE summative evaluation reports over a three-year period, the researcher identified particular standards and elements that appear to be easy, moderately challenging, or difficult for ECEs to maintain proficiency and move to other marking categories (e.g., accomplished and proficient) in the rubric. For Standard I (leadership), Element D (advocacy), ECEs seem to have a difficult time moving along the marking continuum in the rubric. Standard II (environment), Element A (positive, nurturing, inclusive), ECEs appear to have the easiest time moving along the continuum and moving beyond proficiency in to the accomplished and distinguished marking areas in the rubric. An analysis of Standard III (content), Element C (interconnectedness) indicated that ECEs have a moderately

challenging time moving to accomplished from the proficient marking area. According to

a reanalysis of the data, ECEs also have a moderately challenging time moving along the

continuum for Standard IV (facilitate learning), Element H (methods to assess). Lastly,

for Standard V (reflection), Element B (professional growth and goals), ECEs seem to

have a less difficult time moving to the accomplished marking area from proficiency.

A Reanalysis of a Survey for ECEs Served by the EESLPD Office (2017-2018)

Qualitative methods were used to reanalyze data retrieved from the EESLPD

survey (2017-2018) to answer the second research question for this study, "How do ECE

responses regarding needs for support and the support they receive from mentors and

evaluators align with the coaching components of the conceptual framework?" Only

particular questions that related to the research question were reanalyzed. Four open-

ended survey questions were part of the reanalysis and asked participants (a) what other

supports/resources could you use from the EESLPD office to be more successful in

meeting your professional goals to impact the learning of young children and their

families, (b) in what ways have you grown as a teacher since you began the BTSP and

started receiving services from your EESLPD office mentor and/or evaluator, (c) are

there any areas you feel you did not make progress despite being actively involved in the

BTSP, and (d) how could your mentor and/or evaluator provide you with better support?

Table 2 provides information about the steps used during the analysis of the focus group,

individual interviews, and survey responses.

The survey was sent to ECEs at the end of the 2017-2018 service year

electronically. Those ECEs were served during the specified service year were emailed a

survey link via SurveyShare. The survey was optional as well as answering individual

questions to the survey and a modest response rate of ECEs (n = 202), from both East and West hubs, answered the open-ended questions that were reanalyzed for this study. Demographic information that was asked at the time of the survey can be found in Table 16. The majority of respondents worked in NC Pre-K classrooms (N = 139) as well as indicated that they had previous experience working in early childhood settings prior to enrolling in the BTSP and receiving EESLPD office support. The majority of respondents indicated that they were continuing license teachers (SP II) and that they had been served by the EESLPD office for several years ($\bar{x}$ = 5.94). Fifty-five of the respondents (39%) indicated that they were in their first year with their mentor and/or evaluator.

Table 18

East and West Hub ECE Statistics for EESLPD End of Year Survey (2017-2018)

	F	*%*	$\bar{x}$
NC Pre-K Classroom	139	69.5	--
Previous Work in ECE	180	90.0	--
1st Year with M/E	55	39.3	--
SP II # Years Served	94	--	5.94

N = 202

Note. The majority of ECEs who responded to the survey worked in NC Pre-K classrooms and had previous experience working in the field of early childhood.

The LR for the present study used the coaching components included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework (Figure 1) as a means to create categories from ECE survey responses. The researcher used a system of color coding (by hand) to develop categories from survey responses and transcripts from the survey can be found in Appendix C (e.g., examples of coded interviews and transcripts, both survey and focus

group interviews). The researcher has hard copies of all color-coded data in a locked file cabinet at UNC Charlotte.

The coaching components included in the EESLPD office (Figure 1) as well as indicators to the coaching components (Figure 2) inform the categories used to derive meaning and patterns from answers to the open-ended survey questions. The coaching components and corresponding highlight colors used for each, includes mentor/evaluator support that is (a) relationship-based/blue: type, time, quality, (b) individualized/pink: experiences, goals, communication, (c) knowledge-based/green: life-long learner, theory-to-practice, wisdom, (d) adaptable/orange: disposition, non-judgmental, reflection, and (e) strengths-based/black underline: identify, prioritize, and acknowledge. Separate patterns were found across the four open-ended questions and can be found in Table 19.

Table 19

Patterns Found from the EESLPD Coaching Components Across Survey Questions

Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
	Patterns Identified		
KB	KB	KB	KB
I	I	--	--
RB	RB	--	RB
--	A	A	A
--	SB	SB	--

Note. Patterns were found in participants' responses to open-ended survey questions. All five EESLPD coaching components (e.g., Individualized (I), Knowledge-based [KB], Relationship-based [RB], Strengths-based [SB], Adaptable [A]) were mentioned by respondents for question two in the 2017-2018 survey.

Open-Ended Survey Question One. On the EESLPD survey (2017-2018), ECEs who were supported by the EESLPD office were asked, "What other supports/resources could you use from the EESLPD office to be more successful in meeting your professional goals to impact the learning of young children and their families?" A summary of ECE responses and connections discovered between the coaching components included in the EESLPD office framework are described. A pattern of responses between three of the five coaching components included in the EESLPD office framework was discovered during analysis of the data for this question.

Knowledge-based, individual, and relationship-based coaching components. A pattern occurred from ECE responses including coaching components in the EESLPD office conceptual framework such as (a) knowledge-based, (b) individual, and (c) relationship-based. For the knowledge-based component, participants responded with support needs for PD and training needs. One ECE stated:

> I would like to receive resources, information on trainings so that I can be better prepared for requirements instead of hearing about them second hand or too late because I do not have a mentor.

Another ECE talked about the need for professional development that fit her individual needs (Response 6), "Provide more information on Professional Development that would count towards licensure renewal requirements, or a list of acceptable websites that provide professional development for CEUs." Another example of connecting coaching components is the comment from an ECE that referred to her comfortability with her evaluator (e.g., relationship-based, individualized) and the need for information (e.g., knowledge-based), "I feel I can discuss [this] with my evaluator to get this information."

An ECE referred to the need to be "taught" by her mentor/evaluator and to be "more available…instead of throwing [information] in [her] lap and walking away."

In responding to this question, the need for professional development and training, including on-line options were the predominant areas ECEs mentioned needing more support from the EESLPD office. One ECE said, "Maybe offer more online, evening PD classes for CEU's." Another stated, "Understanding what is due and when and where to find things online." Specific areas of the rubric that were addressed by ECEs as needing more support included assessment, literacy, social and emotional development, behavior management, communicating in different languages, inclusion, and 21st century skills. There were several references by ECEs that they would like to have more "hands-on" examples to meet rubric and licensure requirements as well as support with Home Base.

Open-Ended Survey Question Two. During the reanalysis of responses to the 2nd open-ended survey question, many connections were made between ways ECEs indicated they had grown and the coaching components included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework. ECEs were asked, "In what ways have you grown as a teacher since you began the BTSP and started receiving services from your EESLPD office mentor and/or evaluator?" The concept map of the "Ordinary Lives" found in Figure 2, includes the interrelated factors that impact the learning of all involved in the work of coaching ECEs, including the child and family as well as the mentor/evaluator.

Adaptability coaching component. One such factor is that of the adaptability of mentors/evaluators when working with ECEs. The "adaptable" component can be comprised of several elements to describe what adaptable coaching encompasses when

working with ECEs, namely the coach's (a) overall disposition, (b) use of a non-judgmental approach, and (c) reflective practice. Of approximately 200 responses to this question, nearly half (n = 76) of respondents who answered this question included improved confidence and reflection of teaching practices in their responses.

Relationship-based coaching component. Addressing the relationship-based component of the EESLPD office conceptual framework, an exploration of responses to this open-ended question indicated that respondents often used the terms 'confident,' 'communicate,' 'collaborate,' 'support,' and/or 'leadership' together to answer the second open-ended question. One ECE shared, "[I'm] more confident with parents and being able to communicate with them." Another indicated, "I've grown in…collaborating with colleagues and families…" One ECE connected her strengths with her relationship with families by adding. "I have grown…in confidence…with parent skills because I feel that parents have always complimented me on my communication with them as well as being open to anything they would like to discuss." Another ECE responded, "I've certainly become a more educated, confident teacher! I know a lot more! I've collaborated a lot more!" While a third, ECE said, "I'm more confident in my leadership skills…and cooperatively work with teammates and ask questions."

Adaptable and strengths-based coaching components. When addressing relationship-building as a key to a supportive partnership, ECEs referred to "PLCs" and "…gaining confidence with the support of other teachers" as well as supportive relationships with mentors and/or evaluators. One ECE shared, "I've had a great mentor and previous evaluator that encouraged me to grow and instilled confidence." Another ECE shared, "I have grown in many ways but my self-confidence has grown the most.

My evaluator and mentor have been so positive and supportive that I could only grow under their care." The last two ECE responses show a connection between the relationship-based component of the EESLPD coaching framework and the adaptable and strengths-based components.

Relationship-based, strengths-based, and adaptable coaching components. Other examples of connections of the relationship-based component, the strengths-based component, and the adaptable component of the EESLPD coaching framework were discovered during a reanalysis of the survey data for this open-ended question. One ECE stated, "I have become more confident, flexible, and a better advocate for my children." A second ECE shared, "I communicate more and I'm open to new ideas" and another stated, "I have learned to think more outside the box." Advocacy and collaboration was also used in sentences together by ECEs to answer this question. One ECE stated, "[I've grown by] collaborating with others and advocating for early childhood."

Individualized coaching component. To address the individualized component of the EESLPD office conceptual framework, an investigation of this area showed that responses were connected at times to the adaptive and knowledge-based components of the model. For example, one ECE's response to this open-ended question (#2) indicated:

I have grown to understand that there is a process or journey you must take to allow yourself the opportunity, to have abundance of knowledge poured into you, so that you can build on what you already know. The knowledge, resources and opportunities that you receive can make you a great teacher or it can show you that this is not the journey for you. However, if you can accept and embrace this

journey you can become that great resource for all you come in contact with, and I feel like this experience has given me that.

Relationship-based, knowledge-based, individualized, adaptable, and strengths-based coaching components. One ECE summarized all five of the EESLPD office coaching components by describing how she has improved as a teacher since enrolling in the BTSP and receiving services from her mentor and evaluator. This ECE shared:

I have learned to see each child individually, and plan learning experiences to meet the needs of each child. I have learned to accept constructive criticism and grow from it. I am more equipped to work toward 21st century skills with my children. I have learned my own self-worth as a teacher, as well as a collaborator with parents. I have learned to keep learning, always.

Open-Ended Survey Question Three. On the 2017-2018 EOY Survey, ECEs who were supported by the EESLPD office were asked, "Are there any areas you feel you did not make progress despite being actively involved in the BTSP?" Connections discovered between the coaching components included in the EESLPD office framework were identified as a result of ECE responses to this question. Overall, the knowledge-based, strengths-based, and adaptable coaching components of the EESLPD office framework were reflected in responses from ECEs to answer this question in particular.

Knowledge-based, strengths-based, and adaptable coaching components. For example, knowledge-based responses included areas ECEs said that they did not make progress: (a) Entering documentation in timely [manner], (b) global awareness, (c) 21st century skills, (d) advocacy, (e) assessment, and (f) behavior management. Many of these responses align with the responses ECEs provided in Question One, about support needs

from the EESLPD office. Another example of an ECE's response reflecting the

knowledge-based, strengths-based, and adaptable coaching components of the EESLPD

office framework is as follows:

> I am pretty confident in my progress this year but I do think I can make a better
>
> impact by working on leadership skills and collaborating with others in the center
>
> to make a better workplace for educators and students.

Adaptable coaching component. The most prominent descriptor within the

adaptable coaching component that was indicated by ECE responses to this question was

reflection and how this was connected to increased confidence in teaching (e.g.,

Strengths-based). One ECE described her experience during the 2017-2018 year as, "I

believe I have developed in all areas in my professional goals, but I look forward to

further successes." Another said, "I feel I have a made a lot of progress in all areas."

Open-Ended Survey Question Four. On the 2017-2018 EOY Survey, ECEs

who were supported by the EESLPD office were asked, "How could your mentor and/or

evaluator provide you with better support?" Connections discovered between the

relationship-based, knowledge-based, and adaptable coaching components included in the

EESLPD office framework were discovered. These connections were most prevalent as a

result of ECE responses to this question.

Relationship-based, knowledge-based, and adaptable coaching components.

Many of the "provide you with better support" responses were similar to responses

gathered from Question One. Responses included needing support about "affordable

trainings and workshops," "how others do something better with pictures to illustrate it,"

and "more resources based on PDP goals." Respondents provided positive feedback when

responding to this question and the relationship-based components of the EESLPD office conceptual framework are identified within particular responses. For example, one ECE stated, "My evaluator is wonderful. She is always accessible and willing to go above and beyond to help out." Another said, "They have been helpful…I am so glad to have their support." Other positive feedback included this statement from another ECE, "They have done an excellent job in all areas of supporting me this year. I just hope I have the same mentor and evaluator next year. They are very knowledgeable." Another example of connections between the relationship-based, knowledge-based, and adaptable coaching components included in the EESLPD office framework is below.

One ECE said:

> Through mentor visits and evaluations, I believe I have the opportunity to reflect and focus on specific areas of teaching to further develop. Perhaps my mentor can provide me with specific examples to show best practices of things I'm working on to give me "a picture" of a model practice.

Another ECE provided feedback about how a mentor would have been helpful to have as a lateral entry teacher who was converted to an SP II:

> I would have appreciated a mentor throughout the years I have been teaching in NC. Even though I came to NC with an SP II with Pre-K add-on license, a mentor would have given me much more understanding in reflecting/improving on my skills/professional development as a teacher.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis: End of Year (2017-2018) Survey.

To answer the second research question, a reanalysis of four open-ended survey questions was conducted: (a) What other supports/resources could you use from the

EESLPD office to be more successful in meeting your professional goals to impact the

learning of young children and their families?, (b) In what ways have you grown as a

teacher since you began the BTSP and started receiving services from your EESLPD

office mentor and/or evaluator?, (c) Are there any areas you feel you did not make

progress despite being actively involved in the BTSP?, and (d) How could your mentor

and/or evaluator provide you with better support?

Patterns appeared from survey respondents answers to all of the open-ended

questions. Relationship-based, knowledge-based, individualized, adaptable, and

strengths-based connections were made from the coaching components of the EESLPD

office conceptual framework. In response to the four questions, ECEs indicated that they

needed more support in gaining access to affordable training and PD, including on-line

options. Particular rubric areas were also addressed by ECEs as needing more individual,

knowledge-based support from mentors and evaluators including: (a) assessment, (b)

social-emotional support, (c) behavior management, (d) diversity, (e) inclusion, (f) 21st

century skills, (g) literacy, and (h) global awareness.

Relationship-based coaching components including building confidence in ECEs,

communicating, collaborating, and leadership. Early childhood educators said that

leading PLCs were a way for them to build confidence, as well as having support from

others teachers. Strength-based areas that ECEs mentioned in their responses as ways that

they have grown in their teaching practices include: (a) better advocacy, (b) being more

flexible and open to ideas, (c) the use of more communication with parents, and (d)

becoming a life-long learner. Finally, for the adaptable coaching component included in

the EESLPD office conceptual framework, nearly half of survey respondents indicated

that practicing reflection was important to them, as guided by mentors and evaluators. A pattern of ECEs discussing reflection was often followed by statements about confidence in teaching.

Focus Group and Individual Interview Qualitative Analysis

The third research question for this study explores the perceptions of ECEs regarding supports provided to them by EESLPD office mentors and/or evaluators. A focus group, including five participants, and four individual interviews was conducted to gather information to answer this research question. A paradigmatic qualitative analysis of ECEs responses to interview questions was conducted to identify general concepts and themes to add to the database for the present study (Polkinghorne, 1995). The researcher conducted a careful narrative analysis of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that those interested in pursuing qualitative methodology, consider learning about narrative analysis first. Table 1 provides information about the steps used during the analysis of the focus group, individual interviews, and survey responses.

The researcher for this study conducted the narrative analysis reviewing the transcripts provided by participants (focus groups and interviews). When listening to the transcripts, the researcher focused more on what was said rather than how it was said and was interested in developing themes across individuals in line with the original tradition of narrative research (Polkinghorne, 1995). The qualitative analysis included an open-coding process. Pre-determined codes and/or themes were not established during open-coding and the researcher developed and revised codes as needed throughout the process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Initial coding began with a large number of themes identified from information gathered from focus group interviews and the individual interviews (n = 32). At first, the researcher had developed too many codes but much of the information in the transcripts appeared to have connections. The researcher then began to search for themes and ways data could connect together. This large number of themes was reanalyzed multiple times and a winnowing process occurred with each re-examination of transcripts (Brotherson, 1994). The themes were reviewed by the researcher and a GA, who provided new feedback for the researcher to think about during this process. During the re-examination of transcripts, the researcher focused only on responses from participants that informed the third research question for this study (e.g., What are ECE perceptions of supports provided to them by EESLPD office mentors and evaluators?).

Ultimately three major themes were derived from the transcripts with each major theme having three sub-themes. A total of nine sub-themes were identified. All sub-themes have accompanying indicators that provide information regarding what defining elements attribute to participant responses found in the transcripts. These elements are categorized under a specific theme and sub-theme (see Figure 16).

| Research Question | Theme | Sub-Theme | Indicator (Examples) |
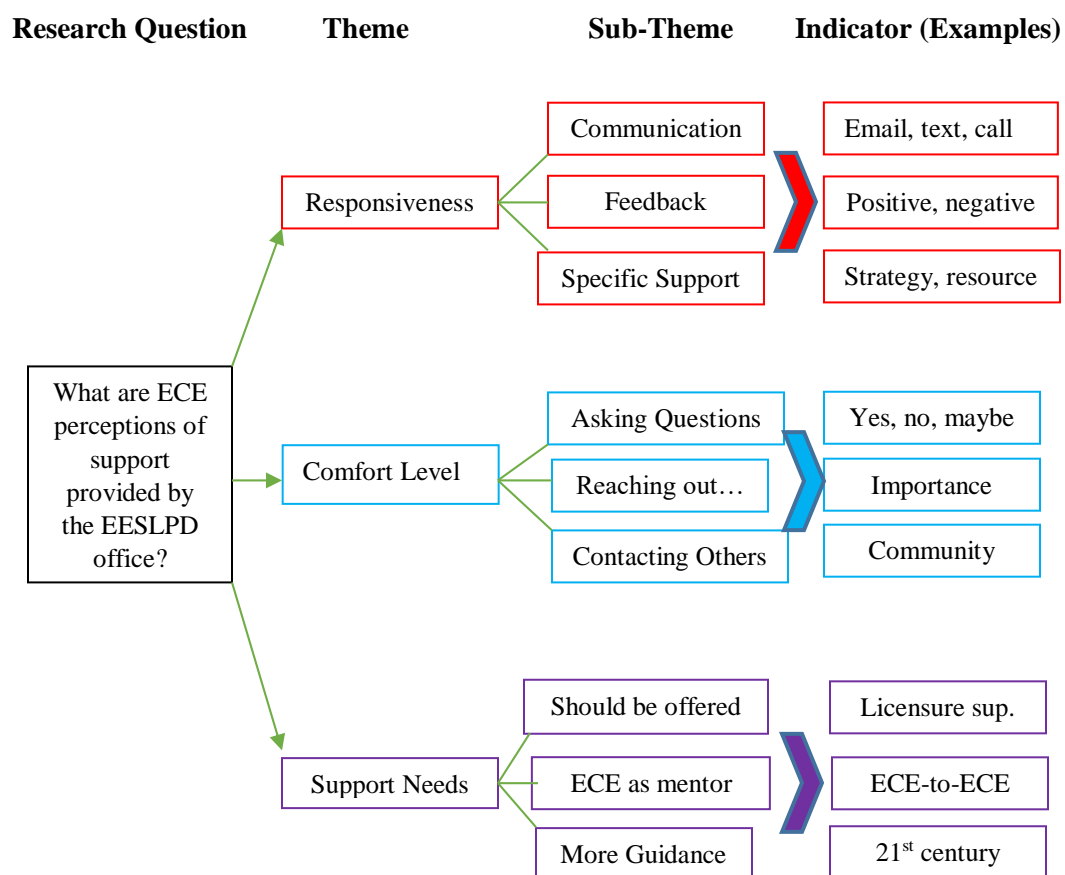
Figure 16. Themes/Sub-Themes/Indicators. To answer this research question for the current study, three major themes were identified with three corresponding sub-themes each. A total of nine sub-themes with defining indicators were developed. Examples of indicators are shown above and were established within each sub-theme to specifically define criteria needed to connect with each category/code/theme.

A quick summary of descriptive data for this portion of the research can be examined in Table 20. Of the 9 ECEs interviewed, six were considered continuing license teacher, with only 3 participants being initially licensed teachers. There was a diverse age range represented as well as some previous experience prior to being supported by the EESLPD office.

Table 20

Focus Group and Individual Interviews Demographics for East and West Hubs

	Gender	Age	Race	License	C-Type	PE	BTSP
			East & West Hubs Combined				
Erica	F	30-39	W	B-K	NC PreK	4	SPII-3
Lucy	F	40-49	A	B-K	NC PreK	4	SPII-1
Ann	F	40-49	W	B-K add-on	NC PreK	7	2
CC	F	50-59	W	B-K add-on	NC PreK	7	SPII-4
Jessica	F	40-49	W	B-K	NC PreK	0	2
Tina	F	40-49	B	B-K	NC PreK	0	3
Paige	F	40-49	W	B-K	NC PreK	0	SPII-3
Tammi	F	50-59	W	B-K add-on	NC PreK	30	SPII-2
Diana	F	50-59	B	B-K	NC PreK	35	SPII-4

N = 9

Note. *Pseudonyms were used for all ECE names for both the focus group and the individual interview portion of this study.

Theme One: Mentor/Evaluator Responsiveness

The first theme, Mentor/Evaluator (M/E) Responsiveness, had three sub-themes identified by the researcher. The sub-themes and indicators include the (a) communication method of M/E (e.g., availability, email, text, call, answer questions), (b) feedback offered by M/E (e.g., positive, negative, demeanor), and (c) specific support offered by M/E (e.g., strategies, resources, modeling). This theme was derived from a series of responses by participants during the focus group and individual interviews.

Sub-Theme One: Communication Method.

Mentor. The ECEs who participated in this qualitative component of the current research study explained the means in which their mentors communicated with them. Early childhood educators also explained the nature of relationship-building with their mentor and how communication methods and priorities were individualized to meet the needs of the particular ECE. Paige indicated that her mentor is "…great, quick, responsive…if we needed her she was there through calling and emailing. In the past, at our team agreement [meeting] she was there in-person, we chatted about…[our] personal relationship and talked about the best way to communicate." Ann stated, "My mentor has been has been easy to talk to and has been very responsive."

Evaluator. Participants shared about communication with their evaluator. Some of the ECEs shared that their evaluators are often readily available to them and may adapt their communication methods to adapt to the individual needs of the teacher. Paige shared that her site administrator is her evaluator now. Paige shared:

My site administrator is my evaluator now and asked me what I wanted help with this year. We have a really open dialogue. We have a lot of verbal communication, she doesn't email or send resources since I see her everyday…I can't think of a time that she isn't available. She's always been there for me when I've needed help.

Tammi shared her experience with her EESLPD office evaluator as primarily focusing on observation processes, "I don't talk much with my evaluator. She sends me pre-conference questions via email or calls me with questions. She observes and has the post-conference meetings but then I won't hear from her until the next observation."

Tammi said, in reference to communicating with her site administrator, "…I always tell her [site administrator] what my evaluator provides me and she continues to help make sure we stay on track." Diana also shared that her evaluator, "… talks to me about my pre-observation questions and I'm dead on it. She only checks in from time to time because [my director] is so good. My evaluator says if I need something not to hesitate to ask."

Early childhood educators described many ways that their M/E communicated with them. In regards to *availability*, ECEs shared several examples of how their M/E's would let them know of their communication style. Paige expressed, "I can't think of a time that she [evaluator] isn't available. She's always been there for me when I've needed help." In contrast to these ECEs evaluators being readily available as need, Tina said, "She [evaluator] may not respond right away if I tell her I need something, she tells me I have to wait a couple days and then she gets back to me." Ann said that her evaluator "…has been available by text, or email. She always responds when I ask her a question." Erica made the following comments about her evaluator, 'She always gets back to me within 24-48 hours and answers all of my questions, she has been great." Diana shared that her "…evaluator, [is] always very helpful…and…can be emailed or texted at any time with questions." Paige shared since her site administrator is her director that she "…talks to her everyday about different things since we are in the same center." Tina shared:

> She may not respond right away if I tell her I need something she says I have to wait a couple days and then she gets back to me…she gives me the flexibility to do what I need. Good at emailing and texts."

Sub-Theme Two: Feedback offered.

Several ECEs shared their experiences with receiving compliments and positive feedback from EESLPD office mentors and evaluators. Out of nine participants interviewed as part of the focus group or the individual interviews, most ECEs commented about positive feedback they had received from their mentors and evaluators. Some examples of ECE perceptions regarding support offered are provided. Erica stated:

> My biggest success this year is EESLPD came in and I got great compliments. She said my assistant and I are working very well together. My class feels like it's on path 100% of the day which is not how it's been previously.

Mentor. When sharing their experiences with feedback offered from mentors, ECEs shared about the compliments, support, and encouragement they had received. Ann says following observations that her mentor "gives compliments and points out strengths." She stated that her mentor is, "…very upbeat, friendly, and positive. I've burst into tears in front of her before and she's made me feel very supported, she's been very encouraging which has been wonderful. Makes me feel like she is in my corner." Jessica said that when she needed help her mentor, "…was absolutely wonderful…and [helped] in a friendly, professional manner." In regard to have mentors provide support to teachers, Jessica commented, " I think mentors are such a great thing to have for teachers." Another ECE, Tammi, explains that her mentor has helped her understand that having a "fresh" pair of eyes is helpful and refers to the relationship she has formed with her mentor as part of the feedback she has received. Tammi shared:

> My mentor said she saw glitter in me. Sometimes she sees it and sometimes she doesn't. She said it's not the behaviors in the class I feel like it's something else.

She told me, I care about YOU and want to check on YOU. She actually sees and knows that I'm not by myself going through, and it feels good that somebody else is looking out for me.

Evaluator. The focus group and interview participants also had provided information about specific feedback they had received from their evaluators. CC shared that she didn't have a mentor because she was a continuing licensed teacher (SP II) but that her evaluator "…was always good to point out things [she] was doing well." Tina added that she likes the way that her evaluator provided feedback and her way of gathering information from her related to the NC TEP. She stated that her evaluator:

Gives resources, they are very good and knows how to ask questions [such as] 'Tell me more about global awareness?' She's right on it. She's one of the most professional people to work with and she knows what she's talking about."

Ann shared, "The evaluator has done a very nice job. It took me a while to…or for us, some time to understand each other but we've made a lot of progress." Ann continues by adding:

My evaluator is very knowledgeable, very, very knowledgeable but I kind of feel like she is a my way or the high way mentality, all black and white. And I think that part of being a good teacher is being creative and so sometimes I feel like if I don't do something exactly the way she would do it I'm going to get points deducted basically or I'm going to get penalized.

Continuing with providing information, Paige referenced her evaluator as also being her site administrator by sharing:

She provides me feedback, helps me get materials. Since she is my evaluator and my site administrator, if she sees something specifically during my observation or about my PDP, it's a little easier to get those resources I need if she sees it.

Lucy adds:

> I've had two different evaluators. They both have been bright but I still see the differences between them. I know they are evaluating on the same rubric but I feel like it depends on the evaluator, the focus is just a little bit different and I have to do things a little bit differently. It's not that I have to please them but I am being evaluated and so I try to do well and if I try to do well then I have to know what they like and what they don't, that's how I feel. It might not be the case but that's how I feel about evaluators.

Sub-Theme Three: Specific support offered.

Early childhood educators shared many specific strategies that mentors and evaluators may use to support their work with children in the classroom. This theme was addressed by discussing shared support from mentors and evaluators. There is also mentor-specific and evaluator-specific supports reportedly received by ECEs summarized below.

Mentor and evaluator shared supportive role. The following perspectives reference specific strategies to work with children in classrooms that ECEs referred to as having "challenging behaviors." Focus group participants and interviewees commented that both mentors and evaluators provide them information regarding children who may have special needs in the classroom. Tammi shared that her mentor, "…showed us the

solution cards [from the Center of Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning,

CSEFEL]…but now we have to say first you need to do this and then you can do that."

Tammi added that she uses solution cards with "…has be to have what he wants

physically in front of him…so he can see what he is working for." Paige shared that

having her site administrator, who also serves as her evaluator, has helped her with

"Children with IEPs and meeting their needs as far as social emotional in the classroom."

Diana shared her experience working at a new center in a developmental day classroom

this year. Diana shared that she didn't know anything about the referral process for

children with DDs in the new county she found employment. Diana shared:

> Mom always worried about his behavior. We got the school system here to come
>
> in with mom's okay to observe him and refer to all my written notes and talk with
>
> him, he is now receiving services. In January, I moved to a developmental day
>
> room. Where I work, they are not willing to hire a one-on-one person to work
>
> with him. Mom and dad were overjoyed to get services for him that he really
>
> needed and he got a DD diagnosis…he is probably Autistic, his sister is. My
>
> evaluator was very helpful, I'm new in the county and didn't know where to go to
>
> get help. I was left just to figure it out for myself. He would scream at top of
>
> lungs. In a round about way the director was like, you found a way to get rid of
>
> him. She wanted him to go because he was hard to handle. My evaluator was
>
> happy that I found the right place for him.

This statement has implications for future practices of mentors and evaluators and is

summarized in that section of this paper in Chapter 5. Diana commented about another

child that she has in her developmental day classroom with challenging behaviors. She

said that her evaluator has "Talked with her about Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline and using breathing strategies to help the girl distract focus away from anger, positively redirect her. [For example] 'I need you to help me, read this book to me.' It diffuses [her] anger." Tina added that her evaluator has been supportive because '…she knew I had children with challenging behaviors."

Early childhood educators shared about the specific support they received from both mentors and evaluators together. Erica discussed how her evaluator and mentor "…share resources." Lucy shared that "They [mentor and evaluator] are always helping me find the right people for specific help." She said that her most "…enjoyable experiences" with her mentor and evaluator was visiting other NC Pre-K classrooms. About this experience, Ann stated:

> We are all teachers and a lot of times we are stuck in our own classrooms. Through the EESLPD program…my mentors and evaluators gave me several places I could observe other teachers' classrooms.

Diana shared:

> "They've (mentors and evaluators) been hands on, very cooperative. They provide support by being there to listen and help find materials, activities, research articles, and sending different links to help with things you might be working on."

Mentor-specific. When answering questions about how mentors and/or evaluators have helped ECEs with challenges this school year, there were several comments that references mentor support in particular. Ann also provided information about how her mentor has helped in her classroom:

She has come in my classroom, and she's been incredibly patient with me

because I've had a real hard time with all this and she's come and

rearranged my classroom and she's really gone above and beyond.

Lucy had detailed information to share that her mentor had provided to support her by

"…webinar technology training."

Evaluator-specific. Erica stated that her evaluator "always comes to me with

concrete information." Lucy shared that her evaluator, "…advocates for teachers in our

program…I don't get a planning time but I know she's been advocating for that as long

as I've been enrolled in the EESLPD program." Tammi stated that her evaluator has

helped her to realize that she is already doing a lot of things in the classroom to meet the

NC TEP requirements. Tammi said the following about support provided by her

evaluator:

Document everything…write it down and date it so that I can move forward to

proficient level. It's very hard for me to remember to write it down because I'm

used to just doing it…she helps me to see what I have been doing but I don't have

proof until I write it down.

Diana also shared evaluator-specific information including that her evaluator attended her

PLC meeting to be her "cheerleader." She said about the experience, "Every now and

then she'd look at me and smile and say I want them to know about what you do, tell

them about..." Diana also shared that her evaluator checked on her and the children she

works with during the hurricane "…to see how I am and my students were."

Theme Two: Comfort Level with Mentor/Evaluator

Several ECEs shared about their perceptions and experiences regarding the comfort level they feel with their EESLPD office mentors and evaluators. Participants offered feedback during the focus group and individual interviews focused on comfortability with their mentor/evaluator regarding asking questions, reaching out to their mentor/evaluator, and contacting others for support. Some examples of perceptions regarding ECE comfort level with their mentor/evaluator follow.

Sub-Theme One: Asking Questions.

When asked how comfortable ECEs felt when asking their mentor/evaluator for support, various information was provided. Erica explained that her evaluator is new this year to the evaluator role and that, "…she's [evaluator's] had questions, I've had questions by we've worked it out together." Erica also added that if her evaluator says something doesn't understand, she will ask, "Why? Because maybe a different evaluator [I've had] hasn't told me that yet." CC shared that she always feels comfortable, "On a scale of 1-10, a 10." Paige continued the discussion by sharing her own comfortability asking questions to her mentor/evaluator. When speaking of her comfortability with her evaluator who also serves as her site administrator, "I'm totally comfortable. Good, bad, ugly, it doesn't matter. I feel really comfortable. We have a great relationship at work and outside of work so I'm very comfortable."

Several ECEs indicated that they do not ask for help or like to ask for help. Erica said that when she began working in NC Pre-K she didn't ask for help. She explained this by adding that she had spent several years teaching in the public school system and "…didn't want people to think I didn't know my job." Tammi described herself as,

"…not liking to ask for help. But I feel pretty comfortable." Tammi continued to describe

her comfortability differences between her mentor and evaluator by adding:

> I'm more comfortable with my mentor because she has seen what I'm going
>
> through personally. My evaluator is more about the rubric and that's it. My
>
> mentor is observing me but also wants to know me and has gotten to know me.
>
> [My evaluator] told me to look at the rubric so that I could see what was expected,
>
> but some of it is vague. My director pointed out somethings that I'm actually
>
> doing that would help me satisfy the developing areas but they didn't seem to fit.
>
> She told me to use the resource manual too.

Although Diana stated that she had never requested help, she expanded on her response

by adding:

> My evaluator brought me stuff and looked stuff up for me. I have no problem
>
> asking for help, if I have an issue I would say, 'Hey, I need help' [laughs] but I
>
> wouldn't want her to think that I didn't know what I was talking about. I would
>
> always like for her to…[pause] sorry I'm looking for the right words. I always try
>
> to do the right things so I don't want to come across like I don't know what I'm
>
> doing, ya know? I don't know. Sometimes I just want to say, 'tell me how to do it
>
> and I'll do it.'

Sub-Theme Two: Reaching Out To Mentor/Evaluator. Early childhood

educators responded about their comfortability reaching out to their mentor/evaluator for

additional support. Erica shared that although she is no longer served by her mentor

because of her continuing license (SP II) status, that she still keep in touch with her first

mentor. She discussed this by adding, "We developed a friendship (mentor and ECE). She still answers my questions as long as I email or call her. She has been amazing."

Ann described her concern about reaching out to her mentor for support by indicating:

> I know she [mentor] is incredibly busy so unless something is really important I don't want to bother her. She's made it clear that if I send her an email she'll respond to it as soon as possible and 9 out of 10 times she does. But I know she is incredibly busy with all the work she has to do.

Lucy added that her concern with contacting her evaluator for help would only be the case if her site administrator was also the person evaluating her. Lucy shared:

> I've always been against the idea of your boss being your evaluator, and um I would not contact her for any help because it should be the EESLPD program and the evaluation within the agency should be separate. Because it's supposed to be separate even though it's really not. The boss is only human and what she sees when she comes to evaluate those teachers, it's not like she's going to forget. So if she becomes my evaluator, I would not feel comfortable contacting her for any reasons because she is my direct boss.

Tina added that she wouldn't discuss certain things about her center changes with her evaluator. She explained, "My evaluator wouldn't understand another company taking over, she is to evaluate me but I wouldn't share my concerns about that. Like changes in management, under another company."

Sub-Theme Three: Contacting Others for Support. When answering questions about the comfort level of ECEs asking mentors/evaluators for help, several participants discussed needing help with outside resources (e.g., licensure department, Partnership for

Children, and other community resources). Ann discussed her need to gather information from the licensure department but has had some trouble doing so. She share, "I have had some difficulty talking with and getting responses from my B-K licensure consultant…I prefer to email just so I have a paper trail [and] copy my mentor and director as often as it takes. " She also added of this experience that her mentor has helped her interact with her B-K licensure specialist "…so that we can get some things accomplished."

Lucy shared that she needed to join a committee and said the following about support received from mentor, "She helped me connect with the person who runs Smart Start and all the resources she provided me were great." Other ECEs discussed the need for support outside of the classroom to collect materials. A discussion emerged about how to gain access to community resources and businesses willing to donate learning materials for young children. Ann stated that her center, "…has no budget so anything I find that I feel like we really need I have to pay for myself, and it's getting really expensive." During this discussion, mentors and evaluators were not mentioned as contributors of information pertaining to obtaining donations or discounted materials.

Erica stated the most challenging aspect for her in meeting standards included in the NC TEP is "going outside of my classroom." In talking about collecting information from outside resources she explained the following:

> I would like a way for teachers to share the way we are now, to communicate and
> those of us who have some stuff to share, just talking back and forth. Like if
> someone doesn't know about technology, or whatever, because I can't leave. I
> have children, my husband works two full time jobs and I can't leave my house a
> lot or leave my job and I don't get paid to go to an event or attend all of these

meetings, um, ya know things like that. I do get to go to training sometimes but the kids have to have a substitute and you don't have a lot of time on the weekend to promote your classroom and to go learn about all these new things in education that changes frequently. I just think we could use like a state-wide PLC kind of thing where you can just log onto your computer and talk and do what you need to do on there instead of having to pack up and go to UNC Charlotte or whatever or go to another county or whatever.

Theme Three: Support Needs from Mentor/Evaluator

Several ECEs shared about their perceptions regarding supports needed from their EESLPD office mentors and/or evaluators. Participants offered feedback during the focus group and individual interviews that was focused on supports that should be offered by their mentor/evaluator, possible teacher-to-teacher support, and more guidance about specific topics. Examples of ECE perceptions regarding support needs are below.

Sub-Theme One: Supports Mentors/Evaluators Should Offer.

When ECEs were asked what supports are needed by mentors/evaluators many different topics emerged. Erica stated, "Definitely licensure support." Erica also added that she would like to know more about the mentor process because, "…we have turnover and I know the EESLPD can't mentor every teacher who needs it." Erica explained that many teachers at her center could use a mentor if they are on the EESLPD waitlist and aren't being served yet. Erica also suggested other support needs be provided by mentors and evaluators such as "…tech support…where you can just email a question and get a response back immediately." CC added to the conversation by expressing the need for

administrators to know more about what is expected of ECEs going through the NC TEP

process. CC stated:

> It would be nice if they can get it clear, if they can let your administrator know the
>
> expectations of the EESLPD, or the NC PreK for your classroom. I think a lot of
>
> the administrators still think it's just daycare and they don't realize that we are
>
> expected to do certain things and we need the time, and the support, materials,
>
> and resources for that.

Another teacher, Jessica, extended CC's comment by adding, "Not only for us, but

they are offering the classroom so they [need to know what is] expected, to have those

materials in the classroom." A few ECEs discussed the need for more support when

getting started with the EESLPD office. Ann stated:

> I feel like I got thrown in without a handbook or anything, like I was just expected
>
> to know what to do. No handbook, guidebook, or knowing what the expectations
>
> were. Not specifically from my mentor or evaluator but just from everyone. I
>
> guess I was just expected to know because I had a degree or something and being
>
> lateral entry. I didn't know deadlines for paperwork for RALC or whatever, I had
>
> no idea so I would be late and then I would get yelled at for it but I didn't know
>
> where to look or find out and there's no email notifying me that I have this or that
>
> coming up.

Regarding specific mentor support needed, Ann suggests, "If our mentor had a slightly

less heavy caseload maybe they could spend more one on one time with us and help us

know the expectations for deadlines." Ann says that this extra mentor support may help

ECEs "…so that we don't feel like we're just treading water and hoping there are no

sharks." Lucy expanded on this discussion by the EESLPD needing to let ECEs know earlier in the season about being served so they can be better prepared. Lucy stated:

> The first year I got picked up in September, it was the beginning of the year and it was very, very, hectic and the EESLPD asks a lot. A lot. I mean they are very helpful, but they ask a lot. I mean they want so many artifacts and everything and once the school year starts it's very hard to meet the demands. I think if the EESLPD could give any support you should pick up all the teachers in the beginning of August and notify all of the teachers that they will be served because once the school year starts and they are notified that they have been picked up it is almost impossible to manage all of thing we have to do for EESLPD on top of all of the things that we have to do for our regular jobs.

Other comments and suggestions offered by ECEs regarding support needs from mentors/evaluators include sending correct emails, having resources available to meet requirements of NC TEP, and modeling classroom strategies. Paige shared, "Sometimes I get the wrong ones, or ones I'm not supposed to get, like for beginning teachers. And sometimes I don't get the emails I'm supposed to get." Following this statement Paige mention that she's "definitely blessed" that her site administrator is also her evaluator and that she is up-to-date on all information. She also concludes her statement with, "Overall the EESLPD is pretty decent, it's pretty good." Tammi responded to the question about support needs by mentioning the "collaborative efforts between mentors and evaluators to support me" as well as "resources to meet the expectations on the rubric." Diana expanded this discussion by adding the need for mentors/evaluators to "come to the

classroom and demonstrate something you have been talking about or something you

don't know how to do." Diana also responded to this question by adding:

> I'm a hands-on, visual learner. I'd rather see you do it than read about it. I like
>
> demonstration classrooms, I'd rather go see it done. I think they
>
> [mentor/evaluator] should be able to come in and teach you what you need to
>
> learn about. [Instead of] just observing you and talking afterwards, be more hands
>
> on and come in. If I were an evaluator I'd like that part more than evaluating.
>
> Being able to come in and show how to do something.

Sub-Theme Two: ECE as Mentor (Teacher-to-Teacher support). As part of

the Support Needs theme conversation, several ECEs discussed mentoring fellow

teachers themselves. Erica, an SP II who doesn't have a mentor due to her continuing

license status shared that she "mostly relies on coworkers." She shared that she may rely

on past evaluators for support if there is something she doesn't understand or if her

coworkers are "thinking too small." Erica explained that she has been trained by the

public school system to be a mentor to other teachers. She shared:

> I just feel bad asking my administrator to put a sub in my class so I can go to
>
> another center that is competition for us [laughs] and help another teacher…it's
>
> just extra money in her eyes to have a substitute in my class.

CC added to this discussion by indicating that she was also trained by the public

school system to mentor teachers and has been asked by her center director to mentor a

new teacher that is being trained to take her place when she retires. She added, "If they

want you to mentor, then they should give you the opportunity and time to mentor." Ann

also stated that her director "expects" her to serve as a mentor even though she is a

relatively new teacher herself. The researcher asked her how she provided mentor support as a new teacher and she responded, "I just know what I would've liked to have had if I had a choice…I offer support if they want it. I think about what would have made my life easier." Erica also added to the conversation by mentioning that "they [teachers] need to know they are not alone and they have someone they can talk to."

During an individual interview an ECE referred to families and parent communication when asked about her experiences with mentoring. Tina shared that she mentored other teachers in the public school system years ago. She stated:

> [Mentors] should lift them [teachers] up, and if they ask you something, they don't want people to talk harshly to them, but in a more positive way. You have to be very careful, just like if you're a teacher talking with a parent. If the parent asks for homework [for the child], we can't do ditto sheets. This is what I might do, I might share interactions with the parents they can have with their child that week and talk with the parent…the parent is the facilitator of the take home activity with their child. Our kids need to learn about social-emotional and that's what we're working on.

Sub-Theme Three: More Guidance. Another topic area that was mentioned by ECEs when asked about support needs, were areas that more guidance is needed as part of the NC TEP. Jessica pointed out that her evaluator is her director as an SP II and it has been challenging. Jessica explained:

> When I had a mentor, she was wonderful. Now my evaluator happens to be my director, it just seems like [pause]…she does not have the training for this and it has been a struggle. She seems to not have the training and not know what's going

on. I had an issue last year where a lot of things were not filled out at the end and

somebody at the state had to end up helping me fill out my PDP and it seems like

I'm going through the exact same thing this year.

Several other teachers mentioned that they needed more guidance on the rubric items

such as diversity, technology, global awareness, and 21st century skills. CC shared, "The

hardest thing for me is to find out the interests of the children." Diana mentioned juggling

lesson plans, foundations modules, and assessment as being areas she would like more

guidance. Finally, when asked about more supports needed, Tammi added, "I need help

with reflection. What will help me reflect as a teacher? That's one of my PDP goals this

year. And leadership."

Summary of Qualitative Analysis: Focus Group/Individual Interviews

To answer the third and final research question for this study, a narrative analysis

was conducted from the transcription of a five-member focus group and four individual

interviews. Interview questions (Table 1) were asked to all interviewees, recorded using

WebEx and then transcribed by the researcher. All interviews took place in both East and

West Hubs served by the EESLPD office. Using the transcripts, the researcher developed

three main themes: (a) Theme One: Responsiveness, (b) Theme Two: Comfort Level, and

(c) Theme Three: Support Needs from Mentors and/or Evaluators. Each main theme had

three sub-themes with defining indicators described for each (Figure 16).

First main theme – responsiveness. A summary of the sub-themes from the first

main theme, responsiveness, includes the communication methods used, feedback

offered, and specific supports offered by mentors and/or evaluators to ECEs. Educators

indicated that their mentor/evaluator typically met their individual needs regarding

communication methods used and were quick to respond via text or email. Educators also indicated that the EESLPD gives positive feedback and compliments during visits and observations. Mentors were noted by ECEs as building rapport with them as part of the relationship-based coaching component by getting to know them and asking about how they doing are on a personal level (e.g., checking on them during bad weather, inquiring about happiness at work). Evaluators were viewed by ECEs in general, as more observation and process-based by providing knowledge-based support (e.g., gives resources, professional, asks the right questions).

Some ECEs also acknowledged that at times they feel that they need to get to know their evaluator before observations to know what their priorities are according to getting marked on the rubric as part of the NC TEP. Educators indicated that specific supports offered by mentors and evaluators focused on challenging behaviors, strategies to use with children with special needs, and supporting social-emotional domain of development (e.g., CSEFEL, Conscious Discipline). ECEs mentioned that this is an area that may need more support and the implications for future practice section in Chapter Five addresses this area in more detail.

Second main theme – comfort level. A summary of the sub-themes from the second main theme, comfort level, includes ECEs asking questions, reaching out to mentors/evaluators, and contacting others (outside of EESLPD) for support. Educators indicated that at times they worked together with mentors and evaluators to find answers to questions, and were overall comfortable asking for help. Some ECEs commented that they did not like to ask for help because they didn't want their mentor and evaluator to think that they didn't know how to do their job. A few ECEs indicated that they still keep

in touch with previously assigned mentors and evaluators, even though they are currently no longer assigned to them. Educators also stated that if they need to contact outside support (other than from the EESLPD) it is mainly for licensure reasons.

Third main theme – support needs. A summary of the sub-themes from the third main theme, support needs from mentors and evaluators, includes supports that should be offered, teacher-to-teacher support and more guidance needed. Educators indicated that they would like to know more about the mentoring process and how to acquire mentoring skills themselves. They also said that they would like for the EESLPD to more clearly communicate with administration about the expectations of ECEs who work in NC Pre-K settings (e.g., real teaching in comparison to daycare, requirements of the NC TEP, need for planning time). Other supports that should be offered by mentors and evaluators mentioned by ECEs included: (a) more one-on-one time with their mentor, (b) a beginner's handbook with important due dates, and (c) modeling of instructional practices in the classroom by their mentor and/or evaluator. Educators talked about the value of having their peers support them and the need for more mentor support at their center (e.g., in the form of teacher-to-teacher support, ECE as mentor). More guidance needed by mentors and evaluators according to ECE responses included topics such as specific examples and resources to meet the requirements of the NC TEP (e.g., diversity, PDP goals, technology, global awareness, 21st century skills, reflection, and leadership).

Summary of Results from All Three Data Sources

There were three sources of data gathered to answer the research questions for this study and a summary of results is provided following each data source reported in this chapter. A cross-sectional, quantitative reanalysis of summative data was collected

from NCEES/Homebase to formulate descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies and percentages) and to answer the first research question for this study, "In what areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP are ECEs making progress or not?" The second source of data collected for this study came from the EESLPD survey from the 2017-2018 academic year. Four open-ended questions were analyzed using qualitative analyses to answer the research question, "How do ECE responses regarding needs for support and the support they receive from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the EESLPD conceptual framework (e.g., knowledge based, individualized, relationship based, adaptable, and strengths based)? A qualitative, narrative analysis of data was conducted and data was collected from a focus group and individual interviews to answer the 3rd research question for this study, "What are the perceptions of ECEs regarding supports provided by mentors and evaluators?" These three different data sources provided both varying and similar responses to answer each research question.

Summary of Triangulation of Data

Using all three data sources, findings were derived that show connections between the quantitative and qualitative methods used for this study. During analysis of all data collected, the LR reviewed areas that appeared to connect between all data sources. Particular standards and elements that related to survey and interview responses were analyzed to find meaning and discover patterns and interconnections between and within data sources.

A thorough discussion of the findings based on the results of this study can be found in Chapter 5. Information gathered from these data sources are important to explore and inform a process of reliability and fidelity to the EESLPD office conceptual

framework. Early childhood educators by and large indicated that they would like mentors and evaluators to provide more support such as (a) information about leadership and advocacy (b) opportunities to learn and grow professionally through engaging in PD, trainings, and workshops (c) modeling, and (d) specific resources and examples for meeting requirements of the rubric used as part of the NC TEP.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

The intent and purpose of this project was to inform a process of reliability among EESLPD evaluators and fidelity to the EESLPD office framework. These efforts are to consistently support ECEs in providing inclusive, high-quality education and care that positively influences child and family growth and development. This research is foundational and sought to explore (a) areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP that ECEs are making progress or not, (b) ECE needs for support and how the support they receive from mentors and evaluators aligns with the coaching components of the EESLPD office conceptual framework, and (c) perceptions of ECEs regarding the supports they receive from their mentors and evaluators.

Qualitative methods including a quantitative component was used for this research study. The LR has many shared experiences as the ECEs who were interviewed for this study. Due to these shared experiences, and interest on the part of the LR to interview individual ECEs, qualitative analysis was used to explore personal perceptions regarding supports received from EESLPD mentors and evaluators. Qualitative methods may be used by researchers who have interests in pursing authentic experiences of others (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004).

The qualitative tradition used to inform this study is referred to as ethnomethodology, and is described as a framework to explore the "ordinary" events that occur in daily life (Garfinkel, 1967). The concept map in Figure 2 illustrates the reciprocal reflective process that may occur between ECEs, children and their families, as well as their coaches. The five coaching components included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework are shown as an integrated circular pattern, referred to as "color

bands." The coaching components have corresponding descriptors located within the color bands of the concept map in Figure 2. These color bands and descriptors have reflective components and elements of self-awareness that occur as part of a continuous model of improvement, to implement high quality early childhood learning opportunities, as experienced by the teacher, child and family, and the coach. Maxwell (2005) suggested that arrows included in concept maps for qualitative research design methods may represent possible connections and/or relationships between circles and categories that are developed as part of qualitative research analysis. Figure 2 is meant to depict how each group included in the figure, informs and enlightens one another during a progression of continuous improvement.

Information gathered from all three data sources (e.g., NCEES, focus group and individual interviews, survey respondents) shows that a reflective process does seem to occur with ECEs who work in inclusive environments while being supported by mentors and evaluators. As Odom et al., 2004 pointed out, ECEs who work in inclusive classrooms must be flexible due to a variety of factors such as (a) available resources, (b) children's participation in the classroom, (c) family engagement, and (d) the quality of classroom environment. Furthermore, the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) indicates that development is influenced by interactions within the child's life including her/his (a) biological makeup, (b) immediate family and community, and (c) societal factors.

Data from the qualitative portions of this study indicated that ECEs remarked about their need to be flexible and adapt to unpredictable circumstances when working with children in inclusive settings. An explanation of findings from the data analyses are

below. With a variety a factors to consider, it is important that ECEs have mentors and evaluators who understand the need to adjust, be flexible, and understand how to provide individualized support to teachers. Findings from this research study have informed future training and PD for EESLPD office staff and the ECEs they support who teach in nonpublic, inclusive NC Pre-K classrooms.

General Overview of Results

This study explored marking areas in the rubric used as part of the NC TEP. A reanalysis of data collected from NCEES/Homebase that represented a three-year time period (e.g., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018) was conducted. A summary of descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency [F] and percentages [$\%$]) from marked rubric areas of Standards I – V in the NC TEP, was included. Specific elements were highlighted in Chapter 4 to illustrate unique features found in the data. The overall cross-sectional analysis for all five standards in the NC TEP, over the three-year period specified, shows a pattern of ECEs meeting the proficiency category in the rubric. Particular standards and elements were identified as areas teachers were able to move through the marking continuum of the rubric more readily than others. For example, ECEs seemed to have a challenging time moving beyond the proficient marking area of the rubric for Standard ID: Teachers advocate for schools and children. They also appeared to have some challenges moving to proficient from developing in this area. This is an interesting finding due to the needs for support shared by focus group and individual interviewees. More detailed information about this particular standard and element is below in the discussion and findings section.

Focus group/individual interview responses regarding Theme Three: Support Needs, focused on supports ECEs think their mentor or evaluator should offer (e.g., licensure support, explanation of NC PreK classrooms to Site Administrator, more guidance about specific NC TEP content). This is an interesting finding because many of the items ECEs talked about were advocacy topics. This finding may initiate further research about whether mentors/evaluators are modeling and supporting advocacy with the teachers they support. Furthermore, the majority of survey respondents indicated that while they feel more confident since enrolling in the BTSP and receiving EESLPD support, many stated that they feel they need more help with leadership. This was also noted during the focus group/individual interview discussion.

An area of the rubric that ECEs appeared to be able to easily meet proficiency and even go beyond that area into the accomplished range, was in Standard IIA: Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults, and Standard VB: Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals. Participants and survey respondents both indicated that they would like more professional growth opportunities as well as time with their mentor/evaluator to learn about specific content in the rubric. One reason that teachers may have an easier time reaching proficiency in these two elements, and even going beyond them, is due to interest alone and perceived need. A cross-sectional analysis of ECE summative evaluation data show a pattern of overall proficiency over a three-year period.

Four open-ended questions on the 2017-2018 survey were qualitatively analyzed using the coaching components of the EESLPD Conceptual Framework (e.g., strengths-based, relationship-based, individualized, adaptable, knowledge-based). Indicators were

derived from Figure 2 to code survey responses. The goal of the mentoring/ coaching support offered by the EESLPD office is to provide reflective, intentional, responsive, data-driven pedagogy to teachers to promote and enhance child and family growth and development. Patterns and connections to the coaching components of the EESLPD conceptual framework were found during the reanalysis of the open-ended survey questions.

In response to the four questions, ECEs indicated that they needed more knowledge-based support from mentors and evaluators in gaining access to affordable training and PD, assessment, 21st century skills, and behavior management, among others. Relationship-based coaching components discovered during the reanalysis included communicating, collaborating, and providing opportunities for ECEs to be leaders. Specifically, ECEs said that leading PLCs were a way for them to build confidence and gain support from fellow teachers as well as promote their own leadership. Strengths-based areas that ECEs mentioned in their responses as ways that they have grown in their teaching practices since receiving mentor/evaluator support include advocacy, flexibility, being open to ideas, and becoming a life-long learner.

Lastly, regarding the adaptable coaching component included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework, close to half of ECEs who responded to the survey indicated that reflective practice is important and has been guided by their mentors and evaluators. When the topic of reflection was mentioned, respondents also tended to talk about their confidence in teaching, therefore associations between ECE reflection and confidence in teaching should be further explored.

Discussion and Specific Findings Based on the Results

Three sources of data were gathered to answer the research questions for this study. The study incorporated qualitative methods with a quantitative component. Connections between the three sources of data are described in eight areas including (a) leadership and advocacy, (b) creating an inclusive environment, (c) modeling and/or "specialized" coaching from mentors and evaluators, (d) requirements of the NC TEP, (e) reliability of evaluators, (f) assessment, (g) reflection, and (h) PD and training. A discussion of findings identified from the results of this study are described below.

Leadership and Advocacy. According to the reanalysis of summative data collected from NCEES/Homebase, ECEs may have a more challenging time moving beyond the proficiency marking category, into accomplished or distinguished, for Standard I (leadership), Element B (advocacy). Both survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated that they had either grown in leadership and/or advocacy or that they needed more support and guidance in this standard and element. Early childhood educators who discussed how they had grown in these areas, also mentioned that they felt more confident in their teaching. Previous research indicates that ECEs who have a strong sense of self-efficacy and feel more confident in their teaching practices may lead to higher achievement of the young children they teach (Guo, Dynia, Pelatti, & Justice, 2014; Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2010). This standard and element may need further exploration as to the possible association between gaining leadership and advocacy skills and feeling more confident and competent at work.

Observations are used as a way to evaluate ECEs during the NC TEP, but also as a way for the mentor and teacher to reflect and communicate about practice that were

observed (Jablon et al., 2007). Prior research indicates that a true partnership cannot form unless the mentor's protégé reciprocates participation in the relationship and transformation process (Lambert et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important for ECEs to take ownership as well as lead their own professional growth as part of the NC TEP.

Creating an Inclusive Environment. Regarding Standard II, Element A, ECEs seem to have an easier time going to the next marking areas along the rubric continuum, from proficiency to accomplished and into the distinguished range. Educators stated during interviews, as well as on the survey, that they felt many of their successes came from working with children in the classroom environment (e.g., routines, transitions, celebrations, activities). Since Standard IIA, in the NC TEP focuses on environment, ECEs may feel most comfortable with their work with young children in this area in the rubric. However, further exploration may show that although ECEs move along the continuum easily for IIA, many ECEs indicated that they still need guidance and support when working with children with different abilities.

Creating an inclusive environment is a main component of IIA, so further information may be needed to investigate whether ECEs are developing consistent, inclusive opportunities for children in the classroom. Early childhood educators discussed that they need more guidance and support using proper strategies for children with behavior problems, children with special needs, as well as ways to enhance the social-emotional domain of development in children. Prior research suggests that when teachers have higher levels of self-efficacy they are able to provide the emotional support and modeling that young children need in early education environments (Guo et al. 2014; Pianta, LaParo, and Hamre, 2008).

Modeling and/or "Specialized Coaching" from Mentors and Evaluators.

During a cross-sectional analysis over the three-year-period, Standard IID appeared to be

an area that ECEs didn't find difficult to move through the marking progressions on the

rubric used as part of the NC TEP. Conversely, during the qualitative analysis of

interviews and survey responses, many ECEs said that they would like to have more

information and guidance from mentors and evaluators about working with children with

different abilities. More information about this finding may be found in the "Implications

for Future Practices" section below.

While individual children have periods of regressions and progressions, they

follow a linear pattern of growth and development (Brazelton, 2000). In NC, ECEs have

children in their classrooms with a wide range of abilities and many are responsible for

working with children who have IEPs. The DEC/NAEYC joint position statement on

inclusion states that high-quality early childhood programs should provide children with

opportunities to fully participate with their same-age peers and the provision of

accommodations and modifications should be made available to them. The EESLPD

office mentors and evaluators are expected to have knowledge of appropriate practices

that should occur in inclusive, early childhood settings.

Furthermore, the rubric used as part of the NC TEP, requires the implementation

of EBPs in the classroom. Cook and Shirmer (2006) indicated that although the use of

research-based instructional practices is important and needed when working with young

children, a research-to-practice gap is prevalent when educators work with children in

inclusive settings. An abundance of research exists that purports that teachers who work

with a mentor or coach could improve the use of EBPs in the classroom (Gersten, 1995;

Hsieh et al., 2009; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Knight & Wiseman, 2005; Sibley et al., 2010; Whitaker, 2000).

Many ECEs mentioned that they would benefit from more "hands-on" mentorship in learning teaching strategies to meet proficiency in the rubric as part of the NC TEP. This may be an area the EESLPD could improve by modeling classroom practices during coaching opportunities with ECEs. It is possible that mentors and evaluators need new PD to provide coaching to ECEs to meet the needs of all children in the classroom. Professional development that is of high-quality should be evidence-based and grounded in research (Schachter, 2015). Other research suggests that teachers who receive high-quality PD may benefit from the use of a multi-tiered training model including the combination of in-service training, coaching, and other support (e.g., the provision of side-by-side coaching and supervisory coaching together) (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Wood et al., 2016).

Evidence-based practices in fields of EI and ECSE suggests that professionals who work with very young children and their families should provide individualized support to them (Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Dunst & Trivette, 2005; James & Chard, 2010; McWilliam & Scott, 2001). Early childhood professionals who provide individualized supports may promote the families they work with in identifying their own strengths and needs. Mentor and evaluator support provided by the EESLPD office may help ECEs to identify their own professional goals, strengths, and areas of need.

Requirements of the NC TEP. Standard III (content), Element C (interrelatedness) appeared to be a moderately challenging area for ECEs to move along the marking continuum. Although the cross-sectional analysis of summative data over a

three-year period indicates that Standard IIIC is not extremely difficult for ECEs to move from proficient to accomplished, this area still presents some challenges for ECEs. During the interviews, ECEs mentioned that teaching using children's interests was a challenge for them as well as understanding that what they are doing in the classroom is related to what is required in the NC TEP (e.g., using graphic organizers, scaffolding children's learning, making connections with children's previous learning).

Many ECEs mentioned that their mentors and/or evaluators help them to articulate and understand that what they are doing in the classroom translates to the expectations of the rubric. Survey respondents and interviewees indicated that they need more specific resources and examples that pertain to meeting the proficient marking area of the rubric. An exploration of best ways to support ECEs in meeting and maintaining proficiency in Standard III is warranted based on this information. Research has indicated that coaching is a recommended approach to help teachers develop and use EBPs that are effective in the classroom (Hsieh et al., 2009; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Whitaker, 2000).

Reliability of Evaluators. A few educators stated that they feel that they need to get to know their evaluator so that they know what rubric priorities are before being observed during the NC TEP. Comments provided of this nature give value to the need for establishing a process of reliability among evaluators so that ECEs understand what is expected of them regarding their professional growth. Evaluators should be able to use performance evaluation with educators to show differences in performance objectively, rather than relying on one's own beliefs or opinions about priority areas in the rubric. Having a system of inter-rater reliability ensures that all ratings are addressed fairly and

eases the concerns of educators, researchers, and policymakers when using performance evaluation instruments to assess teacher quality of practices (Graham et al. 2012).

Assessment. Regarding Standard IV (facilitate learning), Element H (methods to assess), ECEs seem to have a moderately difficult time moving from the proficient category to the accomplished and/or distinguished marking areas. Since many ECEs communicated that they needed support in using assessment and in meeting the needs of children with different abilities, using different methods to assess children may be an area that ECEs need more specific support as well. Lambert, Kim, and Burts (2013) indicated that all children, regardless of ability level, language, or cultural background should be assessed using appropriate measures in their natural learning environment.

Several survey respondents indicated that they need more support with assessment strategies and would like modeling from mentors and evaluators in the use of specific classroom strategies. This may be an area that the EESLPD could offer more support through the use of (a) implicit modeling (e.g., actions mentors and evaluators use to support and respect individual ECE teachers) and (b) explicit modeling (e.g., actions mentors and evaluators use to model best practice in the Pre-K classroom for ECE teachers).

Since some ECEs who were interviewed said that their mentor and evaluator helps them to understand and articulate how they are meeting rubric expectations, Standard IVH may be one such area that needs future exploration regarding whether ECEs know how to provide a variety of assessment methods for every child in their classroom. When working with ECEs, mentors and evaluators need to identify the strengths to build on future learning (Peterson & Valk, 2010). Early childhood educators

mentioned that they want their efforts validated and by having the proper support from mentors and evaluators that emphasize strengths and capacity-building, the self-confidence of teachers served may be positively impacted. Using strengths-based approaches during mentoring and coaching may lead to ECEs self-confidence and positively impact teaching (Jablon et al., 2016).

Reflection. Standard V (reflection), Element B (professional goals) may be an area that ECEs are more readily able to move along the marking continuum in the rubric, from the proficient category to the accomplished category. Nearly half of survey respondents commented that they had been guided through a process of reflection with their mentor and/or evaluator. Several interviewees commented that their mentors/evaluators were very good at "asking the right questions," leading to reflection.

An area of interest discovered during the qualitative analysis was the connection between mentors and evaluators guiding ECEs through a process of reflection. As part of survey responses as well as during the focus group and interviews, often ECEs would mention reflection (either with written responses on the survey or verbally during interviews) and then talk (or write about) confidence or vice versa. This is an important connection that should be further explored.

A pattern existed between ECEs remarking about reflection and subsequently talking about feeling more confident. Reflective practitioners may make the largest impact on outcomes for children (Silsbee, 2010; Hsieh et al., 2009). Having a knowledgeable colleague to support teaching practices may guide teachers to self-reflect and improve practices lead to positive child outcome (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2010; Cruickshank, 1998). Along with guiding a reflective process with ECEs mentors and

evaluators use steps included in the Practice-Based Coaching framework to guide the development of professional goals (e.g., needs assessment, goal setting, action planning steps) (Snyder et al., 2015).

The adaptable coaching component was reflected strongly during qualitative analysis of both survey and focus group/individual interviews. Reflective practice also takes place when adults participate in learning new information while engaged in the process (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Mentors guide ECEs through reflective practice by using approaches that are nonjudgmental. Just as families must be met "where they are at," ECEs may also benefit from this philosophy with hopeful outcomes of building confidence and competence on both personal and professional levels. Self-efficacy is described as the individual beliefs one holds about perceived capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Research shows that educators with increased levels of self-efficacy lead to higher rates of child progress in early childhood settings (Guo et al. 2014; Guo et al. 2010).

PD and Training. A large number of survey respondents and interviewees remarked that they needed more opportunities to engage in affordable PD, training, and workshops, with online options. While ECEs may be able to move from proficient to accomplished more readily in Standard VB, they have communicated that they would like more opportunities to learn and grow professionally. Research indicates that practitioners will implement EBPs with high levels of self-efficacy when a strong system of PD is provided (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Snyder et al., 2015).

Both federal and state government efforts have focused on employing early childhood educators that are of high-quality to address the needs of children who are

considered at-risk for school-age achievement gaps (Burchinal, Hyson, & Zaslow, 2008). The quality of professionals who work in early childhood education can have a crucial impact on the quality of early learning and care experiences of young children (Barnett, 2003). Prior research conducted over a variety of settings suggests that quality of staff training in early childhood programs (e.g., Pre-K) is critical in measuring the program quality (Bloom, 1992). The Head Start program serves children considered at-risk and has high standards for ECEs in both qualifications and training (Whitebrook, et al., 2009). EESLPD office mentors and evaluators may provide the type of individualized support that ECEs who have earned a B – K license need when working with young children and families.

An increased interest in the professionalism of the early childhood workforce may in part, be attributed to findings from previous research that suggest that quality education and care may impact the academic outcomes of children at school-age (Buysse, Winton, & Rouse, 2009). Significant, long-term changes in teaching practices may not occur solely because of federal or state mandates or from one-time in-service training (Barth, 2011). Training and professional development in the field of early childhood education should support the professional knowledge of ECEs by acquiring (a) skills, and the (b) dispositions necessary to improve teaching and positively impact child and family development (Egert, Fuffink, & Eckardt, 2018).

Other research-based studies show connections between high-quality center based Pre-K and later school age adjustment as well as successful outcomes (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2003; Peisner-Feinburg & Burchinal, 1997). Buysse, et al., 2009, developed a framework for

the facilitation of high-quality PD to ECEs that focuses on three main components such as (a) who, (b) what, and (c) how the PD should be implemented. The "who" component focuses on the varied backgrounds and skills of both the PD facilitator and the attendee, the "what" component focuses on the content included in the PD (e.g., dispositions, skills, specific knowledge), and the "how" component focuses on the delivery method which ranges from indirect feedback to sustained, intensive training with onsite support (Snyder et al. 2012).

The demographic information provided in Chapter 4, points to the diverse ECEs who were working in NC Pre-K and developmental day programs at the time data was gathered for the present study. Training and PD should be offered by individuals who also have various qualifications and experiences to meet the needs of a diverse population of ECEs (Buysse et al., 2009; Snyder, et al., 2012). Professional development that is ongoing, offers on-site guidance, and one-to-one support and offers training that meets the individual needs of the educator is necessary (Onchwari & Kenngwe, 2009). It is also important that PD be conducted in a safe place, allowing ECEs opportunities to make mistakes so that reflection can occur and ultimately change teaching practices (Dantonio, 2001).

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study. Teachers must have been enrolled with the EESLPD and hold one of three types of licensure: (a) provisional (SP I), (b) lateral entry, (3) continuing (SP II) at the time of the study. Many prospective participants who had provided their contact information on the 2017-2018 survey, indicating they would like to participate in future research, had subsequently left their teaching position at the

time of this study. Many ECEs who participated in the focus group and individual interviews stated that turnover of staff is a concern of theirs. Another limitation of this study is that it only takes place in NC and with ECEs, not teachers who teach students K-12th grade. This study only has data from using the evaluation tool (NC TEP) in nonpublic sites, no public preschool programs. There may be variability in the ratings found on NCEES/Homebase due to ECEs being assigned to different mentors and evaluators over multiple years.

The qualitative portion of the research base also has several limitations. The study may have been stronger if more analysis was conducted with a second researcher. The data was also collected and analyzed in a very brief period of time. More time to analyze and make connections to the three data sources would be beneficial to this study. Specialized coding sheets may have been beneficial to us after transcribing the interview transcripts and survey responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). More discussions with experienced qualitative researchers would have also benefitted the study analysis by providing possible information about developing the coding form using the EESLPD conceptual framework, the focus group, the individual interviews, and the survey responses (Sandall et al., 2002). Because of subjectivity and similarities found between the researcher and the researched, it may make findings stronger to have more than one non-partial person to go over and provide additional feedback based on the qualitative analyses of this study.

Qualitative research has a place in the fields of early childhood education and ECSE and offers the possibility of helping practitioners better understand children with varying abilities and their families in inclusive settings (Sandall et al., 2002). The

quantitative component included in this study helped to provide information to answer the first research question as well as the remaining two questions that used qualitative methodology and analyses. There is sufficient rationale for using differing methodologies in researching educational practices and doing so may help with the discovery of high-quality, effective practices (Odom et al., 2005).

The evidence-base for this study could be added to by including more quantitative and qualitative analysis. There were challenges with recruiting ECEs to participate in focus groups/individual interviews due mainly to time scheduling conflicts and ECE discomfort voicing their perceptions to others. Although a drawing was held for participants who were recruited for this study, only a couple of winners were planned for ahead of time (e.g. one focus group winner, one individual winner). Perhaps more successful recruiting for the study would have occurred if incentives were offered for all individuals who participated.

Future Research

Information collected during this study will lead to many new areas of future research and practice. Future research should focus on particular areas of the rubric ECEs are needing improvement (e.g., meeting the needs of specific population of children, specific practices in relation to items on the evaluation instrument). The development of a protocol/practice for co-observations to ensure reliability (certification process) is also an area that needs to be explored as a natural next step in this process. The development of a formal system of procedural fidelity should also be explored for use with mentors/evaluators as they support ECEs. Mentors and evaluators may also be interviewed to discover their perceptions of providing supports using the coaching

components included the EESLPD office conceptual framework. The best type or combination of PD should be explored to be used with mentors/evaluators and ECEs (e.g., video recordings of classroom practices, reliability with marking ECEs using the rubric as part of the NC TEP, on-line and in-person learning modules).

Future research could include an exploration of *what* facets of the EESLPD conceptual framework are truly "specialized." An investigation of *how* these facets represent a specialized coaching model and how these supports are used by mentors and evaluators is also warranted. Research that explores coaching models used with educators from both early childhood and school-age settings may provide new and improved insights regarding individualized, coaching support that can be offered by the EESLPD office (e.g., multi-tiered support that increases with intensity, high-quality professional development, supervisory coaching, side-by-side or gestural coaching, support that aligns with the PBS framework) (Berg & Karlsen, 2007; Jablon et al., 2016; Kretlow et al., 2012; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Rush & Shelden, 2011; Snyder et al., 2015; Snyder et al., 2011; Wood et al., 2016). Other elements of specific coaching strategies that are supported by research and should be investigated include (a) length of coaching, (b) number of sessions, (c) observations, (d) levels of implicit/explicit modeling, and (e) debriefing feedback [e.g., verbal, video], (f) providing and reviewing resources or materials, and (e) reflective conversation) (Snyder et al. 2015; Wood et al. 2016).

Implications for Practice

This study may inform future coaching practices to be used with ECEs that aligns with the individualized, adaptable, strengths-based, knowledge-based, and relationship-based practices found in the EESLPD conceptual framework. This study will also inform

the reliability and agreement of evaluators when using the NC TEP rubric. This study

will identify areas of the NC TEP rubric where teachers are meeting proficiency

markings as well as areas that may need improvement by teachers. This information will

inform the development of PD and training which occurs at the EESLPD offices at both

the Eastern (ECU) and Western (UNC Charlotte) hubs. This study will also provide

information about co-observing and procedures used in this study that may inform

practice to ensure reliability among EESLPD evaluators.

      The development of an interrater reliability certification process would be helpful

so evaluators will be more consistent when marking the rubric and individualize PD

based on the specific needs of ECEs. Focus group and individual interview participants

voiced that they are concerned with needing to "please" their evaluator. They also

expressed feeling concerned with their evaluators changing all the time. It may be due to

the nature of the relationship with their evaluator, or needing to "get to know" their new

evaluator's priorities when it comes to the rubric so they meet proficiency. Or, it could be

a combination of both of these factors. More exploration is needed in this area.

      This study will inform training for EESLPD mentors/evaluators and teachers.

Training modules will be developed (e.g., online and in-person) to address specific

content areas that ECEs expressed needing more support (e.g., assessment, EBPs for

working with children with different abilities). Mentors and evaluators will also

participate in this training to be better prepared to support ECEs using reliable methods

and fidelity to the coaching framework (e.g., unpack the five standards of the NC TEP).

A continuous improvement processes to inform future training and PD through needs

assessment, development of content and rubric specific modules, and the development of

specific coaching strategies to use with ECEs to support their individualized needs will be developed.

The Resource Manual (de Kort-Young et al., 2016) is currently used as a tool by mentors/evaluators and ECEs. While this manual includes evidenced-based practices grounded in research, information discovered as a result of conducting this study, indicates that revising the manual may be beneficial for ECEs and mentors/evaluators. Revising this manual may help ECEs have more clear expectations of what components are needed to meet the requirements of the rubric as well as meet the criteria of using EBPs with all children in inclusive settings.

An example of an area in the manual that could be revised is Standard IID – Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of children with special needs. Using the quantitative analysis of summative evaluations over a three-year period, it appeared that ECEs didn't find it difficult to move through the marking progressions on the rubric used as part of the NC TEP. However, during the qualitative analysis of interviews and survey responses, many ECEs remarked about the need for more guidance from their mentors and evaluators about working with children with different abilities (e.g., concerns about children's behavior, ways to help with children's social-emotional development).

Early childhood educators discussed the need for modeling of classroom practices by their mentor and/or evaluator. For example, in Chapter 4, Diana explained how her evaluator had helped her learn about the referral process at her center and showed her how to use one approach to address social-emotional development (e.g., Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline). She described the child that she referred to a different setting as possibly being autistic and that he "screamed" a lot while in her classroom. From the

ECE's perspective, her site administrator was happy that this child had been referred to another setting because he could be challenging at times. While this is one specific example, other ECEs interviewed also mentioned that they had challenges with children's behavior in the classroom.

Standard IID is an area of the Resource Manual that could use more expansive resources (e.g., categories and/or specific examples of adaptations/ modifications that can be used to meet the children's developmental domains and align with Foundations). This is an area within the NC TEP that modeling best practices by mentors/evaluators through the use of specific coaching strategies (e.g., multi-tiered, side-by-side and/or gestural) is warranted. Assessment is another area that ECEs discussed needing more guidance from mentors/ evaluators. Since assessing children's progress encompasses all five standards (e.g., Standards I - V) all areas that address these standards could be revised and updated in the Resource Manual. Several ECEs referred to the need for modeling by her mentor/ evaluator by sharing:

> It would be helpful for them [mentor/evaluator] to be able to come to the classroom and demonstrating something you have talked about, or something you don't know about, like what that should look like in the classroom…I think they should be able to come in and teach you what you need to learn about

Other implications may include: (a) better training for directors who serve as evaluators (b) more advocacy on the part of EESLPD and ECEs to have planning time, opportunities to visit other classrooms, (c) more supportive structures in place to help ECEs with meeting the needs of young children and families through diversity,

technology, and 21st century skills (d) communication that is more clear with ECEs about EESLPD support (e.g., that they do not need to spend their own money to meet requirements of EESLPD) (e) a system to help ECEs who are on the waiting list to receive mentorship opportunities and/or community-based, teacher-to-teacher support and (f) training and PD for mentors and evaluators to provide individualized coaching (e.g., multi-tier, side-by-side and or gestural). Those who participated in the focus group/individual interviews commented about the importance of having a personal relationship and connection to their mentor/evaluator. Early childhood educators also discussed the need for validation as part of the support they receive.

Conclusion

Teacher performance evaluation in the United States has become more focused on teaching *quality* rather than on *highly qualified* teachers (Martinez et al., 2016). In NC, those ECEs who have earned a B-K license work with both typically developing children and children with diagnosed disabilities and/or at-risk for developmental delay(s) (DD) and their families. All teachers in NC from grades Pre-K to 12th grade are evaluated using the NC TEP. Presently, a standard of interrater reliability among evaluators in NC who use the rubric as part of the TEP with educators does not exist (Mazurek, 2012).

Since ECEs serve as both the general and special educator in inclusive, Pre-K settings in NC, a specialized form of coaching may be needed to guide ECEs professional growth and meet the needs of children and families. Mentors and evaluators who support teachers using the coaching components included in the EESLPD office conceptual framework have many expertise to support B-K licensed ECEs including: (a) knowledge of what a strengths-based perspective is and how to apply this approach when working

with teachers, (b) an understanding of the time it takes to develop a relationship with the teachers they support, (c) and the need to develop best questions to ask teachers to elicit the information needed for deep, reflective practice, among others.

Since there is no set standard for interrater reliability among evaluators who use the NC TEP to evaluate ECEs, they must rely on the use of the Resource Manual (de Kort-Young et al., 2016), their own professional judgement, and ECE artifacts/ evidences. This study explored (a) areas of the rubric that is used during the NC TEP (e.g. standards, elements, and indicators) that ECEs are making progress or not, (b) how teacher responses regarding needs for support and the support they receive from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the conceptual framework, and (c) the perceptions of teachers regarding the supports provided by mentors and evaluators.

Main outcomes to be explored further from this study include specific topics such as (a) PD and training for all mentors/evaluators and ECEs, (b) modeling by mentors/evaluators as a means to guide ECEs to advocate for themselves as well as the children and families they support, and (c) the idea of reflective practice as an intrapersonal process. This process may prompt change such as knowing oneself on a deeper level, or actively changing perspectives of situations or people due to this form of active reflection (Canning, 1991). This further exploration could include a closer look at Figure 16 and an investigation of the impact reflection and self-awareness may have on building confidence and competence in ECEs who work with young children and families.

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APPENDIX A

Table 21

Employment Status (2017 - 2018)

	East Hub		West Hub		State-wide	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Dev. Day	40	10.7	21	5.0	61	7.7
NC Pre-K	287	76.9	293	69.9	580	73.2
RttT Teacher	2	.5	2	.5	4	.50
T & M	11	2.9	20	4.8	31	3.9
Waitlist	3.3	8.8	83	19.8	86.3	10.9
Total	373	100.0	419	100.0	792	100.0

Note. The majority of ECEs across the state work in NC PreK classrooms.

Table 22

ECEs in Beginning Teacher Support Program (2017 - 2018)

	East Hub		West Hub		State-wide	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
0	24	6.4	59	14.1	83	10.5
1	94	25.2	79	18.9	173	21.8
2	53	14.2	53	12.6	106	13.4
3	23	6.2	33	7.9	56	7.1
C	179	48.0	195	46.5	374	47.2
Total	373	100.0	419	100.0	792	100.0

Note. The majority of ECEs served are SP IIs.

Table 23

Counties ECEs served by EESLPD (2017-2018)

Counties-E	East Hub		Counties-W	West Hub	
	F	*%*		*F*	*%*
Beaufort	7	1.9	Alamance	10	2.4
Bladen	1	.3	Alexander	6	1.4
Brunswick	17	4.6	Alleghany	8	1.9
Camden	2	.5	Anson	5	1.2
Carteret	10	2.7	Ashe	29	6.9
Chowan	1	.3	Avery	0	0
Columbus	5	1.3	Bertie	0	0
Craven	11	3.0	Buncombe	29	6.9
Cumberland	49	13.1	Burke	6	1.4
Currituck	1	.3	Cabarrus	7	1.7
Duplin	3	.8	Caldwell	5	1.2
Durham	25	6.7	Caswell	1	.2
Edgecombe	6	1.6	Catawba	3	.7
Franklin	6	1.6	Chatham	4	1.0
Greene	2	.5	Clay	0	0
Halifax	1	.3	Cleveland	6	1.4
Harnett	9	2.4	Dare	0	0
Hertford	2	.5	Davidson	9	2.1
Hoke	5	1.3	Davie	5	1.2
Johnston	1.4	3.8	Forsyth	12	2.9
Lenoir	1	.3	Gaston	21	5.0
Nash	5	1.3	Gates	0	0
New Hanover	21	5.6	Graham	0	0
Onslow	19	5.1	Granville	0	0
Pamlico	2	.5	Guilford	59	14.1
Pasquotank	2	.5	Haywood	4	1.0
Pender	5	1.3	Henderson	16	3.8
Pitt	8	2.1	Hyde	0	0
Robeson	21	5.6	Iredell	8	1.9
Sampson	1	.3	Jackson	2	.5
Vance	2	.5	Jones	0	0
Wake	81	21.7	Lee	8	1.9
Warren	1	.3	Lincoln	10	2.4
Wayne	20	5.4	Macon	4	1.0
Wilson	7	1.9	Madison	2	.5
			Martin	0	0
			McDowell	1	.2
			Mecklenburg	60	14.3

Mitchell	3	.7
Montgomery	1	.2
Moore	5	1.2
Orange	7	1.7
Person	1	.2
Randolph	4	1.0
Richmond	4	1.0
Rockingham	4	1.0
Rowan	14	3.3
Rutherford	4	1.0
Scotland	6	1.4
Stanly	16	3.8
Stokes	3	.7
Surry	4	1.0
Transylvania	8	1.9
Union	12	2.9
Watauga	1	2.5
Wilkes	2	.5
Yadkin	4	1.0

Table 24

Years at Current Site (2017-2018)

	East Hub		West Hub	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*
Year 1	21	5.6	21	5.1
Year 2	67	18.0	88	21.0
Year 3	70	18.8	69	16.5
Year 4	63	16.9	54	12.9
Year 5	54	14.5	40	9.5
Year 6	27	7.2	33	7.9
Year 7	28	7.5	34	8.1
Year 8	12	3.2	25	6.0
Year 9	8	2.1	19	4.5
Year 10	10	2.7	17	4.1
Year 11	6	1.6	9	2.1
Year 12	3	.8	5	1.2
Year 13	1	.3	1	.2
Year 14	--	--	2	.5
Year 16	1	.3	--	--
Year 17	1	.3	--	--
Year 20	--	--	1	.2
Year 24	--	--		
Total	373		419	

APPENDIX B

*Tables for overall standards and elements not included in the text.

Table 25

Standard IA: Teachers Lead In Their Classrooms

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.2	---	---	---	---
Developing	49	12.2	30	6.8	10	12.7
Proficient	196	48.9	236	53.6	238	52.0
Accomplished	128	31.9	139	31.6	255	32.2
Distinguished	25	6.2	34	7.7	34	3.2
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. While a pattern of proficiency can be seen through a visual analysis of the summative evaluation data, this standard and element appears to be relatively easy for ECEs to move along the marking categories in the NC TEP.
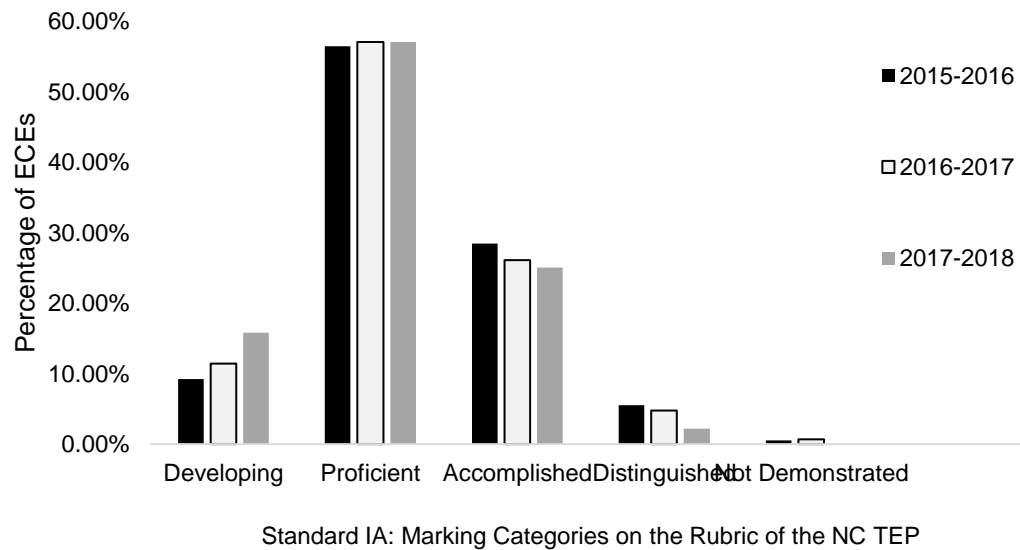

Standard IA: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 17. Standard IA does not appear to be a difficult standard and element to move along the continuum into other marking categories. This seems to be especially the case

for during the 2017-2018 when more ECEs were marked in the accomplished category than the proficient category after a reanalysis of summative data.

Table 26

Standard IB: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership In The School

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	3	0.7	3	0.7	5	0.9
Developing	58	14.5	59	13.4	62	11.6
Proficient	208	51.9	219	49.8	309	57.5
Accomplished	104	25.9	125	28.4	189	35.2
Distinguished	27	6.7	34	7.7	24	4.5
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note: Analysis of Standard I, Element B, shows an increase in ECE progress in both proficient and accomplished marking areas over a three-year period.

Standard IB: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
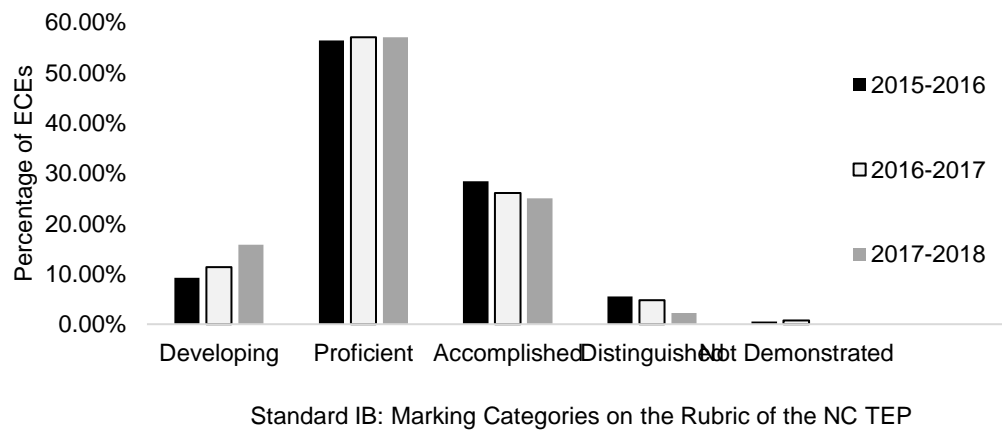
Figure 18. This figure shows an increase in proficiency for Standard IB during the 2017-2018 year as compared to the previous years of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. The use of the "Not Demonstrated" category marked by rubric raters (e.g., EESLPD evaluators) was used slightly more (0.9%) for this element during the 2017-2018 year than in the two previous years (0.7%).

Table 27

Standard IC: Teachers Lead In The Teaching Profession

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.3	---	---	---	---
Developing	42	10.5	27	6.1	41	7.6
Proficient	246	61.4	244	55.5	302	56.2
Accomplished	99	24.7	144	32.7	175	32.6
Distinguished	11	2.7	25	5.7	19	3.5
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard I, Element C indicates that accomplished markings

increased for ECEs over the three-year period.
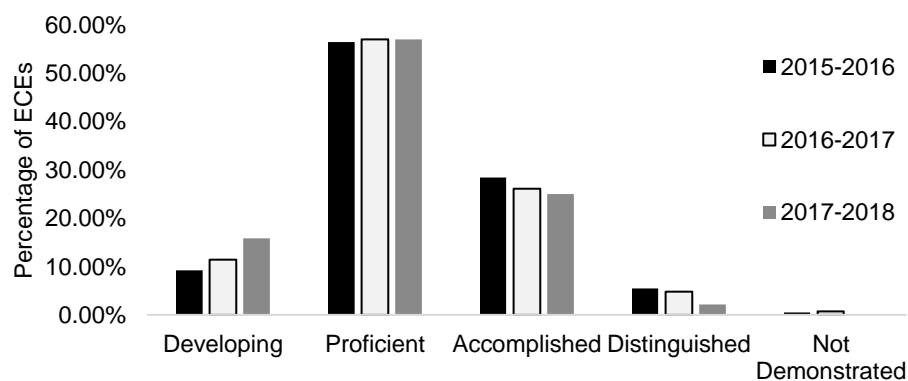
Standard IC: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 19. A visual analysis of IC, shows that ECEs do not have a difficult time moving
along the marking progressions in this area, especially during the 2017-2018 school year.

Table 28

Standard IE: Teachers Demonstrate High Ethical Standards

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	22	5.5	29	6.6	18	3.7
Proficient	210	52.4	222	50.5	327	60.9
Accomplished	139	34.7	153	34.8	255	29.0
Distinguished	28	7.0	35	8.0	34	6.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Analysis of Standard IE indicates that a notable increase in ECE proficient

markings occurred during the 2015-2016 year and the 2016-2017 year to 2017-2018 year.

The accomplished marking area decreased based on summative evaluation data during

the 2017-2018 year.

Standard IE: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
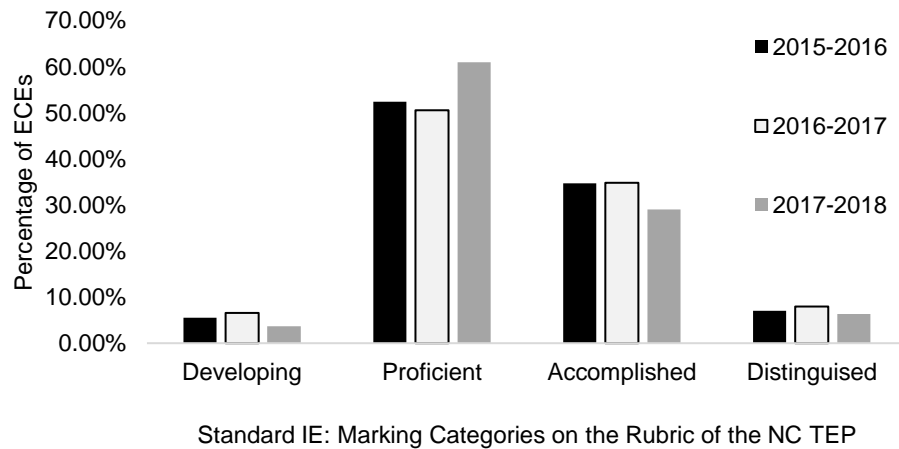
Figure 20. Visual analysis of ECE summative evaluation data shows that while this
standard and element may not be very difficult to move to other marking categories from
proficient, during the 2017-2018 year, moving into the accomplished category from
proficient was more challenging than previous years.

Table 29

Standard IIB: Teachers Embrace Diversity In The Community And The World

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	57	14.2	38	8.6	57	10.6
Proficient	191	47.6	263	59.8	338	62.9
Accomplished	150	37.4	113	25.7	125	23.3
Distinguished	28	7.0	25	5.7	17	3.2
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. For Standard IIB, data collected from ECE summative evaluations indicates that

ECEs made steady increases in receiving proficient marking over the three-year period.
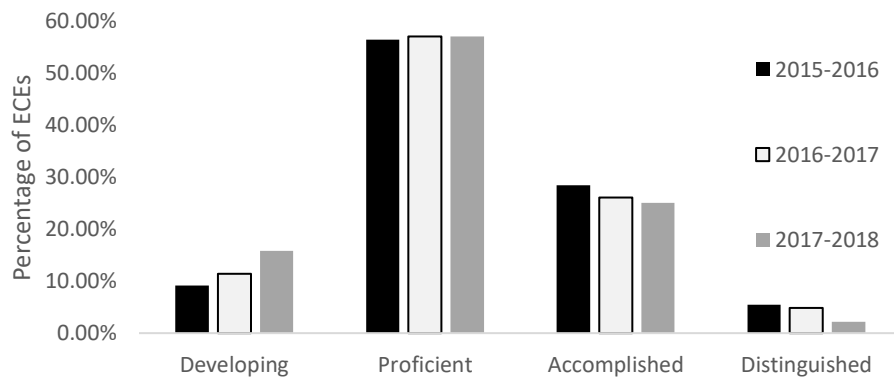
Standard IIB: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 21. Reanalysis of the data for Standard IIB shows that while proficiency markings increased for ECEs over the three-year period, accomplished and distinguished marking decreased. This standard and element appears to be more difficult to move through the marking areas than others.

Table 30

Standard IIC: Teachers Treat Children As Individuals

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	32	8.0	25	5.7	37	6.9
Proficient	191	47.6	216	49.1	249	46.4
Accomplished	150	37.4	157	35.7	219	40.8
Distinguished	28	7.0	41	9.3	32	6.0
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard IIC seems to be an area that ECEs move along the marking continuum in

the rubric fairly well. The majority of ECEs consistently held proficient or accomplished

markings over the three-year period.
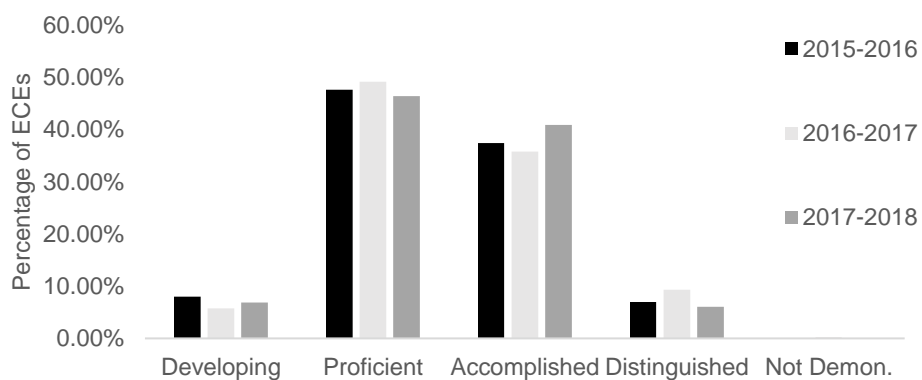
Standard IIC: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 22. Through visual reanalysis of Standard IIC, it appears to be relatively easy for
ECEs to move from proficiency to accomplished marking categories for this standard and
element.

Table 31

Standard IID: Teachers Adapt Their Teaching For The Benefit Of Children With Special Needs

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	5	1.3	1	0.2	1	0.2
Developing	70	17.5	56	12.7	69	12.9
Proficient	203	50.6	232	52.7	304	56.6
Accomplished	104	25.9	119	27.1	137	25.5
Distinguished	19	4.7	30	6.8	26	4.8
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A reanalysis of Standard IID indicated that ECEs showed that proficiency markings increased gradually over the specified three-year period.
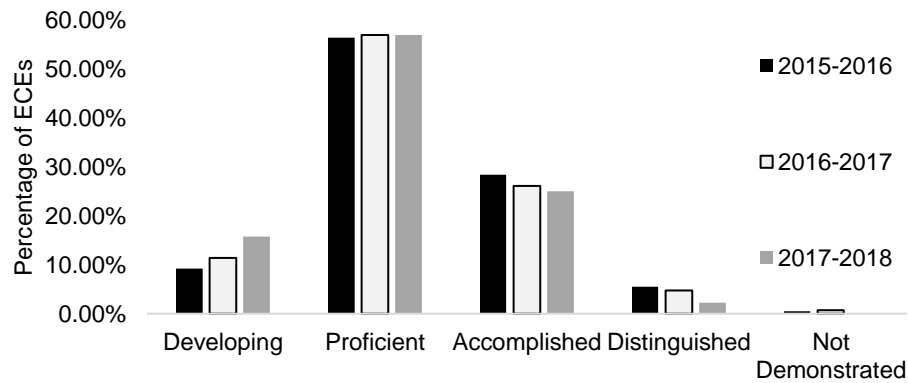
Standard IID: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 23. Standard IID had consistent markings of ECE proficiency over the three-year period.

Table 32

Standard IIE: Teachers Work Collaboratively With The Families And Significant Adults In The Lives Of Their Young Children

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	19	4.7	9	2.1	9	1.7
Proficient	226	56.4	234	53.2	308	57.4
Accomplished	132	32.9	168	38.2	199	37.1
Distinguished	22	5.5	29	6.6	21	3.9
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Through a visual reanalysis of data for Standard IIE, it appears that ECEs high proficient ratings as well as consistent accomplished ratings over the three-year period.

Standard IIE: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

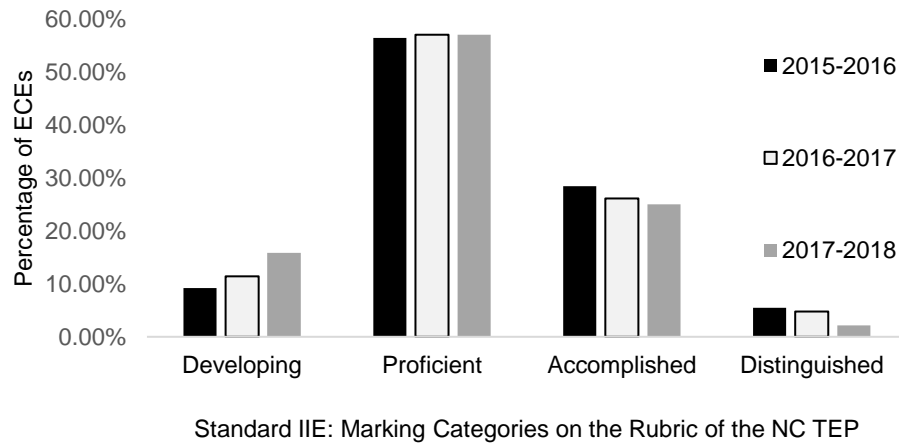*Figure 24.* Standard IIE appears to be an area of the rubric that ECEs are able to move to accomplished markings more readily than some other standards/elements.

Table 33

*Standard IIIA: Teachers Align Their Instruction with the North Carolina Foundations
for Early Learning and Development and/or the Kindergarten Standard
Course of Study (KSOC) and Use it as their NC Standard Course of
Study*

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.3	---	---	2	0.4
Developing	63	15.7	45	10.2	80	14.9
Proficient	221	55.1	260	59.1	329	61.3
Accomplished	96	23.9	110	25.0	108	20.1
Distinguished	19	4.7	25	5.7	18	3.4
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard IIIA seems to be an area in the rubric that is more difficult for ECEs to
move onto other marking areas. However, it appears that ECEs do acquire consistent
proficient markings in this area over the three-year period.

Standard IIIA: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
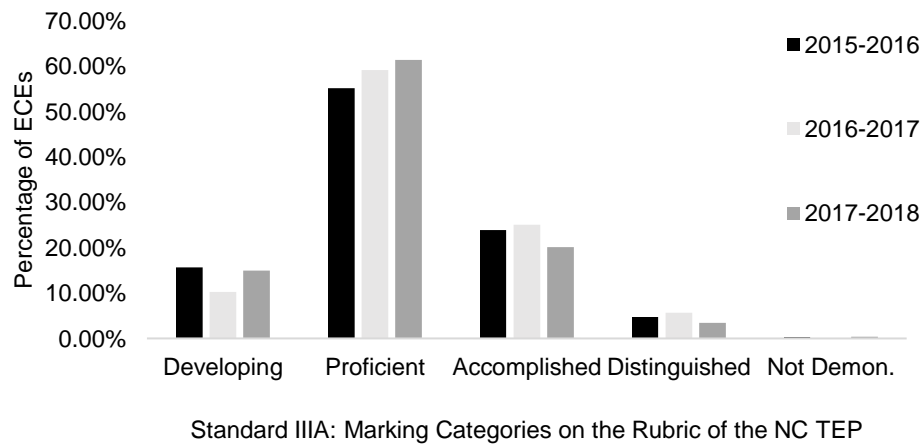
Figure 25. An analysis of Standard IIIA indicates increasing levels of proficiency in ECE
summative evaluation ratings over three years.

Table 34

Standard IIIB: Teachers Know The Content Appropriate To Their Teaching Specialty

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	41	10.2	37	8.4	46	11.0
Proficient	222	55.4	250	56.8	334	58.3
Accomplished	115	28.7	125	28.4	138	27.8
Distinguished	22	5.5	28	6.4	9	3.0
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard IIIB is an area of the rubric ECEs have increasingly received proficient

markings.
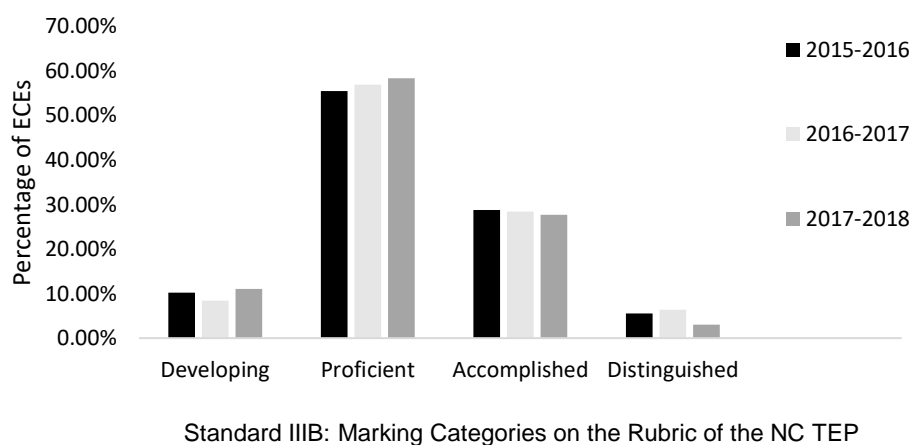
Figure 26. A reanalysis of the data for Standard IIIB indicates that this area may be a relatively difficult one for ECEs to move along the marking continuum of the rubric.

Table 35

Standard IIIC: Teachers Recognize The Interconnectedness Of Content Areas/Disciplines

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	69	17.2	55	12.5	8	1.5
Proficient	228	56.9	227	51.6	334	62.2
Accomplished	91	22.7	129	29.3	118	22.0
Distinguished	11	2.7	27	6.1	8	1.5
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A reanalysis of data for Standard IIIC shows that ECEs have steadily had

consistent markings in the proficient category.

Standard IIIC: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
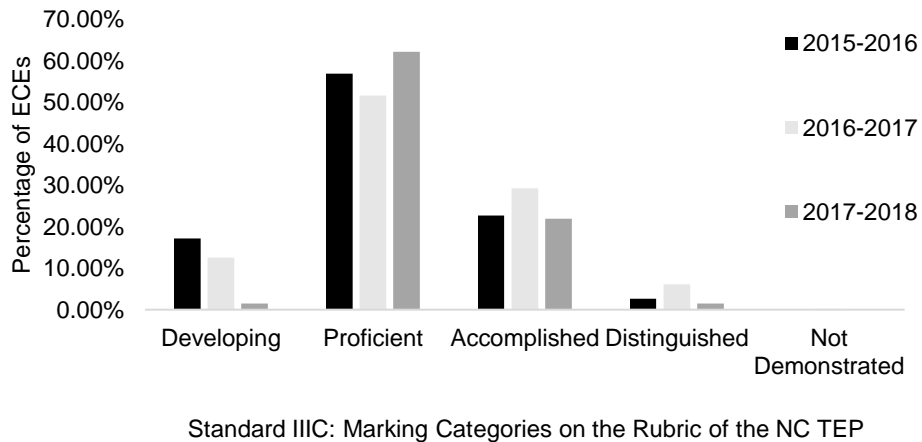
Figure 27. Standard IIIC appears to be a particularly difficult standard and element for ECEs to move along the marking progressions of the rubric used as part of the NC TEP.

Table 36

Standard IIID: Teachers Make Instruction Relevant To Young Children

| | 2015-2016 | | 2016-2017 | | 2017-2018 | |
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.2	---	---	---	---
Developing	52	13.0	55	12.5	62	11.5
Proficient	217	54.1	227	51.6	304	56.6
Accomplished	109	27.2	129	29.3	156	29.1
Distinguished	20	5.0	27	6.1	15	2.8
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard IIID is an area in the rubric where ECEs seem to have a moderate difficulty moving along the continuum of the marking areas.

Standard IIID: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 28. While ECEs maintained proficiency over the three years this summative evaluation data was collected, ECEs seem to have a challenging time moving from the developing range into proficient but seemed able to move into the accomplished range with moderate difficulty.

Table 37

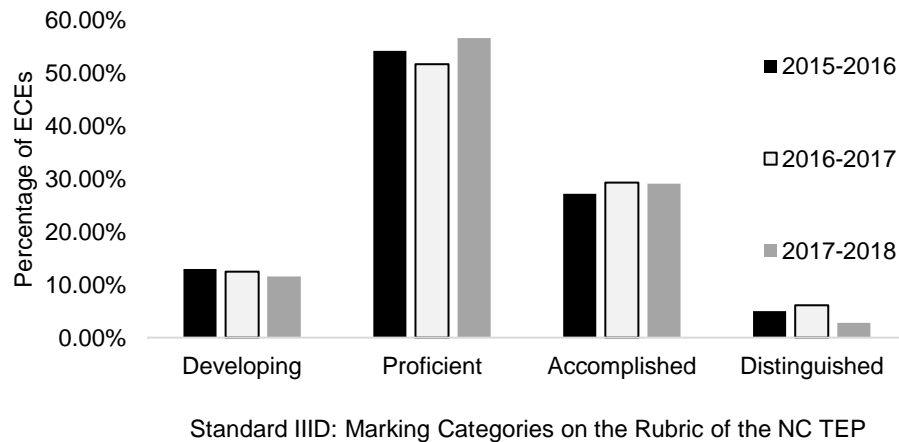*Standard IVA: Teachers Know the Ways in which Learning Takes Place and They Know the Appropriate Levels of Intellectual, Physical, Communication, Social, and Emotional Development of Their Young Children*

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	72	18.0	60	13.6	75	14.0
Proficient	178	44.4	236	53.6	315	58.7
Accomplished	133	33.2	121	28.0	129	24.0
Distinguished	18	5.0	22	5.0	18	3.4
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Data collected from ECE summative evaluations for IVA indicates that proficiency level markings notably increased over three years.
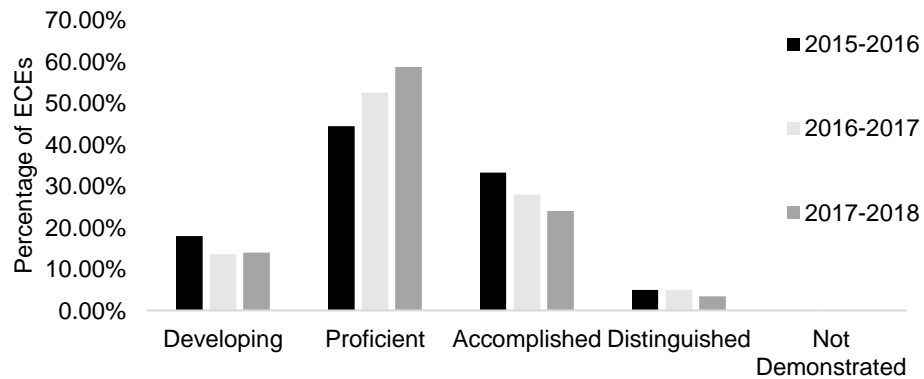
Standard IVA: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 29. Standard IVA data indicates that while proficiency markings increased for ECEs over three years, accomplished marking gradually decreased, perhaps indicating that it was more difficult to move through the marking progression categories during the 2017-2018 year.

Table 38

Standard IVB: Teachers Plan Instruction Appropriate for Their Young Children

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.3	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	72	18.0	40	9.1	70	13.0
Proficient	178	44.4	226	51.4	284	52.9
Accomplished	133	33.2	145	33.0	169	31.5
Distinguished	17	4.2	26	5.9	14	2.6
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Standard IVB information collected from ECE summative evaluations indicates

That the majority of ECEs received proficiency markings.

Standard IVB: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP
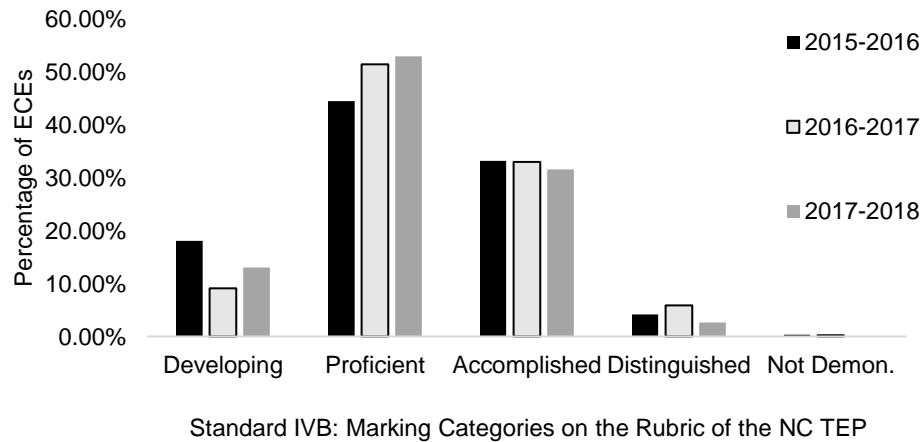
Figure 30. It appears through visual analysis that while ECEs may have a less challenging time moving onto to other marking progressions in the rubric than some other standards and elements.

Table 39

Standard IVC: Teachers A Variety Of Instruction Methods

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.2	2	0.5	---	---
Developing	49	12.2	40	9.1	41	7.6
Proficient	202	50.4	226	51.4	298	66.9
Accomplished	129	32.2	145	33.0	182	24.2
Distinguished	20	5.0	26	5.9	16	1.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. A reanalysis of summative evaluation data for Standard IVC indicates that

evaluators used the ND category more for this standard and element than others.

Standard IVC: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 31. Data from ECE summative evaluations shows that for this standard and element, in the year of 2017-2018, it appeared more difficult to move along the marking progressions on the rubric from [proficient into accomplished and distinguished areas.

Table 40

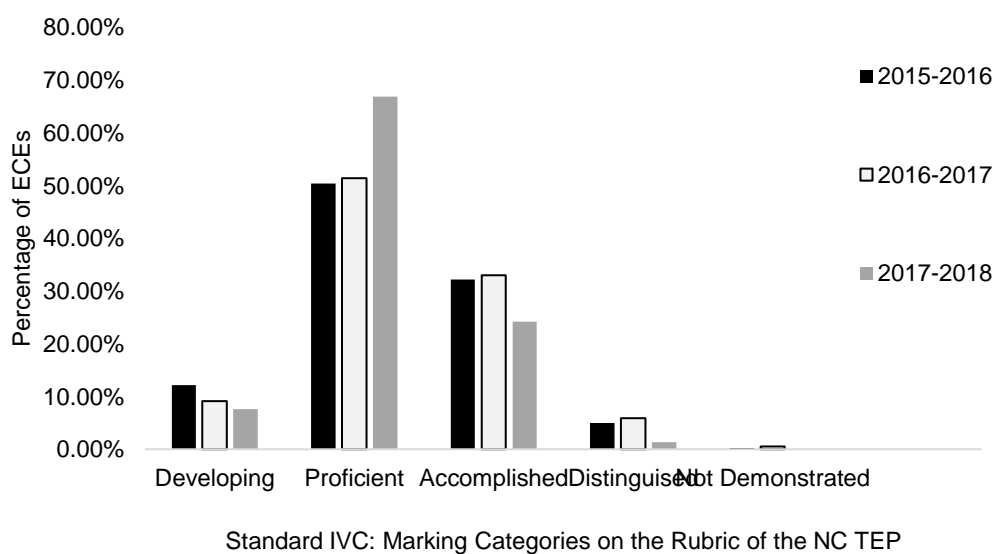*Standard IVD: Teachers Integrate and Utilize Technology in Their Instruction*

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	1	0.5	---	---	---	---
Developing	53	13.2	35	8.0	41	7.6
Proficient	202	50.4	280	63.6	359	66.9
Accomplished	129	32.2	107	24.3	130	24.2
Distinguished	20	5.0	14	3.2	7	1.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. According to ECE summative data over a three-year period, the proficient category notably increased from the 2015-2016 year to the 2016-2017 year and the 2017-2018 year.

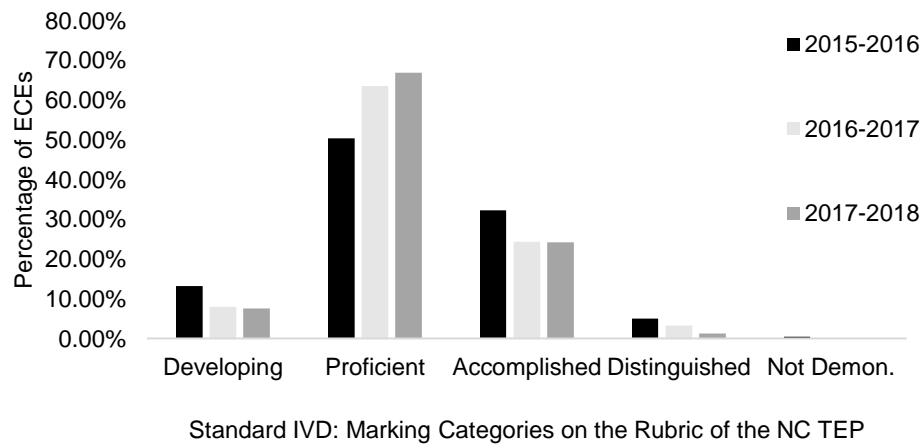Standard IVD: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 32. While ECEs maintained proficiency at increasing rates over three years, Standard IVD seems to be a more difficult standard and element for ECEs to move along the marking progressions into the accomplished and distinguished marking areas.

Table 41

Standard IVE: Teachers Help Young Children Develop Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	2	0.5	---	---	---	---
Developing	71	17.7	53	12.0	67	12.5
Proficient	213	53.0	259	58.9	334	62.2
Accomplished	100	24.9	107	24.3	124	23.1
Distinguished	13	3.2	21	4.8	12	2.2
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Summative data analyzed from ECE evaluations indicates that proficiency ratings increased over three years while accomplished ratings stayed similar during the three-year period.

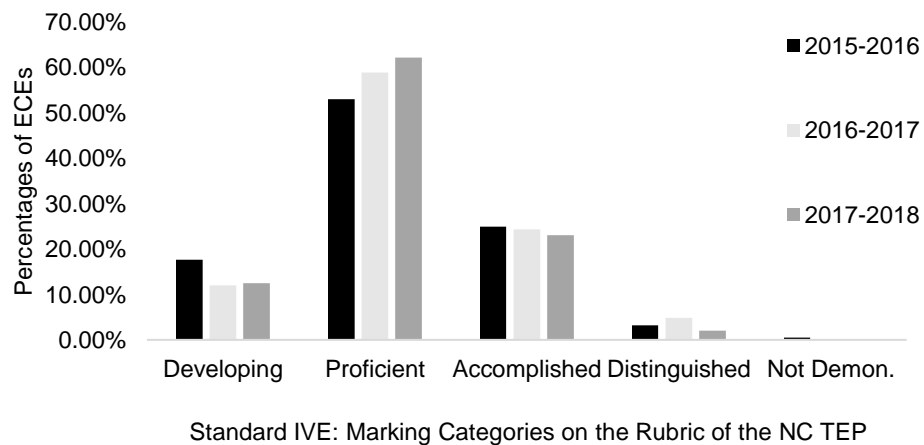Standard IVE: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 33. A visual analysis of Standard IVE shows that this standard and element may be a challenging area for ECEs to move from the proficient category to the accomplished or distinguished categories.

Table 42

Standard IVF: Teachers Help Children Work in Teams and Develop Leadership Skills

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	1	0.2	---	---
Developing	88	21.9	35	18.4	106	19.7
Proficient	200	49.9	280	57.0	308	57.4
Accomplished	100	24.9	107	19.8	109	20.3
Distinguished	13	3.2	14	4.5	14	2.6
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of ECE summative evaluations shows that proficient markings increased notably from the 2015-2016 year to the 2016-2017 year. However, this marking stayed stable and similar from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

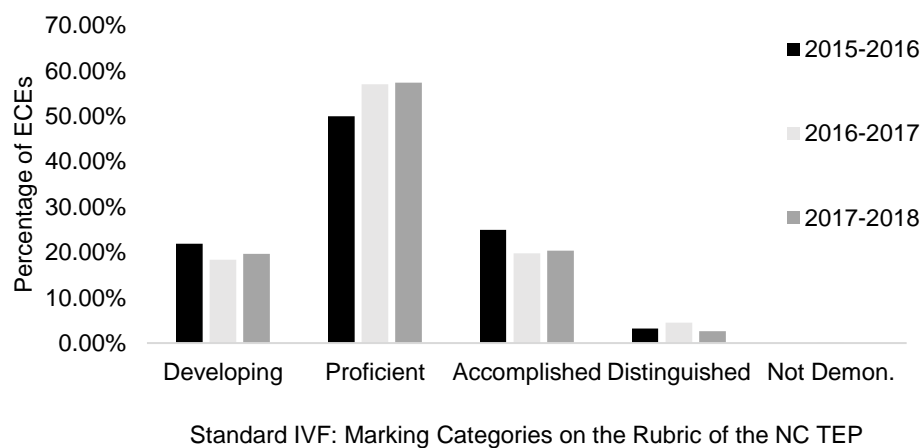Standard IVF: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 34. Standard IVF appears to be an area of the rubric that ECEs are able to move along the marking progressions, but this may be a moderately challenging standard and element for many.

Table 43

Standard IVG: Teachers Communicate Effectively

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Developing	44	11.0	36	8.2	35	6.5
Proficient	208	51.9	241	54.8	327	60.9
Accomplished	127	31.7	138	31.4	159	29.6
Distinguished	20	5.0	24	5.5	16	3.0
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. While a jump in proficient markings occurred from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, ECEs

receiving accomplished markings on the rubric as part of the NC TEP were relatively

similar for all three years explored.

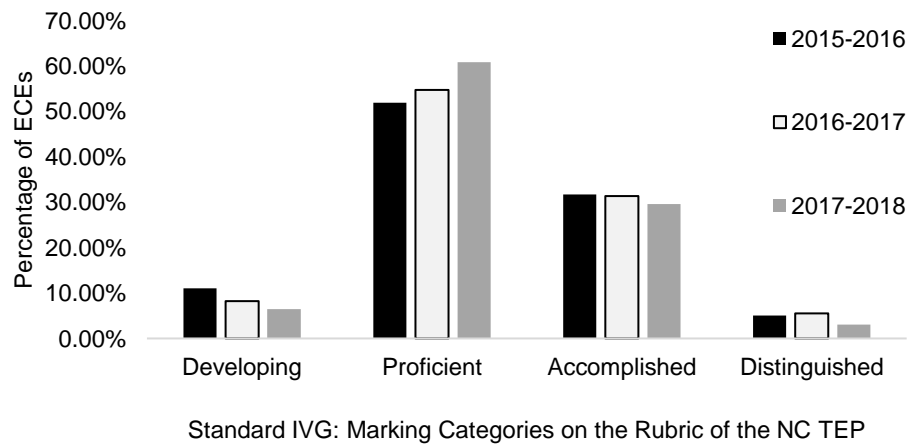Standard IVG: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 35. A visual analysis of Standard IVG indicates that ECEs are able to move along
the marking progressions relatively easily, but had slightly more of a challenging time
doing so during the 2017-2018 school year.

Table 44

Standard IVH: Teachers Use a Variety of Methods to Assess What Each Child has Learned

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	---	---	2	0.5	1	0.2
Developing	70	17.5	55	12.5	81	15.1
Proficient	229	57.1	266	60.5	334	62.2
Accomplished	86	21.4	98	22.3	110	20.5
Distinguished	14	3.5	19	4.3	11	2.0
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard IVH indicates that ECE proficiency markings on summative evaluations steadily increased over the three-year period examined.

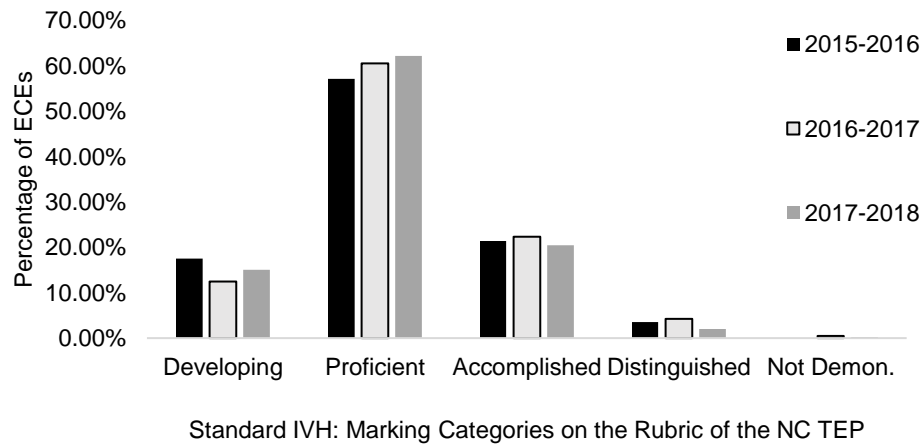Standard IVH: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 36. Standard IVH appears to be a challenging standard and element for ECEs to move along all the marking progressions in the rubric.

Table 45

Standard VA: Teachers Analyze Young Children's Learning

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	2	0.5	3	0.7	---	---
Developing	37	9.2	50	11.4	85	15.8
Proficient	226	56.4	251	57.0	306	57.0
Accomplished	114	28.4	115	26.1	134	25.0
Distinguished	22	5.5	21	4.8	12	2.2
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard VA shows that evaluators used the ND category more often for this particular standard and element. Also, ECEs earning proficient markings stayed similar across the three years, but slightly decreased in the accomplished marking area over time.

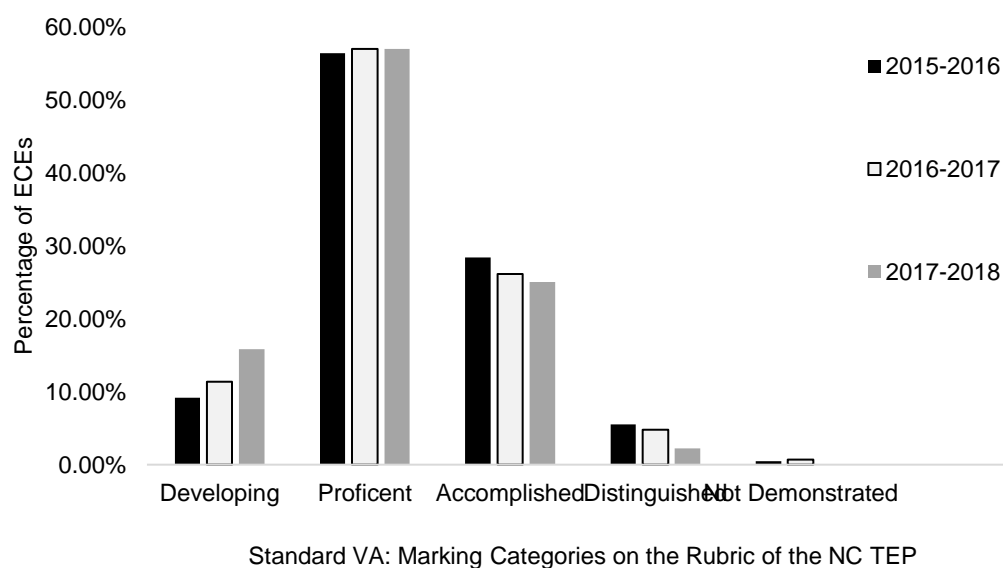Standard VA: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 37. A visual analysis of ECE summative evaluations indicates that ECEs are able to move along the continuum of marking categories, but this may be moderately difficult from the proficient to the accomplished marking category.

Table 46

Standard VB: Teachers Link Professional Growth to Their Professional Goals

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	2	0.5	---	---	---	---
Developing	37	9.2	30	6.8	30	5.6
Proficient	226	56.4	261	59.3	362	67.4
Accomplished	114	28.4	118	26.8	122	22.7
Distinguished	22	5.5	31	7.0	23	4.3
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. Analysis of ECE summative evaluations over a three-year period indicates that

Standard VB had increasing levels of proficiency, but the accomplished levels decreased

over time.

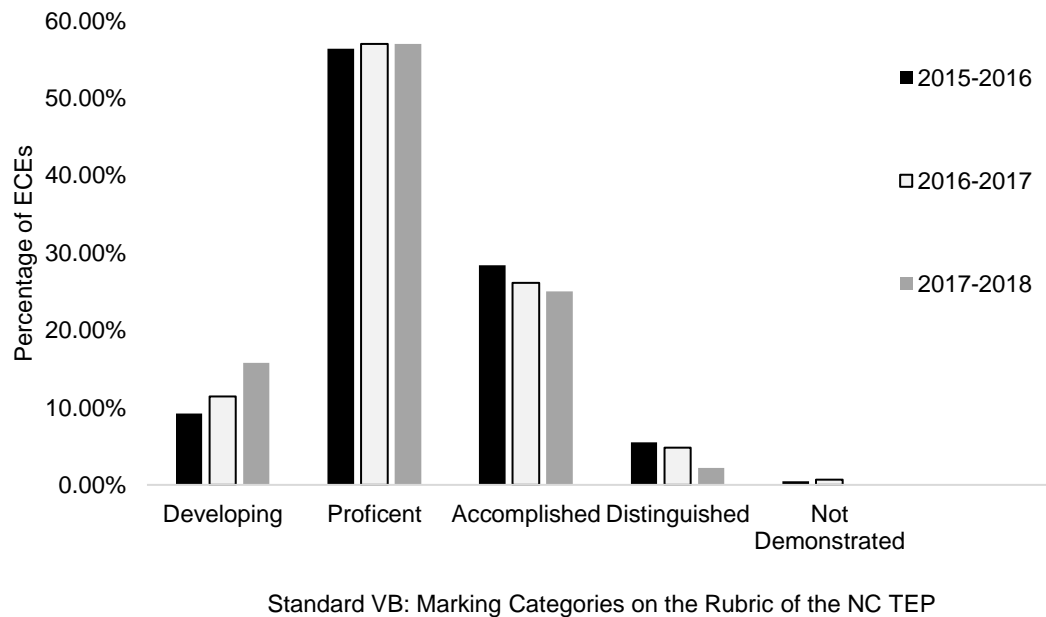Standard VB: Marking Categories on the Rubric of the NC TEP

Figure 38. A visual analysis of Standard VB over a three-year period indicates that ECEs may have a difficult time moving along the marking progressions. During the 2017-2018 year, moving from proficient to accomplished marking categories appeared to be particularly difficult.

Table 47

Standard VC: Teachers Function Effectively In A Complex, Dynamic Environment

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*
Not Demon.	3	0.7	---	---	---	---
Developing	68	17.0	38	8.6	64	11.9
Proficient	228	56.9	260	59.1	336	62.6
Accomplished	88	21.9	134	30.5	120	22.3
Distinguished	14	3.5	28	6.4	17	3.2
Total	401	100.0	440	100.0	537	100.0

Note. An analysis of Standard VC in the rubric used to evaluate ECEs as part of the NC TEP, indicates that proficient markings increased over three years, but in the accomplished area decreased notably from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.
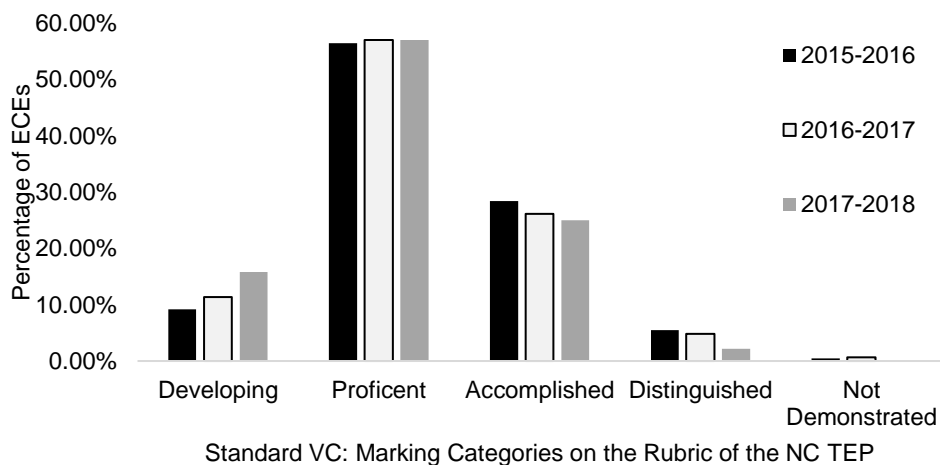

Figure 39. A visual analysis of Standard VC shows that this standard and element is a difficult one for ECEs to move along the marking progressions.

APPENDIX C

Examples of Coded Interviews and Transcripts (Survey and Focus Group Interviews)

*Note: The researcher has hard copies of all data, both categorized and color-coded in a locked file cabinet at UNC Charlotte.

<u>Example 1 of Categorized Data:</u>

1st THEME: Mentor / Evaluator RESPONSIVENESS		
Sub-Theme 1: Communication Method	Sub-Theme 2: Feedback Offered	Sub-Theme 3: Specific Support Offered
Indicators: Availability, Email, text, answering questions	Indicators: (Positive. Negative, Demeanor)	Indicators: Strategies, resources
Paige: great, quick, responsive…if we needed her she was there through calling and emailing. At our team agreement she was there in person, we chatted about TLU and **personal relationship** and talked about best way to communicate Tammy: And I always tell her [site administrator] what mentor/ eval. provide me and she continues to help to make sure we stay on the right track. Paige: She asks me what I want help with this year. We have a really open dialogue.	Erica - My biggest success this year is EESLPD came in and I got great compliments. She said my assistant and I are working very well together. And my class feels like it's on path 100% pf the day which is not (giggles) how it's been previously. Erica-Yes, not only EESLPD coming in and commenting great things and giving me positive feedback and my administrator has too. Ann: In my observation meetings after my observations, my evaluator doing the observation and my mentor give compliments by pointing out strengths, but that's about it. Ann: My mentor is very upbeat, friendly, and	CC - if she [evaluator] did need to offer a suggestion, I like that she would share an example and that helped. Tammy: They showed us the solution cards but now we have first you need to do this and then you can do that. He has to have what he wants to do physically in front of him. So he can see his reward and what he is working for. Paige: (East) If there's something I need to work on, she has sent me articles, links to follow, she reminds me when things are due. She goes over my PDP goals with me. She's really helpful in that area. She gave me an article about coaching this year. Dina (East): Daycare …my evaluator in public didn't know what I was doing had no clue. My evaluator now does and it would be nice if public school knew too.

Paige: I don't talk much with my evaluator. She sends me pre-conference questions via email or call me with the questions. She observes, has post-conf. but then I won't hear from her until next observ. Or when something needs to be locked in Homebase

Ann: she has been available by text, or email. She always responds when I ask her a question.

Erica: she [evaluator] always gets back to me within 24-48 hours... and answers all of my questions. She's been great.

Paige: (site director as evaluator) We have a lot of verbal communication, not email or sending resources. (sees evaluator on daily basis)

Dina: (East) SPII, have evaluator only, she's always very helpful, I can email or text her at any time with questions or ask for help especially at beginning of year to know who to talk to

positive. I've burst into tears in front of her before and she's made me feel very supported and she's been very encouraging which has been wonderful. Makes me feel like she is in my corner.

Jessica: When I did have a mentor, she was absolutely wonderful. If she did think I needed help she did it in a friendly, professional manner. I wish I still had her she made me feel like I was doing everything right and was always praising me. I think that mentors are such a great thing to have for teachers.

CC: I didn't have a mentor with the EESLPD but my evaluator was always good to point out the things that I was doing well

Paige: if we had questions, she [mentor] was there.

Ann: The evaluator has done a very nice job, it took me a while to or for us to sometimes understand each other but we've made a lot of good progress there but my mentor has just been wonderful.

Paige: (East) Um, just providing feedback, helping get materials,

Paige: Children with IEPs and meeting their needs as far as social emotional in the classroom, some stuff in our routines so they go more smoothly, materials in classroom and helping meet those Ecker standards, things like that.

Dina: In Jan. moved to DD room. Where I work not willing to hire a one on one person to work with him. I have a Master's in and am also a national board cert. teacher. I've worked in classrooms with DDs, 14 typically dev., 4 with disabilities. Mom and dad overjoyed to get services that he really needed DD diagnosis, he probably was Au, sister was Au. I know my evaluator was very helpful, new in county didn't know where to go to get help. Left just for e to figure it out for myself… the director was like, you found out a way to get rid of him. She wanted him to go because he was hard to handle. My evaluator was happy was that I found the right place for him but that was it.

Ann: My mentor has been wonderful. She has come into my classroom… And she's just been incredibly patient with me because I've had a real hard time with all this and she's helped me come in and rearrange my classroom and she's really gone above and beyond.

Erica: …she [evaluator] always comes to me with concrete information.

Lucy: my evaluator, she advocates for teachers in our program. Like

about boy, in between person from smart start and my director. Would always touch-base.

Tina: she talks to me about pre-observation questions and I'm dead on it… she checks in from time to time because [my director] is so good. My evaluator says if I need something not to hesitate to ask.

CC: My evaluator, I'm on my second one, I had a change but they've always been very helpful and responsive and helped me with anything I needed.

Ann: My mentor has been easy to talk to and has been very responsive.

Paige: (East) (director is evaluator) I can't think of a time that she isn't available. She's always been there for me when I've needed help.

Paige: I talk to you every day about different things, just seeing her in the center. She also emails me resources. When she has

since she is my eval. And site admin., if she sees something specifically during my observation or my PDP, it's a little easier to get those resources I need if she sees it.

Ann: My evaluator is very knowledgeable, very, very knowledgeable but I kind of feel like she is a my way or the high way mentality, all black and white. And I think that part of being a good teacher is being creative and so sometimes I feel like if I don't do something exactly the way she would do it I'm going to get points deducted basically or I'm going to get penalized.

Lucy: I've had two different evaluators. They both have been bright but I still see the differences between them. I know they are evaluating on the same rubric but I feel like it depends on the evaluator, the focus is just a little bit different and I have to do things a little bit differently. It's not that I have to please them but I am being evaluated and so I try to do well and if I try to do well then I have to know what they like and what they don't, that's how I feel. It might not be the case but that's how I feel about evaluators.

for the last 3 years I haven't had a planning time at all and it's one of those things that we're short-handed, um, I don't get any planning time but I know that's she's been advocating for that um, as long as I've been enrolled in the EESLPD program.

Ann: My mentor has been very helpful with helping me interact with the BK licensure specialist. Has helped me find ways to best interact with specialist so that we can get things accomplished

Lucy: They have helped me find the *right people for specific help*. She gave me specific opportunities for technology training webinar are really hard to find. My mentor provided be with me a webinar tech training opport. **In technology**. They have always sent me to right person when I needed help.

Erica: They always let me *know about new resources* or just having a new person to talk to.

Paige: East) My director is my evaluator and she gives me suggestions and resources that may be beneficial in the classroom. And other stuff she thought may be interesting that might help us in the classroom.

Paige: (East) Children with IEPs and meeting their needs as far as social emotional in the classroom, some stuff in our routines so they go more smoothly, materials in classroom and helping meet those Ecker standards, things like that.

Tammy (East):

something pulled up on her computer that she wants us to see she'll show us, things like that.

Tina: She may not respond right away if I tell her I need something she says I have to wait a couple days and then she gets back to me. She may give me websites and other resources. She gives me the flexibility to do what I need. Good at emailing and texts.

Tammy: They have been very responsive when I ask for help. They have helped me see that by having another pair of eyes they may see something I don't so they come in with fresh eyes and new perspectives. They've seen a change, my mentor said she saw glitter in me. Sometimes she sees it and sometimes she doesn't. She said it's not the behaviors in the class I feel like it's something else. She told me, I care about YOU and want to check on YOU. She actually sees and knows that I'm not by myself going through this and it feels good that somebody else is looking out for me. (RELATIONSHIP)

Evaluator will help me and work on. Helped me realize things that I was already doing, she told me to document, everything I do, write it down and date it so that I can move you to proficient to it. It's very hard for me to remember to write it down because I'm used to just doing it. I keep all of my artifacts in my portfolio and notes in a notebook. She helps me to see what I have been doing but I don't have proof until I write it down.

Dina: Checked on me during hurricane to see how I am and my students were. She always responds to my messages. Always asking me to work on things with her. She has always noted and first week new person was there, with everything going on I didn't have time to. Came to PLC meeting to today to be my cheerleader. Every now and then she'd look at me and smile and say I want them to know about what you do, tell them about…"   ". We're about the same age and we know a lot of same stuff so it's fun to talk with her.

Dina: I have discussed these challenges with my evaluator, discussed girl about behavior, we do reasoning or what not, made changes to classroom, activities with peers.

Dina: Evaluator talked to us about Becky Bailey breathing and helping her to do other things, distract focus away from anger, positively

		redirect her, "I need you to help me, read this book to me" it'll diffuse he build up of anger. Tina: . She has been able to support me because she knew I was in a new facility and that I had a child with behaviors…I told her we do have challenging behaviors, 2 or 3. The other two are mild in comparison to the girl. She (Evaluator) is very receptive and has given us feedback on that. Tina: the ones she's given, like resources, they are very good and knowing how to ask me questions…"Tell me more about global awareness" Once she explained to me that lightbulb came on and I was ready to implement in the classroom. She is in my contacts so I can contact her when I need her. She's right on it. This is my 1st year with her. She's the nicest most professional person to world with and then she has resources, she knows what she's talking about. If she doesn't know she will find out and get back with you. Many others may not have the eval. I have and that's bad. I think they should be looking for approachable, people person who cares about their delivery, not hard-nosed, she's caring. You want her to be professional but you want to feel free to ask questions because you don't want to be scared of her. You don't want somebody to make you freeze up and make mistakes. Thank

		goodness I'm not in that situation, whew!
		Lucy: One of the most enjoyable experience through the EESLPD gives is the resources the mentors have provided to me. We are all teachers and a lot of times we are stuck in our own classrooms. Through the EESLPD program I asked to visit and observe others classrooms. I asked my mentors and evaluators and they gave me several places I could observe other teachers' classrooms. So that was my most enjoyable experiences with my mentor and evaluator. Best mentor experiences. (connect with teacher as mentor)
		Paige: Having my site director serve as my evaluator is great and very helpful. Specifically, for us. Since we're such a small center, anytime we need her, she is right there for us. That really works out well. And she had the background knowledge of us and what we're doing in our classrooms.
		Dina: They've been hands on, very cooperative, if they didn't know the answer the'd go find the answer for you…sorry, - Support by being there to listen, support helping you find materials, activities, research articles, sending diff. links that you might be working on and talking about, e there by email text just a phone call away. Being at meetings when you're presenting and telling you great job.

		Dina: (evaluator) helps with questions or ask for help especially at beginning of year to know who to talk to about boy, in between person from smart start and my director. Would always touch-base.

Example 2 of Categorized Data:

2nd THEME: COMFORT LEVEL with Mentor / Evaluator		
Sub-Theme 1: Asking Questions	Sub-Theme 2: Reaching out to M/E	Sub-Theme 3: Contacting Others for Support
Indicators: (Yes, no, maybe, sometimes)	Indicators: (reasons why or why not, too busy, not important enough)	Indicators: (Licensure, community resources)
Erica: My evaluator this year is actually brand new and she's had questions, I've had questions but we've worked it out together. Also, she's only been out once to observe me but she's been great. If she says something I don't get, I'll ask, "Why?" because maybe an evaluator hasn't told me that yet or in the past. CC: I've always felt comfortable. On a scale of 1-10, a 10. Erica: [laughs] I do not mind asking questions. I like knowing my job and knowing my role and I will keep reaching out until someone gives me an answer. Erica: So when I first started in PreK, this is Erica, I didn't want people to think that I didn't know my job. Especially when I came with 8 years of experience in the	Erica: Unfortunately, when I came I didn't get a mentor because they had me as an SP II instead of an SP I, even though 5th grade, which is where I came from, and it's a lot different than Pre-K. But I will say that my very 1st mentor that I had during my 2nd year of NC Pre-K, she's not my mentor anymore, but we developed a <u>friendship.</u> She still answers my questions as long as I email her or call her and say, "Hey, I have a question…this is going on in my classroom, what can I do?" She has been amazing. Ann: My only concerns would be when reaching	Ann: Um, well I prefer to email just so that I have a paper trail. I cc my mentor and director as well and it often takes, for something that I know would probably only take 5 minutes to look up on a computer, she takes over a week to get back to me. Um, often her responses are kind of curt…you should know this already. Um, don't waste my time kind of thing, or, this is your responsibility to know this. An I'm like, well I'm asking you because you hold the key to all of this

school system and we had the same standards, it's just that the principal was your evaluator.

Paige: I'm totally comfortable. Good, bad, ugly, it doesn't matter. I feel really comfortable. We have a great relationship at work and outside of work so I I'm very comfortable

Tammy : I do not like to ask for help. But I feel pretty comfortable. More comfort. With mentor because she has seen what I'm going through personally. My evaluator is more like about the rubric and that's it. My mentor is observing me but also wants to know me and has gotten to know me. During last observation meeting she had her notes written in her iPAD and pulled up the evaluation form and went through each area individually and mainly talked about the ones I need to work on, the ones that I'm developing in. She said, it's not what I'm looking for but it's what the rubric is looking for. She told me to look at the rubric so that I could see what was expected. But some of it is vague. My director pointed out somethings that I am actually doing, that would help me satisfy the developing areas but they didn't seem like they fit. She told me to use the resource manual too.

Dina: I've never requested anything but she send me links and other thing to help me with creative curriculum that will help with project based approach. She's always been there for me brought

out to my mentor is that I know she is incredible busy so unless it's something really important I don't want to bother her but she's made it clear that if I sent her an email she'll respond to it as soon as she possible can and 9 ties out of 10 she does but I know she is incredibly busy with all the work she has to do.

Lucy: This is not the case for me but my colleagues have their boss as an evaluator and I've always been against that idea of your boss being your evaluator, the person who oversees the program and um I would not contact her for any help because it should be the EESLPD program and the evaluation within the agency should be separate. Because it's supposed to be separate even though it's really not. The boss is only human and what she sees when she comes to evaluate those teachers, it's not like she's going to forget. So if she becomes my evaluator, I would not feel comfortable contacting her for any reasons because she is my direct boss.

Tina: . I don't have a problem asking her things. She'd down to earth, she pleasant. I can confide in

information and so, I'm trying not to bother you with too many questions but I need to know this answer. And I feel like when I call and we're on the phone it's been very unpleasant so I try and only use email (B-K licensure consultant).

Lucy: I needed to join a committee, so she (mentor) helped me connect with the person who runs the Smart Start and all the resources she provided me were great.

Erica: My evaluators, in the past when I have a question, if it's who to call, because I'm up for licensure renewal this year…they always tell me who to call so that I'm not calling the wrong people.

Ann: We have no budget so anything I find that I feel like we really need I have to pay for it myself. And it's getting expensive.

Erica: I think my hardest thing is going outside of my

me stuff looked stuff up for me, so I can't think of anything. I have no problem asking her for help. I don't have an issue asking for help, "Hey, I need help" {laughs}. I wouldn't want her to think that I didn't know what I was talking about. I would always like for her to…pause, sorry I'm looking for the right words. I always try to do the right things so I don't want to come across like I don't know what I'm doing ya know. I don't know. Sometimes I just want to say tell me how to do it and I'll do it.

her. I enjoy Ms. C., Ms. G. has been wonderful (Smart Start) gives feedback, she's like our mentor for those of us who don't have one. Challenging behavior tells us what we need to do.

    a. My evaluator wouldn't understand another company taking over, she is to evaluate me but I wouldn't share my concerns about that. Like changes in management, under another company.

Dina: or ask for help especially at beginning of year to know who to talk to about the boy [with developmental delays] because I was in between the person from Smart Start and my director. [She] would always touch-base.

classroom, meeting that standard. Honestly, I would like a way for teachers to share the way we are now, to communicate and those of us who have some stuff to share, just talking back and forth. Like if someone doesn't know about technology, or whatever, because I can't leave, I have children, my husband works 2 full time jobs and I can't leave my house a lot or leave my job and I don't get paid to go to an event or attend all of these meetings, um, ya know things like that. I do get to go to training sometimes but the kids have to have a substitute and you don't have a lot of time on the weekend to promote your classroom and to go learn about all these new things in education that changes frequently. I just think we could use like a state-wide PLC kind of thing where you can just log onto your computer and talk and do what you need to do on there instead of having to pack up and go to

		UNC Charlotte or whatever or go to another county or whatever. Ann: I have had some difficulty talking with my and getting responses from my <u>B-K licensure consultant</u> though. That's been a real difficulty.

<u>Initial Codes/Themes Identified From Transcripts:</u>

Theme 1: EESLPD/Mentor/ Communication Style

Theme 2: EESLPD/Evaluator/Communication Style

Theme 3: Teacher Assistant Relationship

Theme 4: Positive Feedback/Strengths-based

Theme 5: NC TEP/Progress (standards)/ (areas needing help from rubric)/observation

Theme 6: Assistant

Theme 7: Class doing well/Routine/different from before

Theme 8: Advocacy

Theme 9: PDP/Professional Goals

Theme 10: Program/Site Administrator/Budget

Theme11: Celebration/Aknowledgement

Theme 12: For Children

Theme 13: New to NC PreK

Theme 14: Adjustment

Theme 15: Assessment

Theme 16: Parents

Theme 17: Lack of experience

Theme 18: Go Back to School

Theme 19: Juggling a lot

Theme 20: IEPs

Theme 21: Challenge

Theme 21: Turnover

Theme 22: Pay

Theme 23: Love Teaching/Passion for profession

Theme 24: From School System

Theme 25: Need for Training

Theme 26: State/Licensure

Theme 27: **Areas need help in teaching**

Theme 28: *Other Resources*

Theme 29: Lack of Support/Time

Theme 30: Comfortability Asking Questions

Theme 31: PLC

Theme 32: Specific supports needs

<u>Focus Group:</u>

Me: Thank you so much for joining today. I'm Heather Taylor and I'm the Quality Assurance Lead for the EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte. I know you've received a lot of emails from me and I truly appreciate you participating in this focus group. I'd also like to introduce an Assistant Professor who will be joining me.

McCorkle: Hi, my name is Laura McCorkle and I work in the Child and Family Development program at UNC Charlotte. Thank you for joining.

Me: She will be joining me during the question/answer portion of this meeting. Again, I will be recording this meeting so that we can go back and analyze the information later.

Someone clears throat

Me: I'm going to go ahead and talk about what we're doing today. So I'd like for you to introduce yourselves if you don't mind, you don't have to use your real name, you can just use a pseudonym or call yourself my your first initial or whatever you'd like to do.

Just for sound check purposes to make sure we can hear everybody okay, please introduce yourselves.

Participant 1 (Faint sound)

Me: Hello?

Participant 1: Hello, I'm here.

Me: Okay, great. I can hear you pretty well. Can I hear another person?

Participant 2: I'm here.

Me: Okay, great. How about a 3rd?

Participant 3: I'm here.

Me: Okay, thank you. A fourth?

Participant 4: Uh, can you hear me?

Me: I can hear you. Thank you. And we have one more person on…

Participant 5: Oh, it's probably me. I logged in on the computer as well.

Me: Okay. I can hear you, great. Thank you guys for joining again. I just want to talk with you a little bit about what we're doing. As I told you in my email this is part of my dissertation study but I'm also very curious and I have a vested interest in knowing what the teachers in our state are provided as far as support offered by the EESLPD office mentors and evaluators. The questions today are really about your perceptions of the supports you are receiving or have received. We're asking you to participate because you expressed interest on the End of Year (2017 – 2018) Teacher Survey and I truly do appreciate that. I think that one person has just joined us so can you please say 'hello' so that everyone can hear you?

Caller: No response

Me: Hello? {[No response]

Me: Anyway I want to just explain this process. We'll be asking everyone if you've participated in a focus group before. Has anyone ever participated in a focus group of this nature before?

All participants answer "no"

Me: Okay, well we're glad that you are participating in this focus group right now. So we are going to be learning from you today both whatever your perceptions may be, whether positive or negative. We're not trying to achieve consensus here so if one person has a different opinion from another please feel free to express yourself. I would also like for you to understand that this is purely exploratory research so we're just trying to find out

information. The only way that we'll be using it is to provide better support for you guys moving forward. Also, just so that we know what is actually happening in the field. Just as a reminder, the focus group is going to last between 60-90 minutes. Since we're not meeting in-person, I want you to know that all of the information that you talk about today cannot be connected with who you are whatsoever. So, I want you to know that all of your information will be de-identified and if you need to get up and leave the area for any reason, please feel free to do so. Try to not be gone for too long because it may be hard for us to continue with the discussion, however, you are free to leave at any time that you want to. You do not have to stay with the focus group the entire time if you do not want to participate any longer. Some ground rules, just to get started, everyone should participate so as I move along the questions please add to the questions whenever you would like as far your own perceptions and responses that you would like to contribute. Also, all of the information provided in the focus group must be kept confidential. So everyone in this group please be mindful of that and don't have conversations with your colleagues about what is said and please just be conscientious of your peers. Let's see here, so we're ready to start the questioning unless anyone has any questions for me before getting started.

Participant: One question here.

Me: Okay. What is your question?

Participant: Um, no questions.

Me: (both giggle) Oh, no questions. Thank you for making that clear. If you do have questions along the way please let me know. Just say "wait a second, stop, stop, stop" and I will be happy to answer questions you may have as we move forward. I just noticed and I just heard from one of our participants, they are muted because they have small children in the room. I know that many of you are making some different concessions this evening especially with our weather and everything so that you can join me so I do truly appreciate that. So our first question I'm going to start with (brief pause to discuss with Dr. McCorkle). Guys one last thing I need to do as you go through is I need to get your pseudonyms so whatever you would like to be called during the focus group. I'm going to start with whoever would like to say what their pretend name today is.

Ann: (Me: okay)

Jessica: (Me: alright)

CC: (Me: okay)

Erica: (Me: okay)

Nicole: (Me: okay)

Lucy: (Me: Thank you)

Me: I think I have everybody. I have Ann, Jessica, CC, Erica, Nicole, and Lucy. Do I have everybody?

Participants: Yes

Question 1:

Me: Okay, let's start with the 1st question. What successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

Ann: I've made a lot of progress in meeting the standards. Um, I can see a lot of progress between the start of the year and now.

Me: Okay, thanks for sharing. (Pause) I'll repeat the question. What successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

CC: My biggest success is getting a new assistant who is awesome.

Erica: My biggest success this year is EESLPD came in and I got great compliments. She said my assistant and I are working very well together. And my class feels like it's on path 100% of the day which is not (giggles) how it's been previously.

Other participants giggle after this comment.

Me: okay, thank you for sharing that.

Lucy: Um, I'm not really sure this is a success but I'm doing something very interesting for PDP this year. And uh, I'm very excited about it.

Me: Okay, what are you doing?

Lucy: So. I'm taking on a project to advocate for teachers so I started out identifying the challenges at our center and I will advocate to improve our classes, not so much the teaching practice in the classroom but um, how we operate the program.

Me: Okay. So just for those who haven't answered yet, what successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

(5-second pause)

Me: I haven't heard yet from Nicole. Nicole, would you like to chime in? (5-Second Pause) Jessica, would you like to answer this one?

Jessica: I would say just getting the kids into their routines especially with having a lot of missed school because of the weather, the hurricanes. Just finally getting them back on the schedule and getting them back into the swing of things again.

Question 1B.:

Me: Okay. Let's go ahead and move on to the next question. In regard to your successes, do you feel they've been acknowledged or celebrated?

Erica: Yes, not only EESLPD coming in and commenting great things and giving me positive feedback and my administrator has and then we actually have a celebration station inside our classroom, I went back and told my children, "Yay, we did this right. It was new, we introduced it, we practiced, you're doing a great job at it" so we actually celebrate within our classroom at the celebration station also.

Me: Okay. How do the kids celebrate?

Erica: In the celebration station?

Me: Yes

Erica: So. I'm obviously in Stanley County but one of my coworkers, she has Union County children in her classroom also and it was an initiative that they did at their training that I got to attend just because I took … we took a basket of toys and there's all these really neat things in there, they actually get to decide. We have a magical wand, a little light up one from the dollar story, we have the Dr. Jean's A, B, C Cheers, ya know where they can do your grater and your cheese and it's imaginary and they say "we are great, great, great". They have a little ice cream and they can make a little saying for it. We have stickers and buttons, one of the little teacher pointer things that they can say," you are doing a great job." We have bubbles they can blow and they can do just whatever they choose.

Me: Okay. You sound so enthusiastic when you're talking about it.

Erica: Love, love my job!

Me: Does anyone else have any other ways they would like to explain how their successes have been acknowledged or celebrated?

Ann: In my observation meetings after my observations, my evaluator doing the observation and my mentor give compliments by pointing out strengths, but that's about it.

Me: Okay

CC: I think it's obvious in my classroom with having an assistant that's really good, really awesome, ummm, the children are responding to that in a positive way and we're having a good year

Me: Great. Anyone else? (5-second pause) Okay, I'm going to go ahead and move onto the next question. What challenges have you had this year in the classroom?

Ann: I've started my first year as an NC Pre-K teacher and I was a Developmental Day teacher the year before, well 2 years before so this was my first year in NC Pre-K and

neither me nor my administrator knew how to do the assessments and we had to have a lot of help with that and having a lot of new parents to pre-k in general, it's been a huge adjustment because the previous years I had parents who had their children in preschool already. This year is all brand new for the parents and the kids and it's been a big adjustment.

Me: Would anyone else like to share experiences that they may have experienced?

CC: I think with changing an assistant mid-year, the first one I had until October and then she left and ummm, the biggest challenge was she didn't have any experience with NC Pre-K or in that type of setting and then her realizing she would have to go back school to stay in that position and she did not want to so finding another one and then just changing, um, an assistant and getting the kids something new to get used to is always a challenge and then the new one and I both are just know learning to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD for assessments and documentation so that's a challenge also.

Lucy: [inflection…drawn out word I] I've fought this one so long and it's nothing new but juggling assessments, documentation, teaching, training, it's always challenging.

Me: Okay, Thank you for sharing.

Jessica: I too have a new assistant this year and then we have a couple of kids in the classroom that have IEPs this year.

Erica: OOOH ya'll I feel you on the assistants. This is my 7th year in NC Pre-k and it took me forever to find an assistant that meshed well that wasn't quite frankly just showing up for a paycheck and wanted our children to be successful and wanted us to be successful. My biggest challenge though (inflection slows down. Seems like is carefully choosing words) is getting administration to see that what I'm doing is worthwhile. I've switched centers 3 times and it's hourly now and sometimes it's a pay rale issue and they get upset if you take it home because they think you should have plenty enough time to do it and I guess if it's really important to me and detrimental to my kids or helps my kids or something I really think they're going to be excited about or something that's going to work, then I'm going to do it (Teach as calling or as career) And I wish I could get paid for everything but I worked for the school system for a while so I know sometimes it's just extra But that's probably been the biggest thing for me to overcome. That and knowing that there's stuff to laminate and stuff to cut and stuff to be printed, research that needs to be done before we do an activity and getting your assistant on board and see can can see and yes it's something that needs to be done and something I'm passionate about and needs to be done to be successful.

Me: Jessica, let me ask is the IEP situation you describe new?

Jessica: Yes, for me it is. This is my first time having a child with a developmental delay. Usually we have a lot of speech and now it's kind of a mixture. And for Erica on that administrator and centers, from my experience it doesn't get better [laughs].

Erica: Luckily where I'm at now is in a really small town and they're amazing. I've just had to get them on my side. I don't think they used to anyone being as driven as I can be. When I showed up with my own laminator and my own printer and told them that I had a mini teacher lounge in my house [laughs and other participants laugh] I think I won them over. An about the IEPs too I have 7 or I will have 7 after we do this next meeting and I know ya'll they can be so bad but coming from the school system umm, it is so much better in NC Pre-K. I know it's harder to get the parents on board and sometimes it's hard to get the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ in place and sometimes the parents don't understand and the administrators don't understand but the people of work with, we just have to let them know that some of us don't have special education backgrounds like we are just generalist teachers. I know I have to go back to school to get my preschool add-on but sometimes I have questions and sometimes I don't trust google to answer those questions [laughs].

Me: Thank you so much for sharing that information. Everybody. Would anyone else like to share a challenge they've experienced this year? [5-sec pause] Okay I'm going to move on. Based on some of the challenges that you talked about or others that may just be in your mind how have your mentor and/or evaluator helped you during those challenging times?

Ann: My mentor has been wonderful. She has come into my classroom, she has been available by text, or email. She always responds when I ask her a question. And she's just been incredibly patient with me because I've had a real hard time with all this and she's helped me come in and rearrange my classroom and she's really gone above and beyond. The evaluator has done a very nice job, it took me a while to or for us to sometimes understand each other but we've made a lot of good progress there but my mentor has just been wonderful.

Erica: Unfortunately, when I came I didn't get a mentor because they had me as an SP II instead of an SP I, even though 5th grade, which is where I came from, and it's a lot different than Pre-K. But I will say that my very 1st mentor that I had during my 2nd year of NC Pre-K, she's not my mentor anymore, but we developed a friendship. She still answers my questions as long as I email her or call her and say, "Hey, I have a question…this is going on in my classroom, what can I do?" She has been amazing. My evaluator this year is actually brand new and she's had questions, I've had questions but we've worked it out together. Also, she's only been out once to observe me but she's been great. If she says something I don't get, I'll ask, "Why?" because maybe an evaluator hasn't told me that yet or in the past, again this is my 7th year. But she always comes to me with concrete information and answers all of my questions, she always gets back to me within 24-48 hours. She's been great.

24 minutes

Jessica: I do not currently have a mentor because I'm an SP II but when I did have a mentor she was wonderful. Now my evaluator happens to be my director, it just seems like [pause]…she [Jessica seems to be slowing down to choose her words carefully] does not have the training for this and it has been a struggle.

Me: Why would you say that or think that?

Jessica: Cause she seems to not have the training and not know what's going on. I had an issue last year where a lot of things were not filled out at the end at the somebody at the state had to end up helping me fill out my PDP and it seems like I'm going through the exact same thing this year.

Me: Okay. Thank you for elaborating on that. Would anyone else like to share how their mentor or evaluator has been able to help during challenging times in the classroom?

Lucy: I'm an SP II teacher so I don't have a mentor but um, my evaluator, she advocates for teachers in our program. Like for the last 3 years I haven't had a planning time at all and it's one of those things that we're short-handed, um, I don't get any planning time but I know that's she's been advocating for that um, as long as I've been enrolled in the EESLPD program.

Me: Okay. Has anything changed or have you noticed anything changing with your planning time?

Luce: [hesitates] Yes, kind of? We're permanently short-handed so but I know there are people who are trying. We have a new director and she is very understanding so I know we are headed toward resolving that issue. The previous director, she wasn't as supportive of the planning time, so, I feel like it's getting better.

Me: Okay, Will you describe some of the ways that it's getting better?

Lucy, Well? [giggles] I haven't had a planning time at all so I mean technically I haven't seen change but I know that, um, they are always trying to hire somebody and this year they're trying to hire people to cover wrap-around service so that some of the teachers don't have to stay late and some of the new waits to recruit new employees, that's new. And there are more floaters, and we just can't keep subs enough, long enough to cover everyone, but um, I see the effort. I do.

Me: Thank you for sharing. Would anyone else like to share about how their mentor or evaluator has helped them during some challenging times in the classroom? [5-second pause] Okay, I'm going to move on to the next question. What particular areas of your teaching do you feel you need help?

Lucy: This is easy. **Diversity, technology, 21st century skills**.

Me: Okay, would you mind going into a little bit more detail about those?

Lucy: It's just general lack of understanding. It took me a while to understand what 21st century skills are. And, diversity, rather than having the materials, um diversity of materials in the classroom, it can be really hard to incorporate into everyday activities, Um, technology is one thing, I mean we have an iPAD and we use computers but I would like to have more meaningful experiences with children, not just having the materials but I want to do something with it. And, that has been my goal for the last three years, technology, 21st century skills, and diversity.

Erica: Where I came from they threw technology at us like crazy but it was not pertinent to my classroom. My technology came with by KWL charts, my bubble maps and venn diagrams, and honestly I just make big, oversized ones with poster boards, taped them together and laminated them and had foldable ones for them to do, they could unfold them in centers and we did it in the groups times also.

Lucy: Charting is technology?

Erica: Yes.

Lucy: Huh?

Erica: I don't know if you've ever heard *of PBS Kids* and if you're allowed to use that, but a lot of the things my kids are interest in, I can usually find kid-friendly games on there.

Lucy: Yeah, I mean we have a children's iPAD but I mean, it's just there. I want to do something more meaningful with them. Like I will do a lot of ask google when we're studying something and then I want them to learn to use the technology to find out things, not just open up the game and play a game and that's it. But, um, I don't know, it's just something I've never been satisfied with.

Me: Okay. How about someone else share about what you feel you may need help with in your teaching.

Erica: [giggles] I laugh because I've had technology and global awareness on my PDP for the last 2 years since I left my title 1 school where every kid had a laptop and I had Active Board and technology was expected all day. My challenge has been about getting out of using it all the time, asking everything to google as part of the school system. In Pre-k, I've had to ween myself away from the active board and using it so much because we're only allowed to use it for 15 minutes a day, um, but part of my problem is that like I can look up stuff bu then my kids may not like it or not understand it, and then I go to the carpet and say, "hey, look at this." I recently did this stacking cup thing from *Pinterest,* and my kids were into it and we talked about space, my place in space, I introduced them to the community and we took a field trip in a really, really small town and tried to get them to do the stacking cups, with the largest stacking cup going on the bottom and this is a whole universe and then we go to the next cup and talk about our county and our house and the kids didn't really understand that so we're still working on

that. But I will say that part of my problem is having the right materials. I have my administration on my side so I could have pretty much whatever I want but there's so much out there and trying to decide and find the best thing to use for fine motor skills and things that are different and being able to circulate those instead of just buying everything that is on the market these days.

Me: Okay, thank you so much for sharing.

Ann: I'm kind of on the opposite end. Um, we have no budget so anything I find that I feel like we really need I have to pay for it myself   And it's getting expensive.

Me: Can you give me some examples of things you have bought yourself?

Ann: Well, for instance we were having our Ecers folks come into do their checks and I had to go out and spend over $200.00 of my own money on stuff to make us Eckers compliant because we have no budget in our school. I save stuff for my taxes but it only goes so far, an um, ya know it's kind of expected for teachers to spend a lot of their own free time, their weekends, their evening working on stuff we don't get paid for and we're also expected in a lot of the schools, not all of them, but in a lot of them we're expected to pay for stuff ourselves.

Erica: I have been there friend, that is actually where I came from [center] and it was told to me, "Well, if you want to do well with the EESLPD and you want to do well with Eckers then you'll just do this, right?"

Ann: Right. They just expect it.

Lucy: Yeah. I agree with you too.

Ann: Yeah Last year I spent over $1,000.00 of my own money to make us Eckers compliant and to supply the stuff the school is not supplying but expects me to do like they expect us to do art and they expect us to use paint, they expect us to have paint and art supplies out everyday, we're supposed to have sand and water table out everyday, but they don't pay for the sand and they don't pay for the paint.

Jessica: Girl, I feel your pain. [everyone laughs] Construction paper, markers, if the kids leave the marker lids off then we ain't got no markers, dry erase markers, laminating sheets are like gold.

Ann: uh huh, exactly. And the kids have to learn that if they leave the lids off at school they don't get to have markers.

Jessica: And for these centers to get paid so much money for these NC Pre-K classrooms, it just does not make any sense.

Erica: And that's exactly how it was where I came from and I guess that's why I count myself so lucky now. I was actually inter-city and it's all the state of NC Pre-K all in the same county but I'm on the other side of the spectrum, and there it was, and I did it of

course because I wanted my children to be successful, and I was and am truly motivated but it was completely different (than now). I had to have a sit-down talk with the management, it was real bad. And it is like they do get so much money per child..

Jessica: Uh huh, true.

Erica: I actually went back to school in administration so I could help out the office over the summer but we had to have a heart to heart and I told them, "I'm doing my part but where is your part?"

Jessica: Right.

Erica: Because they get the check.

Jessica: Mmm hmmm.

Me: Ann, I just wanted to ask about how long you have been at your center?

Ann: This is the middle of my 4th year.

Me: Okay. Have checked into donations from stores such as Wal-mart or Target?

Erica: We get a lot of stuff from local *Christian ministries* and they'll actually give us discounts

Ann: I have to go out and find the discounts, my center will not go out and find them for us. If I want to buy something I have to go see if I can get a discount.

Me: So your school does know that you are paying out of pocket and that others teachers are paying out of pocket.

Ann: Yes they know.

Jessica: Yes, they know because that's the only way you're going to have it. And I tried *Go Fund Me, no not Go Fund Me, the fund website for like grants or whatever but they don't do NC Pre-K because you're not in a public school.*

Erica: I do know, and I just found this out this year. We got a new teacher and she was from another county school and she was like, "you know there's this *Pet Smart* thing…" and she didn't actually get an animal but she got like *$250.00 on a gift card to Pet Smart* and she was able to get a Guinea Pig and take it to the vet, she got the cage, water bottle, everything for her classroom and she told them she was NC Pre-K and she said we are paid but we have a budget and they gave it to her.

Ann: Yeah, I'm familiar with that but who has the time to take care of a Guinea pig on the weekends when your busy doing planning (everyone laughs). I mean I don't have time to take it to the vet, time to take off of work to take this animal to the vet.

Me: Is there anyone else who would like to share challenges?

CC: The hardest thing for me is to find out the interests of the children. Ya know I need to get my lesson plans done so I get them done and I can ask them what they're interested in but it's been like trying to go with that and turning it into a unit and get them involved in what they want to learn is a hard thing. I need to get those lesson pans done so I have something to stick by but then I feel like I have to stick by them and they may be interested in, they're always interested in what you do but it's like going with their interests, that's a hard thing to do, for me.

Me: Thank you. Anyone else?

Erica: I think my hardest thing is going outside of my classroom, meeting that standard. Honestly, I would like a way for teachers to share the way we are now, to communicate and those of us who have some stuff to share, just talking back and forth. Like if someone doesn't know about technology, or whatever, because I can't leave, I have children, my husband works 2 full time jobs and I can't leave my house a lot or leave my job and I don't get paid to go to an event or attend all of these meetings, um, ya know things like that. I do get to go to training sometimes but the kids have to have a substitute and you don't have a lot of time on the weekend to promote your classroom and to go learn about all these new things in education that changes frequently. I just think we could use like a state-wide PLC kind of thing where you can just log onto your computer and talk and do what you need to do on there instead of having to pack up and go to UNC Charlotte or whatever or go to another county or whatever.

Me: Thank you for sharing. Okay, I'm going to move onto the next question, describe ways in which your mentor or evaluator may or may not be responsive when you request help?

Erica: My evaluator is awesome and as I said I had the previous one that helped too. We usually email and text and she always says if I need extra time to talk to call her whenever. It's been great.

5-sec pause

Me: Would anyone else like to describe ways in which your mentor or evaluator may or may not be responsive when you request help?

Ann: My evaluator is very knowledgeable, very, very knowledgeable but I kind of feel like she is a my way or the high way mentality, all black and white. And I think that part of being a good teacher is being creative and so sometimes I feel like if I don't do something exactly the way she would do it I'm going to get points deducted basically or I'm going to get penalized.

Me: Okay, thank you for sharing.

CC: My evaluator, I'm on my second one, I had a change but they've always been very helpful and responsive and helped me with anything I needed.

Lucy: I've had two different evaluators. They both have been bright but I still see the differences between them. I know they are evaluating on the same rubric but I feel like it depends on the evaluator, the focus is just a little bit different and I have to do things a little bit differently. It's not that I have to please them but I am being evaluated and so I try to do well and if I try to do well then I have to know what they like and what they don't, that's how I feel. It might not be the case but that's how I feel about evaluators.

Me: Thank you. Would anyone else like to share? [5-sec pause] Okay, I'm going to go on with the next question. Tell me about your comfort level asking your mentor or evaluator for help.

CC: I've always felt comfortable. On a scale of 1-10, a 10.

44:06 minutes

Erica: [laughs] I do not mind asking questions. I like knowing my job and knowing my role and I will keep reaching out until someone gives me an answer.

Ann: My mentor has been been easy to talk to and has been very responsive. I have had some difficulty talking with my and getting responses from my B-K licensure consultant though. That's been a real difficulty.

Me: Okay

Lucy: I feel very comfortable asking for help.

Me: Ann, you mentioned that you are having difficulty getting responses from the B-K licensure specialist?

Ann: Yeah

Me: Can you tell me what steps you've taken to try to get in touch with them?

Ann: Um, well I prefer to email just so that I have a paper trail. I cc my mentor and director as well an it often takes, for something that I know would probably only take 5 minutes to look up on a computer, she takes over a week to get back to me. Um, often her responses are kind of curt…you should know this already. Um, don't waste my time kind of thing, or, this is your responsibility to know this. An I'm like, well I'm asking you because you hold the key to all of this information and so, I'm trying not to bother you with too many questions but I need to know this answer. And I feel like when I call and we're on the phone it's been very unpleasant so I try and only use email (B-K licensure consultant).

Me: Thank you for explaining that in more detail. Okay, let's move onto the next one. Tell me about any reasons you may have for not reaching out to your mentor or evaluator Most of you said that you don't have trouble reaching out, but are there any reasons you can think of but are there any reasons you can think of and if there are what would they be?

Ann: My only concerns would be when reaching out to my mentor is that I know she is incredible busy so unless it's something really important I don't want to bother her but she's made it clear that if I sent her an email she'll respond to it as soon as she possible can and 9 ties out of 10 she does but I know she is incredibly busy with all the work she has to do.

Lucy: This is not the case for me but my colleagues have their boss as an evaluator and I've always been against that idea of your boss being your evaluator, the person who oversees the program and um I would not contact her for any help because it should be the EESLPD program and the evaluation within the agency should be separate. Because it's supposed to be separate even though it's really not. The boss is only human and what she sees when she comes to evaluate those teachers, it's not like she's going to forget. So if she becomes my evaluator, I would not feel comfortable contacting her for any reasons because she is my direct boss.

Me: Thank you for sharing. Would anyone else like to share regarding that question? Reasons you may not reach out to your mentor or evaluator for direct support.

Erica: So when I first started in PreK, this is Erica, I didn't want people to think that I didn't know my job. Especially when I came with 8 years of experience in the school system and we had the same standards, it's just that the principal was your evaluator. It took me a long time. Actually I didn't start reaching out until one of my coworkers quit and they got a girl fresh out of teaching, well not teaching but student teaching is what I meant to say, and she didn't know anything so I started branching out a little bit and kinda like asking for a friend type thing until I got comfortable with it [giggles].

Me: Okay, thank you. [5-sec pause] I'm going to move onto the next question. Tell me experiences that you've had with coaching and mentoring.

??Can you elaborate a little more on the question?

Me: So the question is, tell the experiences you've had with coaching and mentoring. So coaching meaning how you are receiving the support, the types of communication yu might receive,

??For us or that we've done?

Me: Just in general, you could actually talk about either/or.

Erica: I haven't mentored yet because they had to put a substitute in my room. I did the training and I want to do it. I did do it in the school system but it's hard traveling across the county to other places or signing in to a webinar when I have to get a sub. Two of the three of us at my center are trainined mentors and we could go but we don't and I didn't have a mentor in NC Pre-K since I've been here. I will say throughout our county that I've met a lot of girls and sometimes we get so bogged down with our center but we have a county-wide PLC and we also have a center-wide PLC that the teachers started and

going county-wide helps us see that we are part of a whole and it would be even better if we had a <u>state-wide</u> PLC and we may but if we do I don't know about it. Um, mostly I rely on coworkers. I don't have that mentor piece because I'm a SP II and if there's something I don't understand or I want to go a level up and don't understand how, and maybe my coworkers at work were thinking too small, so that's where those evaluators come in for me or past evaluators that can always help. I wish the process was a little, I know how they could change the process and make it better, but I wish it was a little different for teachers. I just feel bad asking my administrator to   a sub n my place s I can go to another center that is competition for us [laughs] to help out that teacher. Not that I don't love helping it's just that's extra money in her eyes because I'm getting paid to go help that teacher and then she puts a sub in my class and then I'm not with my kids, so ya know.

Me: Okay. Thank you for sharing.

53:04

Me: Okay, would someone else like to share?

CC; I haven't ever been a coach or mentor, my director wanted me to mentor another teacher when I retire, so she hired a teacher that I could mentor and get ready to move into my position but we never have anytime, unless I bump into her in the hall or on the playground or something. If they want you to mentor then they should give you the opportunity and time to mentor.

Lucy: One of the most enjoyable experience through the EESLPD gives is the resources the mentors have provided to me. We are all teachers and a lot of times we are stuck in our own classrooms. Through the EESLPD program I asked to visit and observe others classrooms. I asked my mentors and evaluators and they gave me several places I could observe other teachers' classrooms. So that was my most enjoyable experiences with my mentor and evaluator. Best mentor experiences.

Me: A few of you had mentioned that you have some experience mentoring. Can a few of you just mention your experiences with mentoring. [5 sec pause]. Erica, CC you had mentioned having some experience with mentoring, so if you could how would you provide mentoring?

Erica: I did mentor where I was, I went back and took administration. It was actually my administration role at the center I was out where a lot of teachers had to pay out of pocket and then I stepped in a fixed the problem and then I left and now it's worse and back again. My mentoring, Sometimes a teacher needs to just know that they are not alone. I would let the teacher come to me privately and cry and share whatever she wanted to about whatever she needed to and then we would pick up the pieces. we would go back and say make a list of highest needs with your centers, creative curriculum, which one is your favorite and so on. I would look over it for her and put sticky notes to help her have

areas to look at, same with Eckers. I would say let's figure this out together. We may or may not be lucky enough to have administrators that are holding training or are knowledgeable enough to help us know what they're doing or are willing to help. Broke apart chapters and talk about it, we all know 50 people may read something and see it 50 different ways but bouncing ideas off of each other can really help.

Me: How were you prepared to mentor another teacher?

Erica: All of my preparation came from the school system. I worked in a really small town, I was lucky. Only 2 people who could mentor when I started I started right out f college so after I did those first 3 years of ILTs which my initial license I started getting by the principal. When I was getting observed the first few times with the EESLPD, Cheryo Johnson said "You need to be a mentor". I just don't want people to think I know it all. You don't want to overpower someone or ake them only see it your way. I know that just because I see something one way doesn't mean that's the only way. I've dealt with that with evaluators too. Where they think something but I know my kids the best because they're in my classroom and I know what will work and what won't.

Me: I want to se hear from you too CC. Since you had been set up to coach or mentor another staff member but you haven't been provided the time to do so. If you were given the time or opportunity how would you coach or mentor?

CC: It would be helpful if I had the opport. To observe in her classroom or meeting with her once a week to answer her questions. We do plan a yearly calendar and I do tell her things we have done and answer questions to help her do the activity, like a whole school activity. I think it would be nice if we had an opportunity to meet to regularly and observe her in the classroom so that I can better support her.

Me: Would you mind providing a few examples of how you've been prepared to mentor?

CC: No, I don't think I've been prepared to mentor except way back when I was in the public school. I've just always been willing to answer questions or provide information if I feel like it will help them out.

Ann: Even though I've only been a lead leader for a brief time, we've had so much turnover at my center that I've been expected to be a mentor to other teachers when I'm new myself. It's been an experience to mentor new people when I'm still new myself, in the same boat

Me: so when asked the question about preparation to mentor, what would you say?

Ann: I just know what I would've like to have had if I had a choice, what kind of support I would have like to have, not that I'm going to force my 4 years of experiences [giggles] down their throat. I just think about the kind of support I would have like to have. I will offer support if they want it. What would make my job easier if I would've had someone to do this for me or show me how.

Erica: I think that's the key just letting them know they are not alone and they have someone they can talk to you. That expression, "throw them to the sharks" keeps ringing in my head [giggles].

Ann: Absolutely.

Me: New teacher put in a position to mentor other teachers, how do you provide?

Ann: Sounding board, supplies, time energy, they tell me what they need and I try to help them the best way I can. If I have something that will save them time I definitely let them borrow it. If there's something I don't know how to help with I would ask the director but so far I've been able to handle it.

Me: How would you describe the coaching style of your mentor?

Ann: My mentor is very upbeat, friendly, and positive. I've burst into tears in front of her before and she's made me feel very supported and she's been very encouraging which has been wonderful. Makes me feel like she is in my corner.

Jessica: When I did have a mentor, she was absolutely wonderful. If she did think I needed help she did it in a friendly, professional manner. I wish I still had her she made me feel like I was doing everything right and was always praising me. I think that mentors are such a great thing to have for teachers.

CC: I didn't have a mentor with the EESLPD but my evaluator was always good to point out the things that I was doing well and if she did need to off a suggestion I like that she would share an example and that helped.

Me: Would anyone else like to share about the coaching style of their mentor? Next, what are ways in which your mentor or evaluator has been able to support you?

1:06.49

Erica: My evaluators, in the past when I have a question, if it's who to call, because I'm up for licensure renewal this year…they always tell me you to call so that I'm not calling the wrong people. They always let me *know about new resources* or just having a new person to talk to.

Ann: My mentor has been very helpful with helping me interact with the BK licensure specialist. Has helped me find ways to best interact with specialist so that we can get things accomplished

Lucy: They have helped me find the *right people for specific help*. She gave me specific opportunities for technology training webinar are really hard to find. My mentor provided be with me a webinar tech training opport. **In technology**. They have always sent me to right person when I needed help. I needed to join a committee, so she helped me connect with the person who runs the Smart Start and all the resources she provided me were great.

Final Question:

What kinds of supports should be offered by your mentor/evaluator?

Erica: Definitely licensure support. Giving you specific ideas or supports like Lucy just said. I feel like we should know more about the mentor process because I have a coworker that would be great at it. We have had teachers that have had to leave, because we have turnover too and I know the EESLPD can't mentor every teacher who needs it but we have a lot of people at our center who could use mentoring that may not be in the EESLPD yet. Something like tech support would be helpful too. Where you can just email a question and get a response back immediately. That would be nice too.

CC: It would be nice if they can get it clear if they can let your administrator know the expectations of the EESLPD, or the NC PreK for your classroom. I think a lot of the admin. still think it's just daycare and they don't realize that we are expected to do certain things and we need the time, and that support, materials, and resourced for that.

Jessica: Not only for us but they are offering the classroom so they are expected to have those materials in the classroom.

Ann; I feel like I got thrown in without a handbook or anything, like I was just exp[ected to know what to do. No guidebook, no handbook, no guidleines, or knowing what thxpecations were. Not specifically from my mentor or evaluator but just from everyone. I guess I was just expected to know because I had a degree or something and being lateral entry. I didn't know deadlines for paperwork for RALC or whatever, I had no idea so I would be late and then I would get yelled at for it but I didn't know where to look or find out and there's no email notifying me that I have this or that coming up.. I think if our mentor had a slightly less heavy caseload maybe they could spend more one on one time with us and help us know the expectations for deadlines, etc so that we don't feel like we're just treading water and hoping there are no sharks.

Lucy: I have something to add. So the very first year I got picked up in Sept. it was the beginning of the year and it was very, very, hectic and the EESLPD asks a lot. It A lot. I mean they are very helpful, but they ask a lot. I mean they want so many artifacts and everything and once the school year starts it's very hard to meet the demands. I think if EESLPD could give any support you should pick up all the teachers in the beginning of August and notify all of the teachers that they will be served because once the school year starts and they are notified that they have been picked up it is almost impossible to manage all of thing we have to do for EESLPD on top of all of the things that we have to do for our regular jobs.

Me: If you have anything more to add we still have time left on this call. [5-sec pause]. Reminder about e-card drawing and final Thank You for participating.

Example 1 of Individual Interview

*Pseudonym name "Dina" was chosen to protect the identity of the person interviewed.

Interviewer: What successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

Dina: Successes…ooohhh, student came in beginning of year with no diagnosis and no help, no services received, not at home visit at beginning of year, during half day, my wisdom told me that he was on the autism spectrum, mom was here living with her parents, army, stationed in Kuwait at beginning of the year. Mom always worried about behavior. We got the school system here too come in with mom's okay to observe and with all my written notes and with talking with him, he is now receiving services. In Jan. moved to DD room. Where I work not willing to hire a one on one person to work with him. I have a master's in and am also a national board cert. teacher. I've worked in classrooms with DDs, 14 typically developing, 4 with disabilities. Mom and dad overjoyed to get services that he really needed DD diagnosis, he probably was Au, sister was Au. I know my evaluator was very helpful, new in county didn't know where to go to get help. Left just for e to figure it out for myself. 8-2:30 run, laps around classroom. Different strategies or ideas, different chair and bring to carpet. Sitting in carpet time for 10 min at most, or rest time 45 min. or at a table playing quiet games. Screaming at top of lungs, whenever I miss him I think of that.

Dina: In around about way the director was like, you found out a way to get rid of him. She wanted him to go because he was hard to handle. My evaluator was happy was that I found the right place for him but that was it.

Interviewer: What challenges have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?

Dina: I guess my other challenge is have to do with TA, third TA this year. Same thing happened last year. Floaters in room for month or two. Started the year with me, by Nov. gone since she was not in the school anymore and not taking classes couldnt' work in NC Pre-K. Capstone students came to work with me. I'm in a building by myself. Hard to wrangle her in sometimes. New one who does have degree, trying Pre-K but more of an infant teacher. From NY and that's what she was doing and wanted to try Pre-k when moved here. Also have a Capstone student come in the classroom. Very challenging to have peoples in the room all the time. So much turnaround, discipline they don't really listen to me. I think I just heard someone ask you to do something so you need to do it too. It's hard because I do it all. I had a PLC meeting today. I don't have anybody to talk to about stuff. I mean people in my situation. My assistant, she didn't have the schooling she needed to be an NC Pre-K teacher. She lied but I found out she dropped out, she had gone back to school and then quit. I feel underpaid, for TAs no incentive for them to stay. From the childcare centers, they had the same things as other stuff I was talking about .

No Money, no healthcare, could make as much at McDonalds, really sad. She didn't want to be a teacher teacher, wanted to be a Teacher helper, not a lead TA, she's turing turning 30 next month. She nannied a little too but I think turnover, on daycare side they have a hard time trying to find quality people and teachers in general right now. I'm a retired school teacher, but I got tired of sitting at home after retirement. A lot of people think PreK should be in public schools but I come from there. Babysitting in daycare environment, parents think that's what we are. State mandates us to get them from point A to B. In public school, they would come to family night, because in public school they took it more seriously. Daycare …my evaluator in public school didn't know what I was doing had no clue. My evaluator now does and it would be nice if public schools knew too.

Interviewer: How have your mentor and evaluator helped you during the challenging times in the classroom?

Dina: SPII, have evaluator only, she's always very helpful, I can email or text her at any time with questions or ask for help especially at beginning of year to know who to talk to about the boy I was telling you about. She's a good in-between person from smart start and my director. Would always touch base. Checked on me during hurricane to see how I am and my students were. She always responds to my messages. Always asking me to work on things with her. She has always noted and first week new person was there, with everything going on I didn't have time to really meet much at the beginning. She came to PLC meeting to today to be my cheerleader. Every now and then she'd look at me and smile and say I want them to know about what you do, tell them about…blank. We're about the same age and we know a lot of same stuff so it's fun to talk with her.

Interviewer: What particular areas of your teaching do you feel you need help?

Dina: If someone would come write my lesson plans for me that would be great {laughs} just kidding. Just trying to get Foundations and Gold back in my head, working through modules. Make sure I'm planning what I need to plan and assessing my children to get it in TS Gold. I used to help people in Kindergarten learn that system. I forget that I'm supposed to be getting information in Gold with the other stuff I'm doing.

Interviewer: Tell me about your comfort level regarding asking your mentor/evaluator for help.

Dina: I've never requested anything but she send me links and other thing to help me with creative curriculum that will help with project based approach. She's always been there for me brought me stuff looked stuff up for me, so I can't think of anything.

Interviewer: Tell me about reasons you may not reach out to you mentor/evaluator for help and support.

Dina: I have no problem asking her for help. I don't have an issue asking for help, "Hey, I need help" {laughs}. I wouldn't want her to think that I didn't know what I was talking about. I would always like for her to…pause, sorry I'm looking for the right words. I always try to do the right things so I don't want to come across like I don't know what I'm doing ya know. I don't know. Sometimes I just want to say tell me how to do it and I'll do it.

Interviewer: Tell me about the experiences you've had with coaching and mentoring.

Dina: In public school we had ummm we had different coaches for literacy or math to help do small groups with teachers. I remember doing that. Also, I had um, I was actually a coach for new teachers. I would be paired with someone for the year or for 2 years, talk once month/week/day, whatever needed talking about, worked with families and other things, whatever we needed. Lead Prek teacher for 6 schools, ran PLC meetings, also been the working with college students during student teaching in my classroom, cooperating teachers, I sit and talk with them and help them with lesson planning. I always enjoyed being on that end too. I've had other people come in and coach friends who worked in DPI and she would come in and help with Teaching Strategies For Kindergarten, she would come in use my classroom and coach. I enjoyed having a coach. I wasn't told that was going to have EESLPD, once started NC Prek they told me. A little disheartening because I was hoping to just be a teacher for a little while [laughs} but no ones perfect, always be working on ways to make children more successful and I've enjoyed that experience.

Interviewer: How would you describe the coaching style of your mentor?

Dina: They've been hands on, very cooperative, if they didn't know the answer they'd go find the answer for you.

Interviewer: What are ways in which your mentor/evaluator has been able to support you?

Dina: Support by being there to listen, support helping you find materials, activities, research articles, sending diff. links that you might be working on and talking about, e there by email text just a phone call away. Being at meetings when you're presenting and telling you great job.

Interviewer: What kinds of support should be offered by your mentor and evaluator?

Dina: all over what we've talked about but being able to come the classroom and demonstrating something you haven talking about, or something you don't know what that should look like in the classroom. I'm hands on a visual learner I'd rather see you do it than read about it. Demonstration classrooms, I'd rather go see it done. I think they

should be able to come in and teach you what you need to learn about. Aside from just technology, observing you and talking afterwards be more hands on and come in. If I were an evaluator I'd like that part more than evaluating. Being able to come in and show how to do something.

Example 2 of Individual Interview

*Pseudonym name "Jessica" was chosen to protect the identity of the person interviewed.

Jessica: I would say just getting the kids into their routines especially with having a lot of missed school because of the weather, the hurricanes. Just finally getting them back on the schedule and getting them back into the swing of things again.

Jessica: I too have a new assistant this year and then we have a couple of kids in the classroom that have IEPs this year.

Jessica: Yes, for me it is. This is my first time having a child with a developmental delay. Usually we have a lot of speech and now it's kind of a mixture. And for Erica on that administrator and centers, from my experience it doesn't get better [laughs].

Jessica: I do not currently have a mentor because I'm an SP II but when I did have a mentor she was wonderful. Now my evaluator happens to be my director, it just seems like [pause]…she [Jessica seems to be slowing down to choose her words carefully] does not have the training for this and it has been a struggle.

Jessica: Cause she seems to not have the training and not know what's going on. I had an issue last year where a lot of things were <u>not filled out at the end at the somebody at the state</u> had to end up helping me fill out my PDP and it seems like I'm going through the exact same thing this year.

Jessica: Girl, I feel your pain. [everyone laughs] Construction paper, markers, if the kids leave the marker lids off then we ain't got no markers, dry erase markers, laminating sheets are like gold.

Jessica: And for these centers to get paid so much money for these NC Pre-K classrooms, it just does not make any sense.

Jessica: Yes, they know because that's the only way you're going to have it. And I tried *Go Fund Me, no not Go Fund Me, the fund website for like grants or whatever but they don't do NC Pre-K because you're not in a public school.*

Jessica: When I did have a mentor, she was absolutely wonderful. If she did think I needed help she did it in a friendly, professional manner. I wish I still had her she made me feel like I was doing everything right and was always praising me. I think that mentors are such a great thing to have for teachers.

Jessica: Not only for us but they are offering the classroom so they are expected to have those materials in the classroom.

Survey Responses to open-ended questions:

Q1. What other supports/resources could you use from the EESLPD office to be more successful in meeting your professional goals to impact the learning of young children and their families?

None that I can think of at the moment

Just keeping me updated on what is expected on trainings

None

I feel confident in my abilities at this time

Liaison between partnership and EESLPD

Provide more information on Professional Development that would count towards license renewal requirements, or a list of acceptable websites that provide professional development for CEUs.

The support that I need is for EESLPD to inform the Administration from my site about the licensure process and accomplishments I now hold.

My evaluator was great! She met my needs perfectly!

I would like to recieve resources, information on trainings so that i cant be better prepared for requirments instead of hearing about them second hand or to late because I do not have a mentor.

clear examples with pictures about how other teachers do things under each of the standards

n/a

More consideration of the time consumed by required tasks.

Behavior management training

None

I'm open to any new ideas/suggestions that can helpn me become a great teacher.

Just being mindful of the things I need to know when it comes to learning the language of the standards.

I feel I can discuss with my evaluator to get this information.

Alignments of requirements and encouraged practice among EESLPD program, NC child regulations including sanitation requirements and Head Start requirements will be nice so that we can expand our options of activities in order to meet the EESLPD requirements.

The eeslpd is always helpful!

trainings

N/A

Affordable workshops that offer CEU credits and trainings.

I don't know. Ever Elevator is different keep them the same.

DNA

More opportunities for training to better illustrate the incorporation of 21 century practices.

A "Clearer picture" of what is expected/ what evaluators are really looking for. It can be very subjective to what the evaluator wants to see.

Scheduling time to observe other preschool classes and scheduling time to observe kindergarten class.

Articles to provide families.

My evaluator and mentor have been a great support in providing resources for me thus far.

Information on challenging behaviors and what can be done.

n/a

Be more available. I understand that this is our job and we are adults, but if we don't get the hang of it right away, don't look down upon us. Lift us up as a fellow childcare professional and teach us instead of just throwing it all in our lap and walking away.

Evaluation manual,

I can't think of any.

emails, detailed instructions by mail, email, text

A resource that has examples of the standards that is needing to be met.

Easier access to people by telephone when people have questions, email is great, but sometimes just talking to people is better.

Nothing at this time

None at this time.

not sure

NA

Ideas on lesson for specific goals and skills

Nothing that I can think of at this time.

Everything was very helpful.

I don't know. Kyle Worley has been the only good experience I've had.

Meetings with other teachers within the area in order to support each other through the EESLPD process.

Have examples of things to upload on HOMEBASE.

Online professional development on the areas previously listed on needed development

NA will notify, if needed

I am not sure

None. I see everything as beneficial already

not sure.

I am happy with the current support of the EESLPD office.

Not sure

Access to Foundations training for modules 9+

n/a

None

I loved having the resources I had this year. Trainings are always helpful

Workshops

Planning studies

Trainings on literacy, social and emotional development, etc.

None at this time

Idk

I would love to have the opportunity to see the Jordan Center, I think thats the name, to see how it is supposed to flow. I would love more training opportunities

...

I think we should keep the same evaluator though out the whole three year process.

I'm not sure at this time.

None

Having more resources as far as communicating in different languages.

More online training

Idk

I'm not sure

I really enjoy having a mentor to bounce ideas or thoughts of when it comes to extending my personal growth and learning so I would like to keep picking her brain at times because we got along so well.

N/A

More hands on training in the area of inclusion

Continue with the same mentor and evaluator for the my last year.

n/a

n/a

I think that they are giving great support and resources at this time.

The modules were very resourceful.

Continued support from mentor and evaluator

N/A

N/A

giving us mandatory training

Information on assessments, colleague collaboration, diversity, and 21st century skills.

Suggesting model classrooms in the area that I could visit to help improve my own classroom.

I'm unsure

Not sute

None at this time

Onsite mentoring training sessions.

The foudations teachers goals line up

nothing

anaything else

It would be useful to have an area on HomeBase where we can access some resources and training outside of those offered through HomeBase.

She was good, I'm good. Thanks!

I'm not sure right now but I feel like I could contact my mentor or evaluator at any point if I need help!

not sure

I need more hands on examples when it comes to what my mentor and evaluators are looking for.

Not sure at this time.

None at this time.

It would be nice to have the names of other teachers in my area who I could reach out to as an additional support.

Examples of artifacts that can be used.

None at the moment

behavior management

No other support needed

off site Professional development

N/A

Articles

none at this time

My experience has been very positive. Continue to be Customer Friendly, the Professionals they are.

Don't know of any at this time

Everything I can

Parent resources in english and spanish

N/A

I'm not sure.

Support for families when school in out for summer

None

Opportunities to go the conferences

None

I am not sure

I think that it would be important to include the pay raise for teachers to include NC Pre-K teachers. I have student loans and make 10,000 dollars less than a Elementary Education teacher yet I still have loans. We cannot spend time on lessons and families interactions if we need to work one or two other jobs than teaching. It is very upsetting that everyone talks about how Early Education is so important but we do not get paid as a reflection that anyone thinks or believes it is important.

At this time I can not think of any.

This is a good program that definitely supports teachers in their learning and growth. However, it is a difficult process and the most frustrated part is that BK Teachers are paid so little even in comparision to other teachers. Therefore, it is very important for EESLPD to push for higher BK Teacher pay.

More resources, articles to support the specific area a teacher is trying to improve.

Providing a list of all the different conferences that an early educator can attend for teachers to find, or a way for them to find out how to find these trainings.

N/A

na

MORE MEETING AND WORKSHOPS ON HOW TO USE HOME-BASE

You guys offer many resources for us already. I don't feel the need for any additional resources

continue everything that is in place now for next years support.

nothing that I can think of at this time

Resources that will help with employment advise within the professional realm of an educator.

NA

A mentor and help with homebase

I have none at the moment

none at this time

I think they do fine.

I need opportunities to participate in leadership activities.

N/A

Better advocacy for higher pay in private centers and an increase in classroom funding.

Training

Nothing

What ever resources out there would be appreicated

Assist private centers with resources to help teachers with benefits, sick leave, and personal days, as well as teacher compensation

None

I am not sure.

It Training

They are doing a great job and they have supported me well in this process.

Support on being a strong SP11 Teacher

The office could provide resources on behavior management.

nothing at this time

N/A

Personally, I believe the program is fine the way it is. I feel like the EESLPD office is very supportive of Teachers.

My mentor was able to join one of our PLC meetings this past year. Hearing from her as she participating in our discussions was very helpful and supportive. I would like to see her attend one this coming year also.

I'm not sure

N/a

N/A

They have been helpful to me so far. I can't think of anything at the moment.

none at this time

I feel the EESLDP does an effective job supporting teachers. I honestly am not familiar with the EESLPD office and resources they have available.

my mentor

Maybe offer more online evening PD classes for CEU's.

Reminders of things that may be due.

Additional trainings

More Professional Development workshops and Trainings.

None

N/A

What would be beneficial to me would be a condensed guide as to what exactly is needed in the professional portfolio. Also more guidance as far as the portfolio goes. This is especially needed for a first year teacher.

Can not think of anything at this time.

none at this time

None

resources about planning while differentiating instruction

None

More PLC on lesson planing and 21 Century ideas

None at this time

My mentor and evaluator were there every step of the way with any questions that I had.

None that I can think of at the moment.

Some professional development resources, our local area does not provide much professional development that will count towards us renewing our licenses. If it is available be are not aware how to find out about it.

Not sure at this moment

Can't think of anything as of now.

If any thing I would say more resources on engaging families and parental involvement.

Training specific to step-by-step instuction to complete online system at a local level actually on a computer. It is easy to miss steps. Offer more proffesial webinars for professional development for 21st century skills and global understanding for preK classrooms.

I am pleased with the help I received this school year and the resources I received have been excellent.

More resources pertaining for professional development.

EESLPD professional staff

I would like to continue to have support from an evaluator for questions and guidance because although Alicia was not my mentor she was a tremendous help.

More support in managing challenging behaviors.

Online trainings (webinars) that can be attended

Artifact collection

N/A

I don't think I need any further support.

None I can think of at this point in time.

The internet,

Continue to add videos and references

behavior tips

Q2. **Q2. In what ways have you grown as a teacher since you began in the BTSP?**

More professional and more intentional teaching

I have grown by learning the new curriculum at my place of work

More confident with parents and being able to communicate effectively with them.

I have become more purposeful when it comes to my lesson planning and activity creating

All around

I completed the BTSP program in the school system. I am now working with preschool aged children, so when I started in the preschool group it would have been helpful to have a mentor my first year with this age group, but now that I have more experience.

I have grown in my teaching skills. I can see a tremendous growth from my students from the beginning to now.

Since the beginning? I've certianly become a more educated, confident teacher! I know a lot more! I've colloborated a lot more!

I have grown to understand that their is a process/ journey that you must take to allow you the opportunity to have abundance of knowlegde poured into you to allow you to build on what you already know or have. The knowledge, resources and opportunities that you recieve can make you a great teacher or it can show you that this is not the journey for you. However, if you can accept and embrace this journey you can become that great resource for all you come in contact with and I feel like this experience has given me that.

I have become better in many of the standards.

increased in professionalism

It is nice to have have support from others.

I am more confidant and have gained a deeper understanding of how all kinds of children learn best.

More confident in my classroom

Too many to list. I have totally changed the way I teach.

I feel more confident.

It has made me realize that a lot of the things I was already doing without even realizing it. It has given me a chance tostep out of the box and add more diversity and global awarness in the classroom. It has made a world of different to the learning ot the students.

Letting the children have more control in the classroom.

I can handle bucket loads of work and survive. It wasn't something I could have done when I first became a teacher. At the same time, I can sustain good level of teaching and consistently leaving good results.

In more ways to list! I would not be the teacher I am today without the guidance of Bobby, Lori, and Stephanie!

Learn ways to enhance my practice as a teacher, continue to take professional development trainings to stay abreast of how to meet the needs of the children I serve.

More confident in Classroom Management

I believe that I have become more process oriented as opposed to being product driven.

I now know how to collect evidence.

The PDP process has really helped me stretch and having somebody to confer with on goals and how best to meet them, and then assess how I have done, has been helpful.

More introspective

A better understanding of developmentally appropriate practices; the ability to not fall into those traditional activities/ classroom management (i.e calendar time & Behavior charts)

My room is suited for preschoolers and I am more aware of how to take data on my students and asking open-ended questions.

Confidence and strength

I have grown in all area and have become a better person and a better teacher

Being able to write PDP and provide artifacts and other content needed according to the Rubric.

I am more confident when planning lessons for my students. My lessons are now more student lead.

I am more confident in using Foundations to support student growth and development and promoting family inolement.

I have started a great reflection process and became more aware of how I am teaching and what some of my strengths and weaknesses in the classroom are.

Did not do with eeslpd

More confidence.

I am more confident in my leadership skills, computer skills, and ability to cooperatively work with teammates and ask questions.

I am more confident in my teaching abilities. I also seek out resources to benefit the children.

There is so many things that you have to remember and do, you definitely have to be on your toes

My patience and understanding of how this program works for me.

Critical Criticism has helped me grow and improve my teaching skills.

I have grown in knowledge and experience during this time. I plan to keep learning every day and trying new approaches to learning.

Helping kids learn

More resourceful and more effective

I feel that I have grown in many ways, but especially with emotional learning and supporting students through their emotions. I also feel that I have become more involved in the professional learning community.

I have grown so much as a teacher as far as leadership skills and have grown tremendesly with my lesson plans.

I honestly feel any progress I have made is because of my own research and experience in my class. It's been in spite of dealing with the millions of hoops that the licensing board is making me jump through

I am more confident in planning and implementing activities based on the children.

I have gained confidence with the support of other teachers.

Being able to know what's expected from a teacher that is proficient and working my way up on the scale.

I have learned a lot through Foundations and concious disco

Professionally and demonstrating leadership skills in the classroom in order to meet all of my students learning, while implementing strategies that will enhance development in all domains.

I think I have grown overral every where in my teaching

My classroom is more child driven instead of teacher driven

I am more confident in my teaching , and I am better able to articulate how my teaching practices meet the NC Teaching Standards.I have much more knowledge of the crosswalk between Foundations and the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Kindergarten and how I can better prepare children for their futures in the Public school system.

I feel I have become more confident as a teacher in all areas especially in using Foundations in my lesson planning, implementing the project approach with my study topics and making sure my learning centers are literacy rich.

Become more aware of encouraging critical thinking skills

Collaboration with others and advocating for Early Childhood

I feel more confident in teaching children special needs.

More confidence in my ability to teach.

I have became more confident, flexible and a better advocate for my children.

My leaderships skills have improved. I have confidence in the classroom with what i am doing with the children.

Understanding how to use foundations to plan

I reflect more now than I used to. I asked myself questions on how I can help my students, what was successful in my lesson and what did not work, etc. I use the information I gather from observations to provide more individualized plans. I used the strategies, ideas, and other resources my mentor/evaluator shared with me.

More focused on the importance of the standards in the classroom and how to use them effectively in my teaching

Learning how to correctly run my classroom and helpthe children learn

I am more aware what I want to children to experience in my care and knowledgeable about what they require.

...

i have grwon in lesson planning, professionalism, leadership,

I have grown in how I look at my classroom and the goals I have for myself and my students.

Growth in multiple areas.

I have grown in many ways but my self confidence has grown the most. My elevator and mentor have been so positive and supportive that I could only grow under their care.

I am learning more about child development, assessments, and Teaching Strategies Gold and Foundations

Teaching strategies and dap

I feel more confident about my teaching.

I have grown when it comes to confidence in my patterning with parents skills because I feel that parents have always complimented me on my communication with them as well as being open to anything they'd like to discuss :)

Many

I have grown in my confidence now I now my abilities and I am not scare anymore

I have become confident in myself and the things that i am doing.

Classroom managment

I have learned about school improvement plans. I have found strategies to deal with behaviors through my mentor and evaluator.

I am more confident in leading my classroom and allowing my children to take on a leadership role in the classroom.

Knowledge is power. I have a better understanding of state standards.

I am more aware how to achieve my goals and know what is required to obtain my skills and keep myself abreast of information

I have become more confident in my lesson planning

Knowledge

I have grown tremendously by providing more literacy activities, more intentional teaching, allowing children to be leaders in the classroom, providing children with opportunities to express themselves, and asking more open-ended and critical thinking questions.

I feel much more confident in my planning and assessment.

I have become more confident and have developed a teaching style

Confifence calmer

I have grown in my knowledge of planning effectively, collaborating with colleagues and families and in content knowledge.

I have moved from a Lead Teacher to taking on the position of becoming a mentor. I really love my career!!!

Alot of diffrent ones

I have grown in every aspect

taking courses

"Oh, Let me count the ways..." I feel that I have more confidence in my capabilities as a teacher. I feel that I had good teaching practices overall prior to being served by BTSP; however I didn't always know how to show evidence and artifacts that I was using developmentally appropriate practice or that my students were showing growth. I think that I have learned how to be a FACILITATOR rather than a just a teacher. I have grown to see myself a professional in this community, rather than accept the "daycare teacher" who "babysits kids" persona that is frequently given to NCPreK teachers in non-public schools. I have learned so many wonderful ways that I can serve the learners in my class more effectively. This just names a few!

I understand that I need to be in the public schools teaching. I also need to speak to rude people who don't respect me and my class.

I have developed a great assessment system and way to document children's kesrning

getting more comfortable with curriculum

I try to be more intentional when working on my lesson plans

My teaching skills have increased tremendously as well as my leadership skills.

I am learning more about myself.

I have grown into a much better teacher!

Leadership, confidence, knowledge, different strategies, family involvement

I am a strong teacher, I understand NC FELD and have had a great mentor and a previous evaluator that encouraged me grow and instilled confidence.

Understand cultural diversity and global awareness more

I felt confident due to teaching experience, but did need to build confidence as a classroom teacher of regular eduction students. I have grown in that aspect.

Becoming more reflective and reading last brain research

parent communication

I have become a better communicator as well as incorporating all centers in other centers

I have grown in many areas thanks to the help of the EESLPD.

I am more positive in my professionalism. I have confidence in all my children to be successful. I believe in collaborating with other teachers to support one another.

I have really enjoyed being taught and mentored (trained) how to observe and listen to what children have to say. Social Emotional Development is a vital part of a child's Developmental Growth. It is so important to me, to give young children a positive experience their first year in school.

I feel I have grown in all areas of being a better teacher. Having a great mentor and evaluator has been key.

Cummicate more and I'm open to new ideas.

Learned how to follow lesson plan and if I need to change it, I have learned that it is okay. However, I do indicate the change on the plan.

A better understanding how to use the lesson plans and how to put different items in the different centers.

I know where I can go to get resources that I need for my classroom.

I feel more confident and aware of 21st century techniques.

mean sure that I teach with meaning

I have obtained many new teachin strategies and learning ideas.

I have become more confident in my classroom as a Teacher.

I do my job better

I have become more reflective in my practices.

I have grown to learn more about the importance of social emotional teaching, but would really like to move to Elementary Education where there is more support and additional pay.

I have more confidence in the things i am doing in the classroom. I have tried new ideas and learned new methods I have used in the classroom that have really helped my children to grow and learn.

I am a better teacher after being the the BTSP program. I am more cofident and I am better able to support my students growth in all areas.

More confident

I have grown, by how I educate my students. I have the skills and the knowledge that I need to be able to prepare my students for the future and not for this year. I have learned not to judge and to try to figure out why a child acts the way he/she does. If I am not well, then my students suffer. I have to take care of me first, and then my students will get the best out of what I can teach them. I have learned how to better communicate with my parents and how to better handle behavior.

I have learned to think more outside the box.

SP II

I GROWING A LOT

I am better at lesson plans and using more open ended questions. I am more aware of questions that I create in my head to not use the word what so frequently.

being a more confident teacher,understanding the practices it take to run a successful classroom.

I have been able to better connect what I am teaching my pre-k classroom and how it relates to 21st century learning

I have grown in various way especially with my communication skills.

Communicating with staff and families and working on better ways to teach children

Honestly every area

More confident in my teaching style.

having confidence in what i am teaching the children.

I have become a more well-rounded teacher. I build upon what the children want to learn and do studies.

I have improved in my data taking skills.

N/A

I am a better leader in my school and community. I have gained a better understanding of differentiated learning

More focused and organized

I have learned to adjust lesson plans for Prek

I am more confidence in what I teach and how I teach. I have grown in assessing my children and what's the best materials to use when assessing them.

Leadership

Being more confident in mulyself as a teacher

I have become more confident teacher to model appropriate behaviors for my children.

NC Foundations

Feeling more confident in my teaching abilities and teaching practices.

Taking leadership in my classroom and more organized

I am a stronger teacher and I know I make a difference.

I have learned to be more aware and let my students teach me. I have also grown stong in differentiated instruction and what it supposed to look like.

I really appreciate my PLC group it has helped me to grow in numerous ways

Leadership by mentoring other teachers and leading in my school. Authentic learning activity for the children. Lesson Planning, community involvement, and parent involvement. Implementing 5 standards, foundations, and researching.

I have improved in my assessing of the children and then using that data to develop my lesson plans.

Treating children as individuates eve though they are part of a group.

My lesson plans have become more intentional

Feeling of confidence that I am making a difference while learning new techniques at the same time. I have learned how to listen to the children and to be patient. I have learned how to be engaging and to meet their needs no matter how small it may seemed.

I'm a retired teacher

I feel I do a better job of assessing progress and using information in lesson planning and next steps for individual children an groups. I have created visuals to use with children with special needs and have created a number of activity buckets that have been used successfully in the classroom for these children. I have been implementing cultural examples in our themes which include various environments, houses, clothes, and food.

I have grown as a teacher in every way, but I can always get better.

I am definitely more confident in what I am doing and I'm not afraid to as for help when I need it.

I have grown in my professional development and overall teaching the content area with support.

Learned ts gold & foundations

I build on student-directed lessons and activities.

I am more confident and more intentional

I'm more confident in meeting the needs of the children in my class.

I have grown in many ways as a teacher since I have begun BTSP. I have gotten more confident in my teaching and have learned so much about small groups and global awareness.

More confident in all aspects of teaching an NC Pre- K class.

A little more confident in what I'm supposed to do

I've learned how to reflect on my practices during the week, how to apply areas of need to my lesson plan, and how to differentiate.

Have been more confident in my role as a lead teacher.

Being more effective with meeting the needs of the children

I have grown and my lesson plan ideas researching and assessments

Being more confident

I have gained confidence in my teaching and feel like I finally have a full grasp on each of the different levels of teaching.

I feel more confident in my teaching overall as a whole. I feel especially accomplished in my growth in planning/assessing/reflecting throughout the year.

My classroom has changed each year I have participated. I am always changing things based on my evaluations.

Taken on a leadership role and become more reflective of parts of my teaching practices

NA

I have grown in the area of assessing young children, differentiating lessons, and 21st Century teaching.

To identivy and use more resources in teaching in the preK level, in identifying ways to help children with social emotional skills in the classroom. As well in best-practices to teach math and literacy skills.

I am more confident in helping my class develop positive social/emotional skills.

I have learned to see each child individually, and plan learning experiences to meet the needs of each child. I have learned to accept constructive criticism and grow from it. I am more equipped to work toward 21st century skills with my children. I have learned my own self-worth as a teacher, as well as a collaborator with parents. I have learned to keep learning, always.

I have more confidence as a teacher and model for my students.

So many ways. I always thought I was a good teacher but the help that was provided to me was like the icing on a cake. I am much better able to access my students.

I individualize my students learning goals; I ask many more open-ended questions; I look for teachable moments; My lessons are more child directed and not teacher directed; I play with the children more; I use my observations to drive my goals and what my students need to be learning.

I have definately learned so much and applied information gained from meetings with my evaluator to my daily class routine

More confident

I have become more confident and organized in my classroom. I believe that I am a better leader for my students and will be more prepared with classroom management skills next year.

I am more comfortable with behavior management and I know much more about developmentally appropriate practices.

I now have more knowledge of ways I can teach my students and ways to work collaboratively with other while also demonstrating leadership skills.

I have learn how to be a more effective teacher using the 21st teaching skills.

Ive been able to strengthen lesson plan writing and family involvement.

Knowledge of 21st century and global awareness.

Q3. Are there any areas you feel you did not make progress despite being actively involved in the BTSP?

No

No

No

No

Entering documentation timely

no

Yes with my Site Improvement Plan.

n/a

No

no

n/a

Everytime I feel like I'm organized and have got a handle on things, more changes or arbitrary requirements are thrown into the mix.

No

No

no

I think there is always room for learning. I want to be able to grow in all areas of this learning experience whether or not the areas fall under accomplished or not. I want to be able to expand my growth and learning.

No

1. I need more work on writing PDP in a certain format. Working toward the goal has not been an issue, but writing the goal was very difficult. 2) I am still working toward more effective technology implementation, diversity activities and 21st century skills.

No

No

no

Teaching for the 21st century and globally.

Added more paperwork, so I still fall short in getting that done in a timely manner.

No

x

no

No

No

no

Leadership

Yes....incoporating 21st Century in the classroom, but I am still working on it.

No

Understanding what is due and when and where to find things online.

No

No

I am pretty confident in my progress this year but I do think I can make a better impact by working on leadership skills and collaborating with others in the center to make a better workplace for educators and students.

no

No, not really

Transition time and continuing to learn how to use our new curriculum.

no

No

no

No

No

Not that I can think of at this time. There ARE areas that I have grown in, but I would like to continue to work and grow more into.

Having all center areas covered and linking together to fit theme was a challenge.

Well, I now on anxiety meds because of all the stress from dealing with this process.

No

Communicating certain behaviors with parents.

No

No

More implementation of diverse, cultural awareness and project base within a period of time.

N/a

More projects solely based on the children's instructions

No

I felt Iike I improved in many areas but would like to continue to progress in the area of leadership.

no

In use of technology both for the children and for my planning and communication with others

Families/Communities goals reached.

Content I teach and global awareness... goals for next year

no

No

No

None.

No

Reflection

Global Awareness and 21st Century, as well as advocacy

...

no

I have growth I want to still make but I feel I made growth in every area this year.

No

No

No, I know I have some progress in all areas

No

Taking a leadership role for PLC'S.

I feel as thought global awareness is still an area that is difficult as well as the school improvement plan because I feel like these areas are something that I do not feel comfortable doing or not knowledgable enough to be strong in.

no

No

Reflecting

n/a

no

No

None

No I have been greatly supported

N/A

N/A

learning how to differentiate and do data driven instruction

I feel I have progressed in all areas.

N/A

No

No

No

I felt that I should have been able to take more mentoring training session, but thankful that I was able to view the trainings.

no

no

No

The only area that I still feel I do not have a good grasp on is PLC's. I have learned so much and I have grown in this area; however, I am unsure how to make a PLC really work effectively in non-public sites where there is one or two classrooms and much less opportunity for collaboration that improves student outcomes.

No

No

no

I am not sure

No

N/A

No

No

I have continued to grow

no

no

N/A

no

no

No

none at this time.

I am no longer in the BTSP.

no

N/A

No, not at this time

N/A

I did everything I could do to get more parent involvement but we didn't get a lot of involvement.

no

N/A

No

No

None
No
no
no
I feel that I have made progress in all areas over the last couple of being in the BTSP program.
No
no
no
na
N/A
Assessments, this area is not my strong suit. This was a goal I continued for the next school year.
no I feel I have made a lot of growth in all areas.
no
No
NA
No
my anecdotal notes
no
no
Behavior challenges
N/A
no
I just have to keep growing
I was a SPII
No. I think I made progress in all areas.
None
No
no that i can think of.
no
There is always room for improvement
fully understanding global awareness and 21 Century skills for pre-K
no
No
No
NO
Not really. There are always areas that one can improve on, that is way we set up PDP's every year.
Advocacy
Differentiating instruction, small group activities
N/A
I feel I was not able to manage the children effectively due to various behavioral issues I had in the classroom.
none

I believe I have developed all areas in my professional goals, but look forward to further successes.

I make progress each year.

I think my weak areas are advocacy and leadership.

No

No

Parent/Teacher Collaboration, Time Management

Diversity

No

I feel I didn't make much progress in the area of differentiation.

NO

no

No

no

No

plan activities

no

no

N/A

NO

no

NA

It would be great if I had made more progress in social emotional development and teaching strategies.

No

N/A

I felt I made progress in all areas, but still need work in the area of differentiation.

no

no

No

I still need to work on assessments and data driven planning

na

N/A

n/a

No

global awareness

No

Q4. How could your mentor and/or evaluator provide you with better support?

They are perfect. They are always helpful and available

My mentor and evaluator did a wonderful job keeping me informed at my teaching level.

I am doing ok

I do wish the length of time it took to get back my evaluations was shorter.

Not sure

N/A

n/a

Send me information needed regarding observation ahead of time

Not sure.

Have examples of how others do something better with pictures to illustrate it.

n/a

My evaluator is great.

My evaluator was great

None

They both were great in guiding me through this process.

Just being there to support and guide me in the right direction.

Mrs. Thompson is an awesome evaluator! I have had a lot less stress this year going through the process.

They both were great. Juggling EESLPD program with my work requirements were difficult, but every time I met with them, I learned something new.

Stephanie has done a wonderful job!

n/a

Information about affordable training and workshops.

Have more contact then just letting me know a week before they show up.

It was fine as it was.

x

Provide a clear understanding of what is expected and how to get there effectively. So many times I have heard "Youre almost there" and I had no clue where there was, what it looked like, or how to get there.

Both have been great supporters

They have been great. Considering Rhonda was thrown in halfway through the year, she made it a VERY smooth transition.

I love my mentor and evaluator !

Just continue being there with constructive criticism that supports my growth as a teacher.

They are going a great job!

I don't know of any other ways at this time.

My mentor could have actually supported me instead of just making me have to go ask other teachers in the program for help. My evaluator did an amazing job at helping, guiding and teaching me.

They helped

They have been excellent supporters.

Help with lesson planning and ways to help me reflect and incorporate more differentiation in my teaching

I can not think of any way that they could have supported me any more.They provided resources and they were my biggest cheer leader.

I have good support!

They are both great

She could not at this time.

My evaluator was wonderful this year. She was very supportive if I had any need or concern. She was quick to respond back to me on different issues. She always gave me several dates to pick from for my observations which was not available to me in the past from my last evaluator.

dont know

They are giving me wonderful support

Give ideas on how to reach specific level.

I would like for more communication with my mentor in the future.

They did an amazing job.

Kyle Worley is wonderful, professional, patient and a great guide. That's the best I can offer

N/A

How to address certain things with parents when I feel like they are not doing something about it in the home environment.

Continue to offer support and strategies for issues they see so I can work on changing things.

They were both great, if I have any issues they are my go to people.

My mentor was not useful and neither was it useful last year. They have to many people to work with.

None, she's wonderful

I have been so happy with my support from my evaluator, Rhonda Hamby. She is awesome!

My mentor and evaluator were awesome.

can't think of any

By completing the evaluation process and entering information in Home Base in a timely manner Evaluators can communicate with us not just for site observation visit on going communicaion as well.

They are great.

They were of great support.

Just continue to help me grow as a teacher.

Mentor could reach out more. Evaluator was very helpful.

Provide resources and information I can use in my classroom. Continue to provide me with feedback that can help me make changes or improve in my teaching.

They have been great!!

Push meto do it

Help me with resources or opportunities to witness what I need.

....

If we kept the same people throughout the process

They were very helpful and gave me resources to help me succeed.

The additional observation I feel is unecessary. Post and Pre conference items required when evaluator is site admin and knows information.

They have both been great.

They were great!

They done a great job

Host a plc with me

Increased knowledge of global awareness as well as ideas for thoughts of School Improvement Plan because the improvement plan can differ from school to school but it feels weird to me to ask for changes for the entire school.

N?A they are both great

They did great

Give me ideas on how to reflect.

they were awesome

They did a great job providing me with support.

I think that both my mentor and evaluator has given me the support that I needed I do not think that I would have done anything different.

the support was great.

They have given me good support

N/A

N/A

trainings

Provide more resources based on PDP goals.

I'm satisfied with the level of support I received.

My mentor and I have such different teaching styles, it was difficult to get help in areas I needed, because our classrooms are very different

Did great

My evaluator is very supportive.

I have an awesome evaluator that cares about the well being of her staff, and share professional standards that gives me the opportunity to expand and grow.

more of examples of what they want to see

my evaluator was great and she understood me very well and always provide me with resources in any area I needed.

Having more meetings

I felt that my mentor and evaluator provided excellent support. I don't know that I could have asked for anything better. I would have liked for my Mentor to visit my classroom more frequently; however I know that there was a travel restriction for a portion of the year and that they have still been asked to conserve when possible.

None! She was great!

None. They were amazing!

not sure at this time

I need to be provided with examples of what they need me to do

Just keep giving me the support they already give.

I have not had the opportunity to meet with my mentor at all, but my evaluator has been very resourceful.

She is an amazing evaluator and I can't think of anything I would want her to do differently.

n/a

Evaluator could look beyond binder paperwork and become more involved in classroom displays and the dynamics of teacher and students.

none, she did a great job providing support

support was adequate and helpful

N/A

they did a wonderful job

They give great support.

I feel like they did their best.

I have great support. I have no complaints.

I have been pleased with my mentor and evaluator

Keep doing what their doing

The mentor I have is doing a great job. I would like to have her visit more. However, I understand that she have other teachers to work with as well.

To come and visit the classroom more.

They do a great job.

They did their best and I couldn't ask of anything more.

Keep same evaluator for two years in a row to see growth in teacher

Nothing else needed just assistance in obtaining the SPII.

They do a great job support us as our Mentors and Evaluators

My evaluator did great. My mentor made me feel harassed.

My evaluator was great!

Be kinder and more helpful.

My mentor and evaluator were great and very helpful.

They have done a very good job in providing support.

Other then additional resources/articles I am not sure

They did awesome and I felt well supported. I hope that I get them next year.

They provided excellent support

na

THEY WAS REAL GOOD AND WAS THERE WHENEVERY I NEEDED THEM

My evaluator is wonderful. She is always accessible and willing to go above and beyond to help out.

nothing comes to mind at the moment

I'm not sure at the time

The support was excellent.

None they did a great job

She did fine.

They provide me with what i need.

they are both doing a great job, i have no complaints.

My Evaluator does a great job supporting me.

More feedback throughout the school year.

In all areas

Bring food

After all the bad stories I heard I feel like I had the best support group

did a good job supporting me

My mentor and evaluator provide me with everything that I needed.

NA

They have done a fantastic job. Couldn't ask for better.

They are doing a wonderful job.

all was fine

They have been most helpful in the whole. I am so glad to have their support. Can I please keep them for next year.

By monitoring as they did this year and giving me their feedback to help me

She could bring some literacy and math resources with her.

I was very pleased with the support from my mentor and/or evaluator

I appreciate my evaluator and the support she has provided this year!

My Evaluator is very supportive. Debbie Johnson always goes above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that I understand and providing the best for the children and the classroom. She challenge me throughout the years do research, take training, and reflect on your teaching to make sure that I was meeting the needs of every need. I am really thankful for this because I have grown and about to support, coach, and model for other teachers.

This was my first year of being served by EESLPD and I was very pleased with the support and encouragement they both gave me.

not sure

N/a

N/A

They were very helpful, there was not a time that I called, email or texted them that I did not receives a response. They truly extend their time and effort to help me of which I am very thankful.

Evaluator covers all areas

Through mentor visits and evaluations, I believe I have the opportunity to reflect and focus on specific areas of teaching to further develop. Perhaps my mentor can provide me with specific examples to show best practices of things I'm working on to give me 'a picture' of a model practice.

My mentor already gives me a lot of support.

I think my mentor has made herself as available to us as she could. We can call, text, email, Facebook, etc, with her. She always responds in a timely manner.

Both Mentor and evaluator were great help!

Na- Carla is awesome!

By continuing to be helpful.

That is something we have decided to focus on next year

N/A

My mentor can provide me with more support by meeting with me at a time other than naptime.

My evaluator does all that I think that she needs to do now.

they are real talking with me and helping me understand things I'm not sure about.

They did a great job supporting me in all areas.

They do a fine job already.

Keep lines of communication open

Give me examples

keep informing me of different ideals

They were great. They were there whenever I needed.

N/A

She was awesome and provided lots of support. Any time I emailed her she responded quickly.

N/A If I had any questions my evaluator was more than happy to help.

She is doing a great job!

Continue to provide feedback, resources and the encouragement that she is already giving.

I would have appreciated a mentor throughout the years I have been teaching in North Carolina. Even though I came to NC with an SPII with prek add-on license, a mentor would have given me much more understanding in reflecting/inprovig on my skills/professional development as a teacher.

I received great support as needed throughout the year.

Margaret provided me with encouragement and support in all ways possible.

My evaluator supports me

The only way she could've provided me more support would be to have her as a mentor!

I felt very supported this year.

I think that she can continue the way she has been doing because she has helped me a lot this year

na

I was always able to contact them when needed.

n/a

Ongoing feedback on ways to support student learning.

They have done an excellent job in all areas of supporting me this year. I just hope I have the same mentor and evaluator next year. they are very knowledgeable.

Theyre doing great!

My evalutor is great.

APPENDIX D

Participant Flyer

UNCCHARLOTTE

EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte (West)
Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation
Educational Leadership Department

Cato College of Education Building
Room 323C
UNC Charlotte
Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Study on *Quality Assurance & Reliability* of the

NC Teacher Evaluation Process Rubric

- Brief 60-90 minute focus group question & answer
- Brief 45-60 minute individual interview
- Recruiting Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teachers who are currently working in a NC Pre-K or Developmental Day classroom
- ECEs must be enrolled in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) and receive support via the Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office
- Voluntary and Confidential

Are you underlined interested in finding out more?
Please contact:

Heather Taylor, M. Ed. at htaylo29uncc.edu or 704-728-9629

*The Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD - West & EESLPD - East) Offices at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte and East Carolina University are conducting this research to explore the perceptions of ECEs in regards to mentor and evaluator support they receive as part of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process.

APPENDIX E

Letter of Interest to Recruit Participants

UNCCHARLOTTE

EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte (West)
Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation
Educational Leadership Department

Cato College of Education
Building
Room 323C
UNC Charlotte
Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Dear Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teachers,

You are being invited to participate in a research study entitled, "Quality Assurance & Reliability of the Rubric used during the NC Teacher Evaluation Process." The Research Team for this study (Richard Lambert, Ph. D., a Professor at UNC-Charlotte and Heather Taylor, M. Ed. a doctoral student at UNC-Charlotte) hope to gain your support through participating in focus group interviews. These focus group/individual interviews are intended to gather information from you regarding supports you receive from evaluators and mentors at the Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office as part of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (NC TEP).

This research is foundational and seeks to explore:
- ECE areas of progress or not on the rubric used during the NC TEP.
- ECE support needs and how the support received from EESLPD office evaluators and mentors aligns with the EESLPD office framework.
- ECE perceptions regarding supports provided by EESLPD office evaluators and mentors, whether progress has been made or not on the rubric during the NC TEP.

We are gathering information from ECEs who currently work in nonpublic NC Pre-K and Developmental Day programs across the state of NC. ECEs who wish to participate in the study must have (a) a Birth-Kindergarten (B-K license) and (b) be enrolled in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP)and receive supports via the EESLPD office. Information will be collected during focus group interviews with voluntary participants.

Researchers have no expectations regarding areas of the rubric that show progress or not, supports needed or received by EESLPD office evaluators and mentors, or perceptions of ECEs regarding supports provided by evaluators or mentors. Information collected during focus groups is strictly to explore what supports are presently offered, how these supports align to the EESLPD office framework, and the perceptions of ECEs regarding support received. Voluntary participation in the study consists of a brief 60 -90 minute focus group interview. Participation in focus groups is strictly anonymous and responses are confidential. In no case will responses from individual participants be identified.

*Refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty and participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Thank you for your consideration in becoming a participant in the research study, "Quality Assurance & Reliability of the Rubric used during the NC Teacher Evaluation Process." If you have any questions regarding your rights as a study participant, please contact the UNCC Compliance Office at 704-687-3309. If you have questions about the study, please contact Heather Taylor at htaylo29@uncc.edu

APPENDIX F

Focus Group/Individual Interview Discussion Guide/Protocol

Introduction:

1. Welcome: Introduce yourself as moderator and the assistant moderator. Make sure everyone has signed the "Inform Consent" form. Ask all participants to complete the quick demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, years employed at a nonpublic NC Pre-K site) while I'm introducing myself to the group and while I'm explaining the purpose of the focus group/interview.

   Review the following:

   - Who we are and what we're trying to do
   - What will be done with this information
   - Why we asked you to participate (Because you expressed interest on EESLPD office EOY 2017-2018 Teacher Survey)
   - If you are a supervisor, we would like to excuse you at this time. We are only interested in interviewing ECEs at the present moment.

2. Explanation of the process: Ask the group if anyone has participated in a focus group before. Explain that focus groups are often used in fields of medicine, early intervention, ECE and ECSE, and in related fields including health and human services research.

   About focus groups

   - We learn from you (positive and negative)
   - Not trying to achieve consensus, we're gathering information. Purely exploratory research.
   - We are trying to gain in-depth information from a smaller group of people in focus groups.

   Logistics

   - Focus group will last about 60-90 minutes.
   - Feel free to move around
   - Where is the bathroom? Exit?
   - Help yourself to refreshments
   - Incentive (enter your name in raffle to win a $50.00 gift e-card for participation in the study)

3. Ground Rules
   Ask the group to suggest some ground rules. After they brainstorm some, make sure the following are on the list.

- Everyone should participate.
- Information provided in the focus group must be kept confidential
- Stay with the group and please don't have side conversations
- Turn off cell phones if possible

4. Turn on Audio Recorder

5. Ask the group if there are any questions before we get started, and address those questions.

Discussion begins, make sure to give people time (approximately 5 seconds) to think before answering the questions. Use the probes to make sure that all issues are addressed, but move on when you feel you are starting to hear repetitive information.

Questions:

Probes for Discussion:

- *Culture*
    - *Relationships, camaraderie*
- *Safety & Health protection*
    - *Protective measures (e.g., comfortable sharing information with mentor/evaluator)*
- *Working conditions*
    - *Access to supplies, equipment*
- *Respect/recognition*
- *Opportunity, achievement, growth*
    - *Professional growth, further education, responsibility*
- *Supervision*
- *Is there a sense of ownership of the outcomes here?*
    - *Responsibility for progress on rubric used during the NC TEP*
- *Education for children*
    - *Family involvement*
- *Work/home balance*

That was the last question and this concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us. If you have additional information that you did not get to say in the focus group, please feel free to write it on paper and give to me before you leave.

Materials and supplies for focus groups

- Sign-in sheet
- Consent forms
- Evaluation sheets to be completed following the focus group interviews.
- Pads & Pencils for each participant

- Focus Group Discussion Guide for Moderators
- 1 audio recording device
- Batteries for recording device
- Back up method if recording device fails to work
- Notebook for note-taking
- Refreshments

Focus Group/Individual Interview Questions

1. What successes have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?
   a. How have your successes been acknowledged and/or celebrated?

2. What challenges have you had this school year in the early childhood classroom?
   a. How have your mentor and evaluator helped you during the challenging times in the classroom?

3. What particular areas of your teaching do you feel you need help?

4. Describe ways in which your mentor/evaluator may or may not be responsive when you request help.

5. Tell me about your comfort level regarding asking your mentor/evaluator for help.
   a. Tell me about reasons you may not reach out to you mentor/evaluator for help and support.

6. Tell me about the experiences you've had with coaching and mentoring.

7. How would you describe the coaching style of your mentor?

8. What are ways in which your mentor/evaluator has been able to support you?
   a. What kinds of support should be offered by your mentor and evaluator?

APPENDIX G

Optional Demographic Information Form (Focus Group and Individual Interviews)

1) What is your gender?
   - o Female
   - o Male
   - o Other

2) Please select which age range best describes you?
   - o 18 - 20 years
   - o 21 – 29 years
   - o 30 – 39 years
   - o 40 – 49 years
   - o 50 – 59 years
   - o 60 years or older

3) What is the highest level of school you have completed?
   - o Less than high school
   - o High school or equivalent (e.g., GED)
   - o Some college but no degree
   - o Associate degree
   - o Bachelor degree
   - o Graduate degree
   - o Other

4) Are you Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Cuban-American, or some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino group?
   - o I am not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
   - o Mexican
   - o Mexican-American
   - o Chicano
   - o Puerto Rican
   - o Cuban
   - o Cuban-American
   - o Some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino groups
   - o From multiple Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino groups

5) Are you White, Black, or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race?
   - o White
   - o Black or African-American
   - o American Indian or Alaskan Native

- o   Asian
- o   Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- o   From multiple races
- o   Some other race (please specify) _____

6) How much total combined money did all members of your HOUSEHOLD earn last year?
    - o $0 to $9,999
    - o $10,000 to $24,999
    - o $25,000 to 49,999
    - o $50,000 to $74,999
    - o $75,000 to $99,999
    - o $100,000 to $124,999 or more
    - o   Prefer not to answer

7) Please select which answer below best describes you.
    - o   I have attained my Birth – Kindergarten (B-K) Teaching License.
    - o   I am working towards attaining my Birth – Kindergarten (B-K) Teaching License.

8) Please select which answer below best describes your current place of employment.
    - o   NC Pre-K Only
    - o   Head Start/NC Pre-K
    - o   Developmental Day/NC Pre-K
    - o   Head Start Only
    - o   Developmental Day Only
    - o   Other:_____

9) Did you receive support from an EESLPD office mentor/evaluator during the 2017-2018 school year?
    - o   Yes
    - o   No

10) Do you currently receive support from an EESLPD office mentor/evaluator?
    - o   Yes
    - o   No

11) Please select which answer below best describes the year of participation you are in with the Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office?
    - o   1st year in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP)

- o 2nd year in the BTSP
- o 3rd year in the BTSP
- o 4th year in the BTSP
- o I am an SP II and have a continuing license. I am in the _____ year of my renewal process.

12) Did you previously work in the field of early childhood education before enrolling with the EESLPD office?
   - o Yes
     - o In what capacity did you work in the field of early childhood education?

       _____
       ___

     - o How many years did you work in this role prior to enrolling with the EESLPD office?_____
   - o No

   Thank you for answering the demographic characteristics!

APPENDIX H

UNCCHARLOTTE
EESLPD office at UNC Charlotte (West)
Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation
Educational Leadership Department

Cato College of Education
Building
Room 323C
UNC Charlotte
Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Letter of Informed Consent for In-Person Participation

Dear Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher,

Consent forms for focus group participants are completed in advance by all those seeking to participate. Below is a summary of the information in the consent form that focus group moderators should use to make sure participants understand the information in the consent form.

Thank you for agreeing to participate. We are very interested to hear your valuable feedback as ECEs, regarding supports you receive from EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as part of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process.

- The purpose of this study is to learn about your perceptions regarding the support you receive from your EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as part of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process.

- The information you give us is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the focus group.

- We would like to audio record the focus groups so that we can make sure to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas we hear from the group. No names will be attached to the focus groups and the tapes will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed.

- You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at anytime.

- We understand how important it is that this information is kept private and confidential. We will ask participants to respect each other's confidentiality.

- If you have any questions now or after you have completed the questionnaire, you can may contact Heather Taylor at htaylo29@uncc.edu.

I _____have read and understand each bulleted topic below and
(ECE Name)
agree to participate in this focus group research study occurring on _____.
(Date)

APPENDIX I

Abstract Sent to ECEs

The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process is used to evaluate Pre-K –

12th grade teachers in North Carolina. Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers who

have obtained Birth - Kindergarten licensure are unique in that they work with children

with and without disabilities and their families. Previous research has suggested that

teachers may benefit from professional development and coaching support. The Early

Education Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) office's

conceptual framework includes a strong coaching component to support teachers working

in inclusive classrooms. This research project will use qualitative research methods and

will investigate ECE perceptions regarding coaching support received.

APPENDIX J

Thank You to Participants

Dear Early Childhood Educator,

Thank you for participating in a study on ***Quality Assurance & Reliability*** of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process. Thank you for volunteering to participate in follow-up research. The information you provided will help researchers to improve professional development for mentors and evaluators to better support teachers and will inform a process of reliability when using the rubric as part of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process. Consistently supporting teachers and providing high-quality education and care that positively impacts child and family growth and development will be supported because of the and the feedback you provided during focus groups. Please remember, participation in this study was voluntary and all information will be kept confidential.

*The Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD -West & EESLPD - East) Offices at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte and East Carolina University conducted this research to explore the perceptions of ECEs in regards to mentor and evaluator support they receive as part of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process.

Need more information?
Please contact:

Heather Taylor, M. Ed. at htaylo29uncc.edu or 704-728-9629

APPENDIX K

Letter of Informed Consent for Online

Focus Group/Individual Interview Participation

Dear Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher,

Consent forms for focus group participants are completed in advance by all those seeking to participate. Below is a summary of the information in the consent form that focus group moderators should use to make sure participants understand the information in the consent form.

Thank you for agreeing to participate. We are very interested to hear your valuable feedback as ECEs, regarding supports you receive from EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as part of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process.

- The purpose of this study is to learn about your perceptions regarding the support you receive from your EESLPD office mentors and evaluators as part of the NC Teacher Evaluation Process.

- The information you give us is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the focus group. If you would like, you may wear a name badge and/or use a pseudonym (false name) to protect your anonymity during the focus group and individual interviews.

- We would like to audio and video record the focus groups via WebEx so that we can make sure to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas we hear from the group. No names will be attached to the focus groups and the audio and video recordings will be deleted as soon as they are transcribed.

- You will be sent an email to invite you to join a WebEx meeting prior to the focus group interview.

- You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at anytime.

- We understand how important it is that this information is kept private and confidential. We will ask participants to respect each other's confidentiality.

- If you have any questions now or after you have completed the questionnaire, you can may contact Heather Taylor at htaylo29@uncc.edu.