

# Interconnectedness between Teachers' Beliefs about Curriculum, Planning, and Implementation

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## Research Questions

Teachers' beliefs about curriculum could influence their practice, classroom quality, and child outcomes (Hamre et al., 2012; Wen et al., 2011). However, there is limited understanding of how preschool teachers perceive their curriculum and apply it to their planning and enactment of instruction.

The purpose of this study was to explore preschool teachers' beliefs about their curriculum and how that manifested in planning and instruction.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are preschool teachers' perceptions of how their curriculum, planning, and enactment of instruction support children's learning?
- 2) How are these perceptions aligned across curriculum, planning, and enactment of instruction?

## Method

### PARTICIPANTS

- 18 preschool teachers
- 8.9 average years of teaching experiences (range from 0.5 to 30 years;  $SD = 8.63$ )
- 38.9% ( $n = 7$ ) working in private schools, 27.8% ( $n = 5$ ) working in Head Start, and 11.1% ( $n = 2$ ) working in public schools.
- 72.2% ( $n = 13$ ) of teachers holding a bachelor's degree or higher, and the remaining 27.8% ( $n = 5$ ) having associate's degree
- 66.7% ( $n = 12$ ) using Create Curriculum, and 33% ( $n = 6$ ) using a teacher/school created curriculum

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES

Participants completed a background interview where they described how their curriculum supported children's learning. They then engaged in two planning and stimulated recall interviews (Schachter & Freeman, 2015). During these interviews, teachers were asked to explain their thinking in support of planning and enactment of instruction.

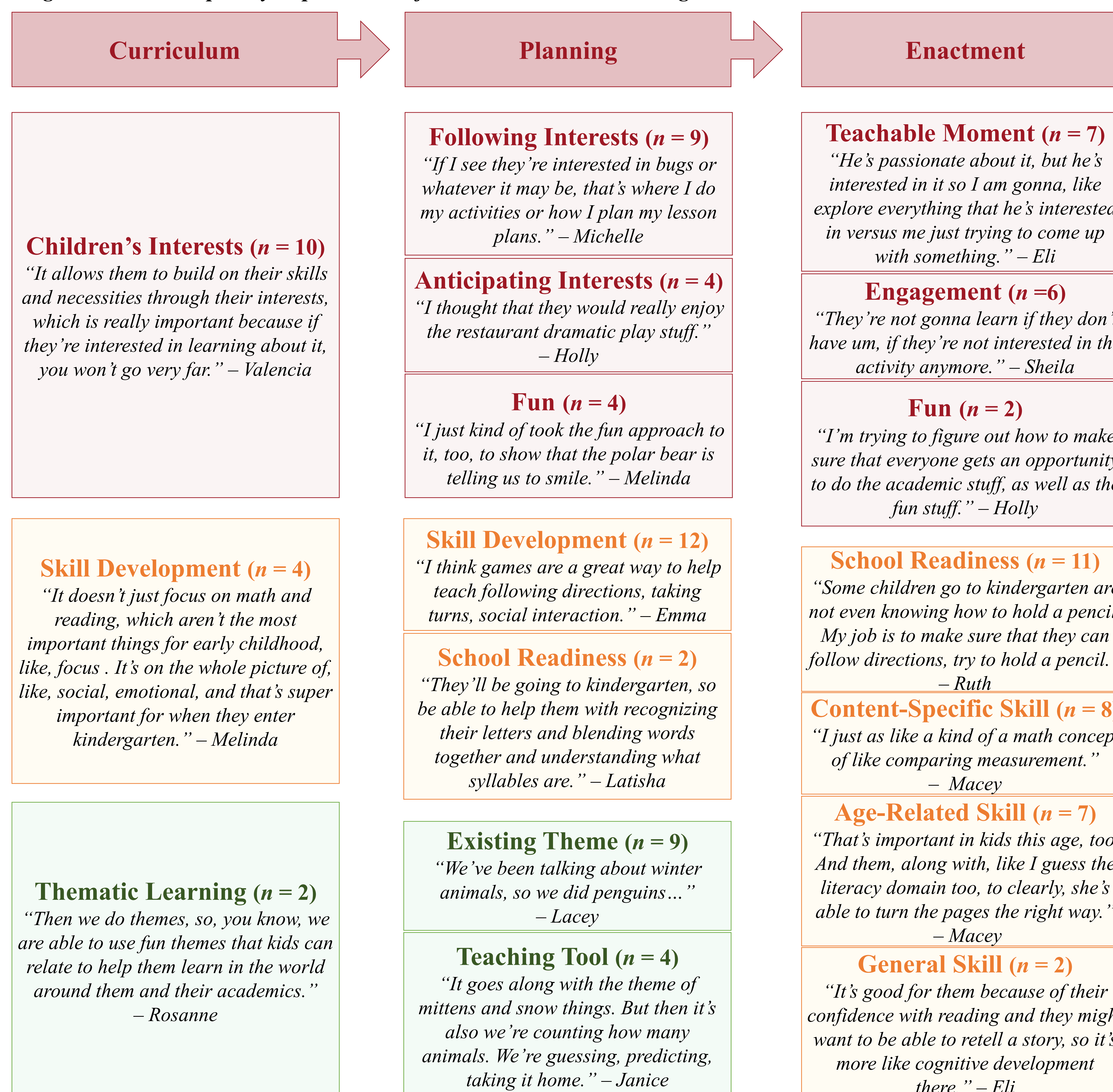
Using thematic analysis, we reviewed the data for confirming, disconfirming, and elaborating patterns. To address the second research question, we focused on the interconnectedness between teachers' perceptions of the curriculum, planning, and their enactment of instruction (Braun & Clark, 2006).

## Results

### Perceptions of How Curriculum, Planning, and Enactment Support Children's Learning

Teachers endorsed a range of beliefs about how their curriculum supported children's learning. These beliefs were evidenced with more nuance in their planning for instruction. However, during teaching teachers on referenced beliefs about learning related to children's interests and skill development.

Figure 1. Most Frequently Reported Beliefs about Children's Learning



### Alignment Across Curriculum, Planning, and Enactment

Overall, teachers' beliefs about curriculum, planning, and enactment were infrequently interconnected; with only 11.11% of teachers having alignment across beliefs about curriculum, planning for instruction, and enactment of instruction.

## Discussion

Teachers endorsed a range of beliefs about curriculum. However, they tended to apply fewer but more specified beliefs in their planning, and only focused on children's learning connected to interests and skills in their enactment of instruction. Beliefs about curriculum, planning, enactment infrequently interconnected.

### IMPLICATIONS

- **Practice:** Professional development may need to support teachers in understanding how to integrate their knowledge of children's learning across their planning and enactment of instruction.
- **Research:** More research is needed to understand how teachers use their knowledge about children's learning in their planning and instruction and how that matters for children's learning.
- **Policy:** More policies to support teachers' professional development around curriculum implementation may be needed.

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This work was supported by the Spencer Foundation. We would like to thank Dr. Shayne Piasta for her contribution to this research.

