To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Claudine Marie Grieshaber entitled "Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Role and Function of Touch in the Early Childhood Classroom." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child and Family Studies.

Jan Allen

Jan Allen, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Deborah N. Tegano

Gary W. Peterson

for Melissa Groves

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Thesis
2002
.G753

Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Role and Function of Touch in the Early Childhood Classroom

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
University of Tennessee

Claudine Marie Grieshaber
August 2002

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my ever supporting friends at Rainbow Riders Childcare Center in Blacksburg, Virginia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first thank Dr. Jan Allen, Dr. Deb Tegano, and Dr. Melissa Groves for all their support and guidance. Their help, patience, and suggestions have helped me immensely with the completion of this thesis.

I must also thank my fellow graduate students, Jennifer Lipps and Catherine Mackey, for their continuing support and encouragement and motivational techniques. Without their continually support, I would not have made it to where I am today. Thank you so much for all the help and guidance as well as for all the shoulders to lean upon.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents and my "family" at Rainbow Riders Childcare Center for their love and optimism. Their presence in my life has helped me to become the person I am today and have helped to keep me morally and ethically strong. They have been there through all my successes and hardships. It is with great pleasure that I can share this success with them. Thank you so much.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to discover and explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate touch and the positive developmental and educational outcomes of appropriate touch in the early childhood classroom. It was intended to provide insight into the role of education, personal teaching philosophy, and previous child care experiences on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward touch. It was hypothesized that (a) pre-service teachers with more college education/ courses will have a more positive attitude towards touch, (b) those pre-service teachers with a social constructivist philosophy will have a more positive attitude towards touch, and (c) pre-service teachers with previous teaching or volunteering experience in a day care center will have a more positive attitude towards touch. Surveys were distributed over the course of one academic year to 250 students enrolled in Introduction to Early Childhood Education (CFS 110) and Early Childhood Environments (CFS 350) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Kruskal-Wallis and Spearman's Rho correlations were used to test the hypotheses. None of the three research hypotheses' received any support from the statistical tests and were therefore refuted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION....1

II. LITERATURE REVIEW....4

Theoretical Perspective....13

III. METHODS....18

Sample....18

Survey Instrument....22

Data Collection....22

Hypotheses....22

Data Analysis....23

IV. RESULTS....25

The Role of Education and Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom....25

The Role of Personal Teaching Philosophy and Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom....26

The Role of Previous Childcare Experience on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom....28

Summary of Results....28

V. CONCLUSION....30
Discussion of Findings....30
Implications....33
Limitations and Future Studies....37
Summary....38

References....40

Appendices....48
Appendix A. 49
Appendix B. 55

Vita....64

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

1. Demographics.....20

2. The Role of Education on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom....27

3. The Role of Personal Teaching Philosophy and Previous Childcare Experience on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom 29

Chapter I

Introduction

Teacher-child interaction and touch in physical nurturance and caregiving have been shown to be essential in children's healthy development (Allen, 1986). But recently there has been a growing concern that teachers will reduce the physical affection and caregiving to children because of the publicity of sexual abuse cases in daycare settings (Field, Harding, Soliday, Lasko, Gonzalez, & Valdeon, 1994). Although it is important to acknowledge the presence of inappropriate touch, teachers should be cautious but not fearful of touching children. Teachers can touch children without harm and misperceptions of the touches if the touch is given appropriately. DelPrete (1998) expressed his concern over the misperceptions children develop about touching: growing violence portrayed in television, video games, and real crimes and the lack of "good" touches may give children the mixed message that inappropriate touches are more acceptable than "good" touches such as hugging and patting someone on the back. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about parents' perceptions of touching. Teachers should also be informed about appropriate and inappropriate touching so teachers can gain trust from the parents. Once teachers gain that trust, they can then help parents understand the benefits of appropriate touch for children's development.

"We rely heavily on our sense of sight and sound to adapt to our environment" and touch can facilitate mother-infant interactions (Cigales, Field, Hossain, Pelaez-Nogueras, & Gewirtz 1996, p. 101). So touch may facilitate teacher-child interactions. Brody (1992) emphasized an unconscious longing for

individuals "to be touched by someone who is willing and capable of caring touches" (p. 21) and the notions that touch is essential for life and for developing one's self. Through touch, one can learn about others, self, and the surrounding social environment. Touch helps us to explore and discover our environment as well as convey meaning from our interactions.

Educators should be aware of the consequences regarding the lack of touch in the classrooms (Field, Harding, Soliday, Lasko, Gonzalez, & Valdeon, 1994). By bringing this to the attention of teachers, more touch might take place in the classrooms. Field et al. (1994) completed a study of classroom teacher-child observations. In particular, they focused on touching behaviors among the teachers and children. After collecting and graphing the small amount of observed touch, the authors presented the teachers with the first observation results. Later results confirmed the authors assumptions that sharing such data with the teachers from the first observation would yield more conscious attempts towards positive touching behaviors. For those teachers who are uncomfortable with touching children because of the publicity regarding sexual abuse in child care settings, they should be reassured of the benefits of appropriate touching.

For example, touch is considered by some to be a communication tool (DelPrete, 1998; Meyer & Driskell, 1997); hugging is considered a language (Johnson & Franke, 1997). Children have a hundred languages with which to express themselves. "A language is more than a set of symbols. A language contains rules of combining these symbols to convey meaning" (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 249). Touch can be a language. All the types of touch, appropriate or not, and the rules about when and how to touch a person convey meaning. Further, "it is the nature of the relation among the symbols that converts the medium into a

message; and it is the presence of an intended message that motivates children to negotiate shared meanings and to co-construct knowledge" (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 249).

Educators should shift their focus away from inappropriate touches and towards appropriate touches. Although it is important to be educated about both types, it is also important to shift the spotlight to focus on the benefits of touch. Teachers should develop awareness of the benefits of touch and massage in the classroom such as increased sleeping time for children and calming effects on children (Field, Kilmer, Hernandez-Reif, and Burman, 1996). It is also time to lift the barriers and the negative perceptions placed on males' nurturant touch (Rane and Draper, 1995). They, too, should be encouraged to give appropriate touches to children and should not be discriminated against or stereotyped because of their gender.

Teachers should not have to consciously think about misperceptions and fear allegations of sexual abuse when touching a child (DelPrete, 1998). Educators should not have any feelings of fear or guilt for any appropriate, spontaneous touches made towards children. Unfortunately, teachers do have to think of the implications of touching children because of the stigma and fear of inappropriate touch. In an effort to make touch an acceptable, appropriate, and non-threatening contact, teachers still need to be educated, aware, and cautious of our touch behaviors. The purpose of this research is to discover and explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate touch and the positive developmental and educational outcomes of appropriate touch in the early childhood classroom.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Several studies have examined the frequency of touch in teacher-child interactions, touch as a communication tool, touch as tactile stimulation for a child's health and development, the role of touch in play therapy, and opinions on the appropriateness of touch. Relevant research related to touch in caregiving, or early childhood education, environments will be discussed in this chapter.

An effort was made by Field, et al. (1994) "to document the amount of touch that occurs between children and between teachers and children in infant, toddler, and preschool nurseries [and to] show that touching could be increased by sharing [the researchers'] data with the teachers, making them aware of how little touch was occurring [in the classroom] and by suggesting appropriate forms of touch behavior" (p. 114). The researchers completed a series of behavior observations of children in a child care setting during free play and during reunions with parents at the end of the day. Between the first and second observations, the researchers presented teachers with graphs of the observed interactions. The teachers were then asked to make a more conscious effort to think about and implement other positive and acceptable ways to touch their students. As a result, positive touching was increased in the second observation time period. This was mainly achieved through a teacher holding a child. In fact, no significant change was noted in caregiving touch. Although boys were observed to receive more positive and caregiving touches than girls, caregiving touch was noted to decrease with the age of the child. More child-to-child touch was observed in the older classrooms while in the younger rooms, more teacher initiated touch was noticed.

During reunion times with parents, the amount of touch between the child and parent decreased with age. Teachers rated the children on whether or not they liked to be touched. For those who did like touch, more touch from parents during reunion times was noticed. Lastly, it was found that positive touch during reunion times was related to positive touching during the day in the classroom. However, these children receiving such touch scored lower on extraversion scales because they were passively seeking touches they received from their parents such as cuddling.

Physical touch can be a useful tool to communicate many messages between a teacher and a child. Meyer and Driskill (1997) completed a qualitative study "to understand what communication strategies are used by children to express their own needs within the constraints of relational interdependence and by the staff members to socialize 'appropriate' behaviors in a selected day care center" (p. 76). Communication strategies that emerged included: statement about friendship, proximity or closeness, joking or teasing, playing or taking roles, use of control, and appeal to rules. These strategies were proposed by the authors "[to also provide] insight into how children begin to negotiate their life long balancing act between their needs for inclusion, affection, and control" (p. 84). The authors suggested that even though symbols such as touch convey various messages, these symbols could help children to discern how the touch made them feel into what the touch meant. In other words, symbols could help children decode nonverbal interactions.

Cigales, et al. (1996) completed multiple observations of teacher-child interactions during free play time over a 90-day period after writing an extensive literature review that supported the importance of tactile stimulation in children's

health and development. Their study was created in an attempt to determine where on the body children touch each other, what types of touch are used, what the purposes are for the touch in those interactions, and how the children respond to the variety of touches they receive. A few of the numerous results showed that infants not only received more touch than preschoolers but they also received more positive touches. There was evidence that preschoolers had less task related, or helpful and functional, touching. The toddlers were touched more than preschoolers as a means of communication and they also were touched more than infants as a means of displaying affection. Although there were few differences between the teachers, the infant teachers tended to initiate more touch than the preschool and toddler teachers.

Touch has also been discussed in settings other than childcare. Brody (1992), in discussing play therapy, stated that the intent of touch was to bring out a productive and successful dialogue between the therapist and the child. She also stated that "capable touching builds the child's self and appreciation of the other's self, and establishes the possibility of dialogue between the two" (p. 22). She further presented her belief that boys play contact sports such as football for the contact (for the hugs, pats, etc. between teammates and coaches) and that "touch can be a potent organizer and stimulator of growth" (p. 29). In a study on massage therapy effects on preschool age children in a nursery school setting, 28 children were equally divided into a massage treatment group and a wait-list group (Field, Kilmer, Hernandez-Reif, & Burman, 1996). Those in the treatment group received 20-minute massages directly before naptime twice a week for five weeks while those in the wait-list group used their regular naptime routine in the same area. Both immediate and long term effects were noted. Immediately after the massages,

the children in the treatment group had more positive mood states and vocalizations and were more cooperative. Long term effects for this group included decreased latency to naptime sleep and tactile defensiveness or touch aversiveness and more extraverted, or outgoing and friendly, behaviors. The results appear to support the authors' conclusions from a review of literature regarding the benefit of massage therapies on other individuals such as preterm infants, adolescent psychiatric patients, and children with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In regards to play therapy and children's social-emotional development, Brody (1992) stated:

> Children who are allowed to be babies again, to pick up and bring forward what they need, will heal. Children need to be able to create their own nurturing relationship before they can deal with their traumas. They need a touching relationship first (p. 30).

There is also cultural evidence supporting the importance of touch in teacher-child interactions. In Italy, in particular in Reggio Emilia, environments are set up to assist children's development via social relations and sociocognitive conflict (New, 1997). Lella Gandini (1998) further explains:

> . . . because social development is seen as an intrinsic part of cognitive development, the space is planned and set up to facilitate encounters, interactions, and exchanges among children. . . At the same time the space is set up to favor relationships and interactions of teachers, staff, and parents among themselves and with children (p. 170).

Edwards (1998) described the importance of listening to children as a tool for helping children in decision making and cognitive growth. She described Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory in which a child might be able to easily move from one step to another yet the next step is a bit harder to reach or comprehend. Teachers can use their listening capabilities and other strategies to

help a child reach and achieve that difficult next step. That next step could be intertwined with a nonverbal message given through touch.

In a study comparing children enrolled in home care settings versus children enrolled in child care center settings, differences were found in the kinds of attention and stimulation children received (Clarke-Stewart, 1991). This study's purpose was to find any advantages and disadvantages different types of child care settings had on children's social and cognitive development. Children in child care centers and preschool programs were found "to be more socially skilled and intellectually advanced than children at home with their parents, sitters, or in day care homes" (p. 109). It was noted that the number of adults is positively correlated to children's competence and caregivers with more training are more involved with positive interactions that are both helpful and full of conversations with the child thus helping the child make more cognitive gains. In regards to program and curriculum, the more direct teaching and interaction the children receive, the greater their competence. This corresponds with Johnson and Franke's (1997) finding that touch has a positive effect on language development and IQ as well as on physiological changes.

Field, Lasko, Mundy, Henteleff, Kabat, Talpins, and Dowling (1997) conducted a touch therapy study on 22 autistic children and illustrated possible physiological changes. Children were divided into a touch therapy and a touch control group. Children in the touch therapy group received 15-minute massages completed in a particular pattern twice a week for four weeks. Children in the control group sat in a volunteer's lap for the same amount of time but they engaged in a color/form/shape selecting game instead of the massages. It was discovered that the autistic children in both groups showed less touch aversion and

off-task behaviors and less orientation toward irrelevant sounds. Although stereotypic behaviors decreased, they declined more so for the children in the touch therapy group. Other changes included increased and positive joint attention, behavior regulation, social behavior, and initiating behavior. The authors critiqued their results by saying:

> That both groups improved on some behaviors, notably touch aversion and off-task behavior, is probably not surprising given that both interventions involved additional one-on-one attention and physical contact from an adult. . .The more active physical contact and relaxation involved in the touch therapy may have contributed to the many ways in which the touch therapy children were advantaged including showing fewer autistic behaviors. . .and improvement on social relating. . .Field, et al., 1997, p. 337).

To better understand the non-verbal messages conveyed through touch, Crapps and Witkowski (1989) presented a study "to identify the functional roles of touch in interaction and to describe the similarities and differences in these roles between groups of children who have handicaps and those who do not" (p. 2). The authors concluded that little research on touch and its interactive role had been conducted and further say that understanding the interactive role of touch can be useful in several ways such as setting a tone in a room. Touch can also be useful in preparing a classroom for integration of children with different developmental needs. After a series of observations during free play, the authors noted that incidental touch was most often used in both the handicapped and nonhandicapped groups of children. Following closely behind in frequency were managing, attentional, interactive, task-related, and protest types of touch. Although nonhandicapped children were observed to use touch in normal playing to communicate with each other or to draw attention to their interaction, handicapped children used touch to obtain assistance from another person (to do something or

to get a toy) or to communicate with others. Lastly, higher levels of task-related touch were associated with the nonhandicapped group and higher levels of managing touch were associated for the handicapped group.

There has been little research developed to help construct an agreed upon conceptual definition for "good" versus "bad" touches so Harrison-Speake and Willis (1995) developed a study to examine respondents' opinions about the appropriateness of the several different ways parents can touch their own child. Results showed a severe decline in the appropriateness of children sitting in a parent's lap as the child ages. However, the decline was not as severe for mothers and daughters. In regards to kissing their child, there was another severe decline in perceived appropriateness. Fathers and sons had a more pronounced decline but despite the decline, mothers and daughters were rated higher on appropriateness. Either gender of parent bathing either gender of child begins to drop steeply around 6-10 years of age. This time, the decline was faster for boys than girls. The results showed little difference for the gender of the parent when the child was age 2 in the bathing scenario, but mothers still rated higher than fathers on appropriateness. In regards to sleeping with a child, this too declined in appropriateness as the child aged. Lastly, the authors examined race effects between Caucasian families and African American families. Results showed that Caucasian families were more accepting of touch regardless of age or gender of the child or gender of the parent. African American families rated fathers higher than Caucasian families did on touch initiated by fathers regardless of child age or gender. The authors, in response to the findings, conclude that "the differences between parents may reflect a decreasing role in parenting for fathers as children

age and they may reflect a greater likelihood of male touch being seen as sexual" (p. 95).

Rane and Draper (1995) conducted a similar study. They used 16 different scenarios in which an adult either engaged or did not engage in nurturing touch with a child. The scenarios were split into combinations of playground scenes or bedtime scenes with adult family members or neighbors interacting with their own children or neighbors' children. Respondents rated the male or female adult character on masculinity scales, goodness scales, likelihood of social acceptance scales, and future instrumental achievement scales. Results showed that men who acted in a nurturing manner were rated lower on masculinity than the men who did not act in that way. However, they were rated higher on measures of goodness and social acceptance. Women rated similarly but the presence or lack of nurturant touch had a more significant impact on the ratings. Men rated male characters lower than the females did on goodness yet the females rated the male characters higher than the female characters. Another interesting finding was that males in scenarios with their own children and women with their neighbors' children were rated higher than males with the neighbors' children and women with their own children. Overall, characters in playground settings were rated higher than characters in the bedtime scenarios.

As cited by Cigales, et al. (1996), "according to Heins (1988), children are less inhibited than adults in their use of touch as a form of nonverbal communication, perhaps because they have not yet learned the social rules and taboos regarding touch" (p. 102). Field, et al. (1996) suggested that standardized massages, even though they can be misconstrued as sexual abuse, can be a non-threatening method for a teacher and a child to become comfortable with

touch. "All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in engaging in social interaction, establishing relationships, constructing their learning, and negotiating with everything the environment brings them" (Gandini, 1997, p. 16-17). Touch could enhance what the environment brings the children as well. Simple hugs that are instinctual, natural responses to positive feelings such as affection, compassion, need, and joy are considered in science as a mode of emotional support, healing, and growth with astounding results (Johnson & Franke, 1997).

In discussing the roles of children's bodies, Leavitt and Bauman Power (1997) suggested that children gain meaningful experiences of their world via the use of their five senses and that bodies are both active and acted on as well as perceived and perceived upon. Children use their bodies as a tool of communication. They use gesturing to get responses from others thus allowing them to learn about their bodies through any type of day-to-day interaction (Leavitt & Bauman Power, 1997). It is further expressed that the teachers' role, in the past, has been to "inculcate" social norms, beliefs, and values regarding behaviors and body management. The authors believed strongly that such "overcivilization" of children's bodies made their bodies come in second after management. In other words, children's own developmental needs came after what society perceived to be their first and immediate need...preventing deviant behaviors by encouraging social norms, beliefs, and values.

The focus on deviant behaviors and negative outcomes of touch could cause moral panics in today's society. Researching his book, Making a Place for Pleasure in Early Childhood Education, Tobin (1997) found a plethora of research

regarding children's deviant and dangerous sexuality issues yet little research on children's and teachers' pleasures and desires. Tobin (1997) wrote:

> We are aware of these dangers. We know that an interest in children's sexuality may be mistaken for sexual interest in children; that advocacy for children's sexual rights may look like retro-1960s hedonism; that calls for reducing the surveillance and suspicion of teachers may seem to elevate teachers' comfort over children's safety; and that our attempts to expose the hysterical and reactionary dimensions of reports of epidemic institutional child abuse may be seen as undermining the efforts of those fighting against the brutalization of women and children (p. 7).

Tobin wrote that because of such perceived dangers and misconceptions, many colleagues have left the field, including many gay male teachers and a majority of male teachers. Further, he added, moral panic is spreading and expanding based on anxieties, fears, and prejudices.

Theoretical Perspective

The behaviorist and social constructivist theories of learning comprise a large part of this study. The behaviorist theory is based on several principles. These principles include the ideas that "people are taught to behave they way they do; people teach each other; to learn is to change and; teachers are people who change learners" (Charlesworth, 1992, p. 276). This unidirectional view towards learning uses rewards and reinforcements by adults to change undesired behaviors and evoke desired behaviors from children. Feeney et al. (1991) suggest that behaviorists see "behavior [as] a function of learning" (p. 218). Teachers create environments that are purposeful and orderly and use behavior management techniques to get children to do what the adult wants them to do (Feeney, 1991). Such techniques require the use of a stimulus, or something in the environment

which would produce a behavioral change in a person. Two types of behavioral conditioning, respondent and operant, were differentiated by B. F. Skinner. He defined respondent conditioning as conditioning in which the experimenter has control of the situation. Operant conditioning, however, is under the control of the subject (Howie & Winkleman, 1977). A teacher could use touch to condition a child into a behavior desired by the teacher such as sitting down calmly. On the converse, a child may use a touch, like sitting thigh to thigh to a teacher, to signal the child's need for some calm one on one time with that teacher. In either type of conditioning, touch can calm, excite, or scare the child.

> Behavior modification is the changing of another person's behavior to help him adapt more satisfactorily to his environment. . .Use of operant conditioning in schools is now growing because it can be applied by classroom teachers in group settings, as well as by clinicians in individual settings (Howie & Winkleman, 1977, p. 29).

Howie and Winkleman (1977) further said, "a payoff is what makes a behavior continue. Many times, without realizing it, we respond to children in ways they perceive as payoffs" (p. 55). Rewards, any visible or physical reaction the subject considers important, and reinforcement, the repeating of the same reward to maintain the same behavior, are used to prolong new desired behaviors until they become permanent. Positive reinforcers act as a stimulus to encourage the subject to repeat a behavior while negative reinforcers where a reward is removed encourages the subject to repeat the desired behavior (Howie & Winkleman, 1977). "Positive reinforcement means spending the time you're going to spend on behavior management anyway in emphasizing the good rather than correcting the bad. . . Positive reinforcement can be as simple a thing as a look of approval or a touch on the shoulder" (Shipman & Foley, 1973, p. 6).

Haring and Phillips (1972) explained "that one of the most important features of the behavioral approach in education is the necessity for structure and consistency. The teacher must respond consistently to the child so that the child knows what to expect in any given situation" (p. 2). Some consistent rewards are found in token systems. Tokens such as stickers, stamps, and cards can become the consistent stimuli teachers use to maintain the desired responses the teacher wants in the classroom. Haring and Phillips stated:

> The strength of a token reinforcement system lies in the attractiveness of the activities for which the tokens can be exchanged. Tokens - anything from actual tokens to plastic disks, stars, check marks - become effective as conditioned reinforcers to develop and maintain behavior because they are exchangeable for something of value to the student. They can be exchanged for commercial items or for minutes of time to engage in a choice of activities (p. 20).

How teachers decide to use these conditioning techniques will vary since the role of their values and attitudes on identifying behavior problems will vary as well. Teachers often differ in their tolerance levels regarding behavioral issues (Upton, 1993). These differences will yield to differences in conditioning styles. In the case of touch, the amount and what kind of touch will be markedly different. Perhaps touch will even be removed to serve as a negative reinforcer.

Vygotsky was the first to propose social constructivism (Lewin et al., 1998). Social constructivists believe that social interactions are a key component in children's learning. Rankin (1997) wrote:

> . . . Dewey sees education as being active and constructive. This kind of education has a social direction. . . within which people consciously refer to each other's use of materials, tools, ideas, capacities, and application (p. 73).

The notion that children socially construct their knowledge is further explained by Lewin et al. (1998):

> This theory proposes that the multiple, complex, and subtle interchanges with other people are the substances from which we co-construct intelligence (p. 338).

Children's interpretations and understandings are gained from active and guided learning. Interactions with culture, peers, and/ or teachers are provocations for the child. These provocations, associated with Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), challenge children. Wall (1975) defined that the role of the teacher is to organize and prepare the play materials and to then become an active participant in the play. Further, contact with grown-ups strongly promotes the cognitive development of the child. Wall (1975) strengthened his position by saying:

> . . .we cannot neglect the important interactions which [social and emotional aspects of growth] have with cognitive and linguistic growth both in stimulating or inhibiting them and in their turn being affected by the growing power of the child to understand what goes on around him and to communicate with others (p. 139). . . .The contributions of the home and the nursery school to the child's intellectual and emotional development should arise naturally out of the quality of the environment they provide rather than from any direct teaching such as may be given in primary or secondary schools. Nevertheless the mother or teacher should be aware how experience contributes to the child's intellectual growth and how, by what she offers and her own interventions, she may stimulate and guide as well as follow and assist, the natural course of growth (p. 145).

Edwards and Ramsey (1986) explained that we build our knowledge through observations and interactions with objects, communication and interactions with others, and attempts to try make sense of the discrepancies in the experiences with the understanding that people and culture guide our thinking. They also added

another dimension to the role of the teacher when the described teachers as guides, facilitators, and problem-stimulators. In comparing behavioral theory with social constructivist theory, Edwards and Ramsey (1986) said:

> This view contrasts markedly with the traditional assumption of American behaviorist psychology that knowledge is culturally transmitted. . .the mind is viewed as a learning device adapted for building up associations between environmental inputs (called stimuli and reinforcements) and behavioral outputs (called responses). Teaching involves gaining control of the environmental events in a way that causes desirable behavioral outcomes. Teachers instruct or shape children's behavior so that the children gradually build up competencies and accumulate information and skills (p. 6).

Behaviorists use stimuli such as touch to elicit certain desired behaviors whereas social constructivists use the function of touch to serve as a stimulus for positive cognitive development.

Chapter III

Methods

The purpose of this research was to discover and explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate touch and the positive developmental and educational outcomes of appropriate touch in the early childhood classroom. In particular, this research will provide insight into the role of education, personal teaching philosophy, and previous child care experiences on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward touch. This project involves secondary data analysis of a project previously conducted by Dr. Jan Allen.

Sample

Surveys were distributed over the course of one academic year to 250 students enrolled in Introduction to Early Childhood Education (CFS 110) and Early Childhood Environments (CFS 350) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. CFS 110, Introduction to Early Childhood Education (ECE), is a freshman level course in ECE. Approximately 125 students per year enroll with 75% as majors and 25% as non-majors. Students who take this class are either declared majors in Child Development or ECE or are using this class as a foundations class as they make a decision on a major. Topics for the class include curriculum models in ECE, theoretical bases for ECE, and career exploration in child development or ECE. CFS 350 is an Introduction to Early Childhood Methods and is taken after students have completed both CFS 110 and an Introduction to Child Development class. CFS 350 is the first in a sequence of

professional development classes and includes topics such as communication and interaction, environmental organization, guidance, the role of the teacher, and children and stress. About 80 students per year enroll in this class. Students in CFS 350 are expected to have knowledge of children's development and of the profession beyond that of students in CFS 110. University IRB approval was secured, and prior to participating in the survey, respondents were asked to complete a consent form. No master list was needed or kept with students' names or ID numbers thus allowing for anonymity of the respondents. No immediate risks were posed to the respondents. Surveys were completed voluntarily with no penalty for students in these classes who chose not to respond. No identification numbers corresponding to respondents' identification were ever compiled.

Participants in this study (Table 3-1) included 235 college students (220 females, 10 males, and 5 omissions) ranging from Freshman to Graduate student status (36.6% in Junior standing) pursuing degrees in an education- related field (49.4% in Early Childhood Education/ Child Development) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The respondents reported having taken approximately 1 to 16+ college level child development classes (51.5% reported taking between 1-5 classes). Approximately 43% of the respondents reported previously working in a paid position in a day care setting and 67.7% of the total sample reported volunteering time in a day care setting. A majority (97.2%) did not have children.

Table 3-1 Demographics

gender of respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	10	4.3	4.3	4.3
	female	220	93.6	95.7	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

previously worked in day care in paid position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	124	52.8	54.9	54.9
	yes	102	43.4	45.1	100.0
	Total	226	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	9	3.8		
Total		235	100.0		

previously volunteered in a day care

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	67	28.5	29.6	29.6
	yes	159	67.7	70.4	100.0
	Total	226	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	9	3.8		
Total		235	100.0		

children in day care

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	219	93.2	95.2	95.2
	yes	11	4.7	4.8	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

Table 3-1 Demographics (continued)

college major

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ECE/CD	116	49.4	73.9	73.9
	psychology/sociology	6	2.6	3.8	77.7
	business	2	.9	1.3	79.0
	other	33	14.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	157	66.8	100.0	
Missing	System	78	33.2		
Total		235	100.0		

college classification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	freshman	13	5.5	5.8	5.8
	sophomore	52	22.1	23.3	29.1
	junior	86	36.6	38.6	67.7
	senio	69	29.4	30.9	98.7
	graudate student	3	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	223	94.9	100.0	
Missing	System	12	5.1		
Total		235	100.0		

number of college courses taken in CD or ECE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5	121	51.5	61.7	61.7
	6-10	43	18.3	21.9	83.7
	11-15	21	8.9	10.7	94.4
	16+	11	4.7	5.6	100.0
	Total	196	83.4	100.0	
Missing	System	39	16.6		
Total		235	100.0		

Survey Instrument

Respondents' were asked to complete the "Teacher Belief Rating Scale" (Allen, 1989). The survey included 16 questions designed to assess respondents' theoretical orientation, specifically constructivist or behaviorist. Two additional questions assess respondents' attitudes about physical touch and behaviors in adult-child interactions (see Appendix A for original survey). Another two questions asked respondents to answer yes or no if they had any experience working in child care as an employee or volunteer.

Data Collection

For this project, original surveys were used for data entry; these surveys contained no identifying information (neither names nor numbers). Of the 250 surveys originally distributed in class, 235 were returned, which equated to a return rate of 94%. Question responses were coded and entered for data analysis. Three touch variables (TOUCH1=high, TOUCH2=moderate, and TOUCH3=low risk) were created by combining variables pertaining to the appropriateness of touch given certain situations from the survey.

Hypotheses

Relationships among the independent variables of teaching philosophy, education level, and teaching experience and the dependent variable of pre-service teachers' perceptions of the developmental and educational outcomes of

appropriate touch in early childhood settings were examined. A teacher's theoretical orientation will most likely be related to the way they perceive and handle different situations including the use of touch in the classroom. While those with a behavioral theory perspective may use touch, it is possible that teachers would be more likely to use touch to control behaviors in the classroom. Teachers using a social constuctivist approach may use touch not only to help guide behaviors but also to help children learn comfortably more about the world around them thus allowing teachers to become more comfortable with the role of touch in the early childhood classroom. Since the social constructivist approach is still growing in popularity, it would be understandable for pre-service teachers to adopt this theoretical belief in teaching young children. Therefore, it is hypothesized that (a) pre-service teachers with more college education/ courses will be related to positive attitudes towards touch, (b) pre-service teachers with a social constructivist philosophy will be related to positive attitude towards touch, and (c) pre-service teachers with previous teaching or volunteering experience in a day care center will be related to a positive attitude towards touch.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and entered for analysis using SPSS 8.0 (1998). For analysis of the data set, questions based on behaviorist and social constructivist views were entered so that response to the social constructivist questions were coded 0-4 (0 equaling "strongly disagree") while the codes for the behavioral questions' responses were then reversed (0 equaling "strongly disagree"). The questions concerning attitudes in touch situations (see Appendix A2) were

combined into high (activities in which there has to be physical contact with a child), moderate (activities with the possibility of physical contact), and low (activities with no physical contact) risk categories of touch. High risk activities were considered to be diapering, toileting, and naptime. Moderate risk activities included reading a book, playing a game, or doing a puzzle with a child. Low risk activities were identified as listening to records, mealtime, and snack time.

Two tests were used in analyzing the data set. Because an association between a respondent's score on each of the touch variables and the number of Early Childhood Education (ECE)/ Child Development (CD) courses were being examined, the Kruskal - Wallis was used. This test was appropriate because the dependent variable is categorical and the independent samples have more than two levels. To examine the role of previous childcare experience and teaching philosophies on attitudes towards touch, the Spearman's Rho correlation was used because the hypotheses tested were one-way predictions.

Chapter IV

Results

In analyzing the data, questions surrounding attitudes in a variety of possible touch situations were combined into high, moderate, and low risk categories of touch. It was hypothesized that pre-service teachers with more college education/ courses will be related to a positive attitude towards touch, pre-service teachers with a constructivist philosophy will be related to a positive attitude towards touch, and pre-service teachers with previous teaching or volunteering experience in a day care center will be related to a positive attitude towards touch. To test the hypotheses, the Kruskal - Wallis was used to examine the role of education and attitudes towards touch in the classroom and the Spearman's Rho correlation to examine the role of previous childcare experience and teaching philosophies on attitudes towards touch.

The Role of Education and Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom

To assess the relationship between the role of education and attitudes toward touch in the classroom, the Kruskal- Wallis test was used. The Kruskal-Wallis test arranges all of the cases in the dataset by their scores from lowest to highest (-3 to +3). Each case is then assigned a rank based on position in this arrangement from lowest to highest rank. The cases are then separated into groups based on their response to the education variable and then the rank scores of the

respondents in each education group are averaged to get a mean rank for each group. Once the mean ranks are calculated for each group, the Kruskal- Wallis test tests the null hypothesis that the four mean ranks are equal.

Asymptotic significance levels for the high (TOUCH1), moderate (TOUCH2), and low (TOUCH3) risk touch groups ranged from .378 to .465 with an alpha value of .05. Because no significant differences in the ranks and no associations between touch scores and the number of college level child development/ education courses were found, the research hypothesis had to be rejected (Table 4-1).

The Role of Personal Teaching Philosophy and Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom

To test the relationship between personal teaching philosophy and attitudes towards touch in the classroom, all questions reflecting a constructivist approach were compiled and averaged for a mean scores (see Appendix B1). The same was done for all questions reflecting a behaviorist approach. With the new variable of Constructivist behaviors (CBEHAV) and the existing touch group variables (TOUCH1, TOUCH2, and TOUCH3), a one-tailed Spearman's rho correlation was used (table 4-2). Insignificant correlations (correlation coefficient scores ranged from -.065 to -.026; $p = .01$) show lack of support for the second research hypothesis. (See appendices B1 and B2 for frequency tables.)

Table 4-1. The Role of Education on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom

Ranks

	number of college courses	N	Mean Rank
TOUCH1	1-5	121	93.88
	6-10	43	108.70
	11-15	20	103.57
	16+	11	91.32
	Total	195	
TOUCH2	1-5	119	91.98
	6-10	42	103.71
	11-15	20	105.72
	16+	11	101.09
	Total	192	
TOUCH3	1-5	119	91.66
	6-10	42	108.39
	11-15	20	97.38
	16+	11	101.86
	Total	192	

Test Statistics[a,b]

	TOUCH1	TOUCH2	TOUCH3
Chi-Square	2.670	2.559	3.087
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.445	.465	.378

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: number of college courses taken in CD or ECE

The Role of Previous Childcare Experience on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom

Spearman's rho correlation was again used to examine the relationship between previous childcare experience (a previous paid position or volunteer position) and attitudes toward touch in the classroom (Table 4-2). Results did not show a strong relationship between these variables. Low significance scores ranging from .150 to .250 refuted the third research hypothesis.

Summary of Results

None of the three research hypotheses' received any support from the statistical tests and were therefore refuted. Examination of the data set showed that pre-service teachers with more college child development/ education classes did not have strong relationship with a positive attitude towards touch in the classroom, pre-service teachers with a more constructivist philosophy did not have a stronger relationship with a positive attitude towards touch in the classroom than those with a behaviorist philosophy and, pre-service teachers with some previous childcare teaching or volunteering experience did not have a strong relationship with a positive attitude towards touch than those without previous experience.

Table 4-2. The Role of Personal Teaching Philosophy and Previous Childcare Experience on Attitudes Towards Touch in the Classroom

Correlations

			TOUCH1	TOUCH2	TOUCH3	previously volunteered in a day care	previously worked in day care in paid position	CBEHAV
Spearman's rho	TOUCH1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.389**	.628**	.169**	.221**	-.038
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.006	.000	.281
		N	233	230	230	224	224	233
	TOUCH2	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.700**	.167**	.150*	-.026
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.	.000	.006	.013	.345
		N		230	230	221	221	230
	TOUCH3	Correlation Coefficient			1.000	.184**	.250**	-.065
		Sig. (1-tailed)			.	.003	.000	.162
		N			230	221	221	230
	previously volunteered in a day care	Correlation Coefficient				1.000	.160**	-.088
		Sig. (1-tailed)				.	.008	.093
		N				226	226	226
	previously worked in day care in paid position	Correlation Coefficient					1.000	-.076
		Sig. (1-tailed)					.	.126
		N					226	226
	CBEHAV	Correlation Coefficient						1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)						.
		N						235

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed).

Chapter V

Conclusion

Discussion of Findings

Behaviorists may use stimuli to evoke desired behaviors while social constructivists may use touch to enhance cognitive and social development. Teachers with a behaviorist teaching strategy might use touch in attempt to have control over the environment. They might use touch to keep the classroom calm, productive and focused. On the converse, teachers with a social constructivist teaching strategy might use touch to help establish a strong teacher-child relationship with the intention of using that strong relationship to help the child feel more comfortable and to grow cognitively. In other words, the child might feel emotionally safe to make mistakes to get to the correct answer. It was presumed that with more college level courses and past working or volunteering in a day care setting, pre-service teachers would adopt a social constructivist teaching philosophy. However, examination of the hypotheses presented in this study showed no support for the research hypotheses. Pre-service teachers with more college child development/ education classes did not have a strong relationship with a positive attitude towards touch in the classroom. The number of child development/ education classes a pre-service teacher had taken showed little difference in the expressed attitudes towards touch in the classroom. Similarly, pre-service teachers with a more Social Constructivist philosophy did not have a stronger relationship with a positive attitude towards touch in the classroom than

those with a Behaviorist philosophy. Lastly, pre-service teachers with some previous childcare teaching or volunteering experience did not have a stronger relationship with a positive attitude towards touch than those without previous experience. None of the predicted variables of education, teaching philosophies, and previous work or volunteer experience had any significant effect on the touch variables.

There are a few possible reasons why no significances might have been found. First, the lack of a definition for touch allowed for the respondents to complete the survey based on their own ideas of what touch means. Respondents could have defined touch as a functional act or they could have defined touch on a more extreme notion of physical or sexual abuse inflicted upon the child. The discrepancies in the opinions on how to define touch could alter how the respondents read and subsequently answered specific questions. For example, in answering questions about the appropriateness of touch in certain situations like "during toileting" a respondent with functional touch in mind might find it appropriate whereas a respondent with an extreme definition might find the touch inappropriate. Another discrepancy in opinions could be based on the differing cultural opinions on the use of touch. One culture may perceive the use of touch as not needed in the classroom while another culture may value the use of everyday touch.

Second, given the respondents varying class standings we can question what the respondents' true intentions of completing the survey were. Did freshmen want to complete the survey to "just do it?" Did they respond in agreement or disagreement to every question just to complete the survey? There is no way to assess the respondents seriousness with completing an anonymous survey.

According to Creamer, et al. (1990) college students are "all dressed up and do not know where they want to go" (p. 50). They are working to develop a purpose, or clarify who they are, where they came from , and who they want to be. By developing purpose they increase their ability to be purposeful, to gain their own interests and options, to make their own goals, to make their own plans, and to keep on going despite what lies ahead of them. They are also working to develop integrity. A person's foundation for perceiving experience, guiding behavior, and keeping self-respect are constructed of values and beliefs. Creamer, et al. (1990) further explained:

> Developing integrity involves three sequential but overlapping stages: (1) humanizing values- shifting away from automatic application of uncompromising beliefs and using principled thinking in balancing one's own self-interest with the interests of one's fellow human beings, (2) personalizing values- consciously affirming core values and beliefs while respecting other points of view, and (3) developing congruence- matching personal values with socially responsible behavior (p. 50).

This presents the idea that respondents of this survey may still be developing purpose and integrity. They might still be looking to see who they are and what their own personal beliefs and values are going to be.

Third, perhaps the attitudes towards the role of touch in the early childhood classroom might have nothing to do with a teacher's theoretical belief. The value towards touch in the classroom might be more a personal belief than an overall theoretically based belief. Perhaps the theory justifies a teacher's existing personal belief to use touch in the classroom. The belief system that drew them into childcare may also draw them to be social constructivist or behaviorist. So, future research should get at personal belief systems about touch.

Lastly, there is a possibility that other outside factors could affect the respondents' responses. There was a small amount of significance reported in examining the role of personal teaching philosophy and previous childcare experience on attitudes towards touch in the classroom. We need to consider that some outside factors may contribute to personal teaching beliefs thus influencing attitudes towards touch.

Implications

Gandini (1997) said, "All children have the preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in engaging in social interaction, establishing relationships, constructing their learning, and negotiating with everything the environment brings them" (p. 16-17). Teachers from Reggio Emilia view children as having not needs, but rights (Hendrick, 1997). But what rights? Children have physical, emotional, social, and cognitive rights that need to be considered. Children have the right to be held on a teacher's lap or given a hug by a teacher when the child becomes sad. One question to ask is if teachers underexpect the emotional and physical needs of children? In other words, do teachers underestimate the child's need for physical nurturance or a guiding hand to complete a task?

In the preschools in Reggio Emilia, "the environments actively promote children's development through means often neglected or denied, including the critical role of social relations and sociocognitive conflict" (New, 1998, p. 229). Gandini (1998) explains that the teachers in Reggio Emilia stay with the children in their room for several years. The relationships that are formed among the children, parents, and teachers set the tone for the classroom and create a culture unique to

that classroom. Thus, the classroom becomes a familiar niche. With social development viewed as an intrinsic component of cognitive growth, the environment is arranged to facilitate interactions among the children. "The space has to guarantee the well-being of each child and of the group as a whole" (Gandini, 1998, p. 170). Meanwhile, the environment is also created to encourage and develop interactions and exchanges of teachers, staff, and parents among themselves and also with the children. Donovan (1997) further explains that the environments are set up to facilitate "encounters between children and adults with objects" (p. 183).

To facilitate these encounters, a teacher should ask what makes the encounters and environments personal? When Gandini (1997) described a preschool environment in Reggio Emilia, she said "[it is] not just beautiful- it is highly personal" (p. 18). In a classroom where physical touch by a teacher is limited or does not exist, is the environment considered to be personal? Children in the Reggio Emilia preschools are given their own personal mailboxes within the classroom. The children can use these mailboxes to deliver individualized messages to each other. The written word is one form of communication but touch, defined by Johnson and Franke (1997) as a communication tool, is another to be considered. How can we incorporate a way for children and teachers to express themselves by using touch? According to Johnson and Franke (1997), there is a great need inside a person to be hugged or touched in order to be healthy and to thrive. The authors have several suggestions for teachers who are attempting to do "Hug Therapy." First, ask the child for permission to hug them so there are no privacy violations. Second, make sure the hugs being given are compassionate and not passionate. Lastly, messages being sent through hugs should give off nonverbal

statements such as "I understand how you feel" or "You are special" or "You are who you are, not just what you do." Of most importance to remember is that hugging is for a variety of people. Those who are lonely and hurt as well as for those who are happy and healthy.

Edwards (1998) described the role of a teacher in Reggio Emilia as being determined by all the teachers working together. As a team, the teachers look at and agree upon the children's nature, rights, and capacities. Teachers complement the children (the learners). However, the role is never permanently defined. The teachers' role changes to meet the ever changing need of the children in the classroom. A teacher should include in their role the need to touch children. It could be a nurturing touch such as a kiss on the cheek to a sad little girl or a pat on the shoulder for a job well done. Touch could also be an educational technique. For example, a teacher could place her hands over another child's hands to help the child work and learn about clay. There is a high degree of collaboration and cooperation that develops from the extremely strong relationships between children and adults (Donovan, 1997). This collaboration might be strengthened if touch between teachers and children were considered a necessary part of the preschool environment. Most children have strong relationships with their parents. These children are nurtured and are shown great deal of affection through hugs and cuddling.

Some would like to think that at home, most children snuggle up to one or both parents and most children are given a kiss good morning or good night. In an interview with a preschool teacher, the teacher commented on her classroom arrangement after becoming inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to teaching. She said, "I added an adult- looking couch to make [the room] more like home"

(Saltz, 1997, p. 172). If the intent of a preschool classroom is to make it feel more like home, then more than physical structures must be considered. Physical interactions and the role of the teacher and the needs of the children must be taken into account.

Unfortunately, moral panics can yield strict policies regarding teacher-child interactions. Such policies could include the "no touch" policy in which provisions and guidelines for teacher-child interactions are made to limit and control any physical contacts between the teacher and child. In discussing their chapter on "no touch" policies, Johnson and Franke (1997) provided multiple examples of the perceptions male teachers have regarding touch in the classroom. Males have been left with many cautious and fearful reminders of modes and rules of interactions such as hugging children from the side, keeping windows and doors open, and never being left alone with a student. Other fears mentioned through brief dialogues with male and female teachers made teachers cautious to not initiate affection but not to refuse an act initiated by a child and to use overcaution in handling regular care situations such as toileting. These fears can cause second guessing of behaviors that should be instinctual and natural. The authors emphasized that children who feel emotionally safe and secure will become more trusting to learn without fears of experimenting, exploring, or being wrong. It has been perceived by some educators that the "no touch" policy was in use to protect the center more than to protect the child (Johnson, 1997). Moral panics are distorting the truth from our perceptions of our knowledge of children. For example, reported allegations of child sexual abuse in childcare settings are perceived to be much higher than what they really are. In fact, it has been reported

that less than 2% of sexual abuse reports have come from within a school system; greater risk is at home (Allen, 1988).

Limitations and Future Studies

There were several limitations to this study. First, some of the questions in the survey were vague in their definition of touch. Varying numbers of respondents declined to answer or chose to write in their responses to several of the Likert scale questions. For example, in answering questions about levels of appropriateness of touch during diapering, many people answered the questions and then wrote "depending on the type of touch used" or "for sanitary purposes only." Another limitation was in the sampling. A larger sample size with a population from several different universities might have helped in creating larger demographic diversity and generating a wider range of responses to the questions being asked. Lastly, most of the respondents in this study were women which reflected the childcare workforce. It is possible that the survey questions directed to childcare workers were not only culturally biased but also gender biased since a single digit percentage of childcare workers are male.

Replication of this study with more funding to survey pre-service teachers around the country would be beneficial once the survey is reconstructed and questions on touch situations are more clearly defined. With a survey in which touch is more clearly defined, perhaps respondents would answer the questions with more confidence and less confusion about what the questions mean rather than answering a question unsure of how touch was defined as and then writing a comment on the side explaining their hesitancy or confusion in answering.

Qualitative interviews could provide much more insight into the minds of pre-service teachers. The interviews could help in determining the seriousness of the pre-service teachers responses. They could also aid in understanding the respondents ideas of what touch means and potentially become a beginning step towards finding a global definition of touch. It would be interesting to interview not only pre-service teachers but to also expand the research to include teachers currently employed in an early childhood classroom who do or do not have an education related degree. Even further, to interview teachers from accredited centers by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and teachers from non-accredited centers and from family childcare centers. It would also be interesting to see how differing personalities (i.e. pre-service and early childhood educators personal values, beliefs, and non-physical characteristic traits) effect attitudes towards the role of touch in the early childhood classroom.

Summary

No support was found for any of the research hypotheses. First, pre-service teachers with more college child development/ education classes were not found to have a more positive attitude towards touch in the classroom. The test showed no significant differences in the expressed attitudes towards touch in the classroom. Secondly, no significant differences were found between pre-service teachers with a more Social Constructivist philosophy and those with a Behaviorist philosophy in relation to attitudes towards touch in the classroom. Lastly, pre-service teachers' day care work or volunteering experiences did not have any significant differences in attitudes towards touch.

In sum, touch is an important element to be considered in the early childhood classroom. Touch can convey many meanings including affection, guidance, and instruction. To gain strong relationships between teachers and children, teachers need to be more open and less fearful of using touch in the classroom. The benefits of using touch are many. Touch can help expand attention spans, calm and relax children, and help communicate a message to a child that words cannot.

REFERENCES

References

Allen, J. (1986). Safe touch: Reassurances for child care workers. Day Care and Early Education, 14, 14-16.

Allen, J. (1988). Turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones: Child sexual abuse in day care. Dimensions, 16 (4), 12-14.

Berk, L. E. & Winsler, A. (1995). Scaffolding children's learning: Vygotsky and early childhood education. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C., Eds. (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Brody, V. A. (1992). The dialogue of touch: Developmental play therapy. International Journal of Play Therapy, 1, 21-30.

Creamer, D. G. & Associates (1990). College student development: Theory and practice for the 1990's. Lanham, MD: American College Personnel Association.

Charlesworth, R. (1991). Understanding child development (third edition). New York: Delmar Publishers Inc.

Cigales, M., Field, T., Hossain, Z., Peleaz-Nogueras, M., & Gewirtz, J. (1996). Touch among children at nursery school. Early Child Development and Care, 126, 101-110.

Clarke-Stewart, K. A. (1991). A home is not a school: The effects of child care on children's development. Journal of Social Issues, 47 (2),105-123.

Crapps, J. M. & Witkowski, M. E. (1989). The role of touch during free-play of handicapped and non-handicapped children. Journal of Classroom Interaction, 24 (2), 1-6.

DelPrete, T. (1998). Getting back in touch with students: Should we risk it? Professional School Counseling, 1, 62-65.

Donovan, F. (1997). Using the Reggio Emilia Approach in a children's museum. In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 181-194). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Edwards, C. (1998). Partner, nurturer, and guide: The role of the teacher. In Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Foreman, G. (Eds.). The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education (p. 179-198). Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex.

Edwards, C. & Ramsey, P. G. (1986). Promoting social and moral development in young children: Creative approaches for the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press.

Feeney, S., Christensen, D., & Moravciki, E. (1991). Who am I in the lives of children? (fourth edition). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Field, T., Harding, J., Soliday, B., Lasko, D., Gonzalez, N., & Valdeon, C. (1994). Touching in infant, toddler, and preschool nurseries. Early Child Development and Care, 98, 113-120.

Field, T., Kilmer, T., Hernandez-Reif, M., & Burman, I. (1996). Preschool children's sleep and wake behavior: Effects of massage therapy. Early Child Development and Care, 120, 39-44.

Field, T., Lasko, D., Mundy, P., Henteleff, T., Kabat, S., Talpins, S., & Dowling, M. (1997). Brief report: Autistic children's attentiveness and responsivity improve after touch therapy. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 27(3), 333-338.

Foreman, G. & Fyfe B. (1998). Negotiated learning through design, documentation and discourse. In Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Foreman, G. (Eds.). The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education (p. 239-260). Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex.

Gandini, L. (1997). Foundations of the Reggio Emilia Approach. In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 14-23). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Gandini, L. (1998). Educational and caring spaces. In Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Foreman, G. (Eds.). The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education (p. 161-178). Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex.

Haring, N. G. & Phillips, E. L. (1972). Analysis and modification of classroom behavior. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Harrison-Speake, K., & Willis, F. N. (1995). Ratings of the appropriateness of touch among family members. Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 19 (2), 85-100.

Hendrick, J. (1997). Reggio Emilia and American schools: Telling them apart and putting them together- Can we do it? In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 41-51). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Howie, P. A. & Winkleman, G. (1977). Behavior modification: A practical guide for the classroom teacher. New York: Parker Publishing Company.

Johnson, R. (1997). The "no touch" policy. In Tobin, J. (Ed.). Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (p. 101-118). Michigan: Edwards Brothers.

Johnson, S., & Franke, S. (1997). Hug therapy. Children and Families, 16 (2), 8-9.

Leavitt, R. L., & Power, M. B. (1997). Civilizing bodies: Children in day care. In Tobin, J. (Ed.). Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (p. 39-75). Michigan: Edwards Brothers.

Lewin, A. W. Bridge to another culture: The journey of the Model Early Learning Center. In Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Foreman, G. (Eds.). The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education (p. 335-357). Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex.

Major, B., Schmidlin, A. M., & Williams, L. (1990). Gender patterns in social touch: The impact of setting and age. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58 (4), 634-643.

Mazur, S., & Pekor, C. (1985). Can teachers touch children anymore?: Physical contact and its value in children's development. Young Children, 40 (4), 10-12.

Meyer, J., & Driskill, G. (1997). Children and relationship development: Communication strategies in a day care center. Communication Reports, 10 (1), 75-85.

New, R. (1997). Next steps in teaching "the Reggio way": Advocating for a new image of children. In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 224-233). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Rane, T. R., & Draper, T. W. (1995). Negative evaluations of men's nurturant touching of young children. Psychological Reports, 76, 811-818.

Rankin, B. (1997). Education as collaboration: Learning from and building on Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget. In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 70-83). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Saltz, R. (1997). The Reggio Emilia influence at the University of Michigan-Dearborn child development center: Challenges and change. In Hendrick, J. (Ed.). First steps towards teaching the Reggio way (p. 167-176). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Shipman, H. & Foley, E. (1973). Any teacher can . . . : A systematic approach to behavior management and positive teaching. Chicago: Loyola University Press.

Tobin, J. (1997). Introduction. In Tobin, J. (Ed.). Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (p. 1-37). Michigan: Edwards Brothers.

Upton, G. (1993). Understanding interaction: The dynamics of emotion and behavioral difficulties. In Charlton, T. & Routledge, K. D. (Eds.). Managing misbehavior in schools, 2nd Ed. (104-120) New York: Routledge.

Wall, W. D. (1975). Constructive education for children. Paris: The Unesco Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONTENTS--APPENDIX A

A1. Consent Letter..... 51

A2. Teacher Belief Rating Scale.....52

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

College of
Human Ecology

Department of
Child and
Family Studies

Dear Early Childhood Education Student:

Early childhood educators will have an increasingly important role in the care and education of young children as more working parents rely on nonparental child care. Thus, knowledge and attitudes of child care workers are very important to those of us involved in the education and training of child care professionals.

I am requesting your help in a project that examines knowledge and attitudes of prospective and current early childhood educators. Please do not sign your name to the questionnaire. Your answers will be anonymous.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. There are no anticipated risks to you from your involvement in this project. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your employment or relationship with your teacher.

Your answers to the questions will be seen by the researcher only. They will not be shown to your teacher. Completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. After the results have been analyzed, the individual questionnaires will be destroyed. Results will be reported by groups only. No individual results can be or will be reported.

Your completing and returning this questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate in the study. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at (615) 974-3316. If you would like a summary of the results, please call or write me, and I will send you a copy when the study is completed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jan Allen, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

JEA:mct

1215 West Cumberland Avenue, Room 115, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37996-1900 (615) 974-3316

TEACHER BELIEF RATING SCALE

Please indicate what you believe related to the statements below by checking the appropriate column corresponding to these responses:

1=strongly agree
2=mostly agree
3=no strong agreement or disagreement
4=mostly disagree
5=strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
** 1.	Children learn best when they are actively engaged with the materials in the environment.	—	—	—	—	—
* 2.	Children learn best when teachers focus on the end-product of learning.	—	—	—	—	—
3.	Touching and physical contact contribute to children's healthy physical development.	—	—	—	—	—
* 4.	Children learn in much the same way that adults do.	—	—	—	—	—
** 5.	Children learn best when the activities are rewarding in themselves.	—	—	—	—	—
6.	Teachers communicate their sex role expectations for children's behavior through the way they touch and use physical contact with children.	—	—	—	—	—
** 7.	Children learn best when they experience a broad range of activities from which they can deduce specific concepts.	—	—	—	—	—
8.	Touch and physical contact contribute to children's healthy emotional development.	—	—	—	—	—
9.	Touch and physical contact contribute to children's healthy self-esteem development.	—	—	—	—	—
** 10.	Children learn best when the focus is on the process or how something is done.	—	—	—	—	—
* 11.	Children learn best when the content of a lesson is given to the child by a good teacher.	—	—	—	—	—
12.	Touch and physical contact help to develop a positive relationship between teachers and children, which can help foster children's learning.	—	—	—	—	—
** 13.	Children learn in very different ways from the ways that adults learn.	—	—	—	—	—
* 14.	Children learn best when they are reinforced with rewards from the teachers.	—	—	—	—	—
15.	Touch and physical contact convey acceptance and feelings of affection to children.	—	—	—	—	—
* 16.	Children learn best when specific information is given to them to learn.	—	—	—	—	—

* denotes Behaviorist questions

** denotes Constructivist questions

17. What do you think is the single most important issue facing day care teachers today?

18. What do you think is the single most important issue facing parents who use day care for their preschool children today?

19. Children are more likely to be abused by a

___father
___mother
___other relative
___day care teacher
___stranger

20. What percentage of all reported child sexual abuse cases occurs in day care centers?

_____%

21. With your knowledge of information about child sexual abuse and the level of public awareness about child sexual abuse, do you think day care teachers should

___yes ___no...teach sex abuse information and prevention skills to preschool children.
___yes ___no...use physical contact to provide guidance in redirecting or responding to a misbehaving or noncompliant child.
___yes ___no...hug, hold, and cuddle children in day care.
___yes ___no...touch children only when necessary for routine caregiving.
___yes ___no...touch children when appropriate and necessary, but probably in fewer situations than their parents do.

22. Do you think it is appropriate to touch children during:

	Yes, it is appropriate	No, it is not appropriate	I'm not sure if it's appropriate
diapering	___	___	___
mealtime	___	___	___
reading a book together	___	___	___
listening to a record	___	___	___
toileting	___	___	___
playing a game	___	___	___
working a puzzle	___	___	___
snacktime	___	___	___
naptime	___	___	___

23. Please answer these few remaining questions about yourself.

I am a _____Female _____Male

Have you previously worked in a day care center in a paid position?

_____Yes _____No

Have you previously worked in a day care center in a volunteer position?

_____Yes _____No

Do you have children for whom you have used day care services?

_____Yes _____No

College Major:

College Classification: ___Fr. ___Soph ___Jr ___Sr ___Grad Student

How many college courses have you had in child development or early childhood education?

APPENDIX B

CONTENTS--APPENDIX B

B1. Frequency Table for Questions Based on Behaviorist and Constructivist Philosophy.....57

B2. Frequency Table for Questions Based on the Appropriateness of Touch in the Early Childhood Classroom.....61

Frequency Table for Questions based on Behaviorist and Constructivist Philosophy

Constructivist Theory Responses

active engagement with materials

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	162	68.9	69.2	69.2
	mostly agree	58	24.7	24.8	94.0
	no strong agreement or disagreement	5	2.1	2.1	96.2
	mostly disagree	4	1.7	1.7	97.9
	strongly disagree	5	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	234	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		235	100.0		

Rewarding activity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	112	47.7	47.7	47.7
	mostly agree	98	41.7	41.7	89.4
	no strong agreement or disagreement	15	6.4	6.4	95.7
	mostly disagree	6	2.6	2.6	98.3
	strongly disagree	4	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

deduce concepts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	87	37.0	37.2	37.2
	mostly agree	95	40.4	40.6	77.8
	no strong agreement or disagreement	33	14.0	14.1	91.9
	mostly disagree	16	6.8	6.8	98.7
	strongly disagree	3	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	234	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		235	100.0		

focus on process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	67	28.5	28.5	28.5
	mostly agree	66	28.1	28.1	56.6
	no strong agreement or disagreement	51	21.7	21.7	78.3
	mostly disagree	40	17.0	17.0	95.3
	strongly disagree	11	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

children learn differently than adults

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	54	23.0	23.0	23.0
	mostly agree	71	30.2	30.2	53.2
	no strong agreement or disagreement	55	23.4	23.4	76.6
	mostly disagree	42	17.9	17.9	94.5
	strongly disagree	13	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Behaviorist Theory Responses

teachers focus on end-product

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	10	4.3	4.3	4.3
	mostly agree	32	13.6	13.7	17.9
	no strong agreement or disagreement	69	29.4	29.5	47.4
	mostly disagree	72	30.6	30.8	78.2
	strongly disagree	51	21.7	21.8	100.0
	Total	234	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		235	100.0		

Children learn the same way as adults

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	15	6.4	6.4	6.4
	mostly agree	50	21.3	21.3	27.7
	no strong agreement or disagreement	57	24.3	24.3	51.9
	mostly disagree	70	29.8	29.8	81.7
	strongly disagree	43	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

content of lesson by a good teacher

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	52	22.1	22.1	22.1
	mostly agree	81	34.5	34.5	56.6
	no strong agreement or disagreement	65	27.7	27.7	84.3
	mostly disagree	25	10.6	10.6	94.9
	strongly disagree	12	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

reinforcement with rewards

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	25	10.6	10.7	10.7
	mostly agree	83	35.3	35.6	46.4
	no strong agreement or disagreement	73	31.1	31.3	77.7
	mostly disagree	41	17.4	17.6	95.3
	strongly disagree	11	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	233	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.9		
Total		235	100.0		

specific information given to children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	15	6.4	6.4	6.4
	mostly agree	64	27.2	27.2	33.6
	no strong agreement or disagreement	52	22.1	22.1	55.7
	mostly disagree	76	32.3	32.3	88.1
	strongly disagree	28	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Frequency Table for Questions Based on the Appropriateness of Touch in the Early Childhood Classroom

Touch 1 (High Risk)

touch during diapering

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	203	86.4	88.3	88.3
	no, not appropriate	5	2.1	2.2	90.4
	i'm not sure if appropriate	22	9.4	9.6	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate during toileting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	95	40.4	41.3	41.3
	no, not appropriate	78	33.2	33.9	75.2
	I'm not sure if appropriate	57	24.3	24.8	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate at naptime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, it's appropriate	119	50.6	51.7	51.7
	no, not appropriate	81	34.5	35.2	87.0
	I'm not sure if appropriate	30	12.8	13.0	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

Touch 2 (Moderate Risk)

appropriate while reading together

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	194	82.6	84.3	84.3
	no, not appropriate	15	6.4	6.5	90.9
	I'm not sure if appropriate	21	8.9	9.1	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate while playing a game

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	153	65.1	66.8	66.8
	no, not appropriate	32	13.6	14.0	80.8
	I'm not sure if appropriate	44	18.7	19.2	100.0
	Total	229	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.6		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate while working a puzzle

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	137	58.3	59.8	59.8
	no, not appropriate	46	19.6	20.1	79.9
	I'm not sure if appropriate	46	19.6	20.1	100.0
	Total	229	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.6		
Total		235	100.0		

Touch 3 (Low Risk)

appropriate while listening to a record

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	131	55.7	57.2	57.2
	no, not appropriate	50	21.3	21.8	79.0
	I'm not sure if appropriate	48	20.4	21.0	100.0
	Total	229	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.6		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate at mealtime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	116	49.4	50.7	50.7
	no, not appropraite	60	25.5	26.2	76.9
	i'm not sure	53	22.6	23.1	100.0
	Total	229	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.6		
Total		235	100.0		

appropriate at snack

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, appropriate	110	46.8	47.8	47.8
	no, not appropriate	62	26.4	27.0	74.8
	I'm not sure if appropriate	58	24.7	25.2	100.0
	Total	230	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.1		
Total		235	100.0		

VITA

Claudine Marie Grieshaber was born October 27, 1974 in Newport News, Virginia to Karl and Shirley Grieshaber. After graduating from Sherwood High School in Sandy Springs, Maryland in June of 1992, she returned to Virginia to attend Radford University. She graduated from Radford in May of 1997 with a B.A. in Human Development. During her undergraduate experience, Claudine took on a part time job at Rainbow Riders Childcare Center as an after school school-age teacher. She later worked full time for one year after graduation in the four-year-old classroom at the same center. After a one year hiatus from studies, Claudine enrolled in the Masters program at the University of Tennessee to receive her M.S. in Child and Family Studies. She then returned to Blacksburg, Virginia to resume work as a preschool teacher at Rainbow Riders. She aspires to teach college level courses at a local community college and to also become a consultant for area childcare centers.

5176 3768 48
09/24/02 VA MAB