

CASE STUDY

Massachusetts ASCD presents this case study as a tool to support ongoing professional development and inquiry in teacher, school, and district leadership teams as they discuss and learn about issues of ethnic, racial, and language diversity.

The first part of this case is presented here for preview. The full case study, including discussion questions and support materials, and our “Breakfast Trash” blog are available at www.mascd.org. Massachusetts ASCD welcomes your feedback and would like to hear about discussions that emerge in your professional communities based on this case.

Synopsis: “Breakfast Trash!” by Monica Ng and LaurieAnn Dunn, brings attention to the challenges of creating a supportive school culture for immigrant children and families, within a context of American school readiness. A conflict has arisen between teachers Quyen Nguyen and Lakeisha Williams over children arriving late for breakfast at Mop-Hai Ba Preschool--a bilingual Vietnamese-English program serving inner city families in a predominantly Vietnamese immigrant community. When Vietnamese parents plead with Quyen to serve their children breakfast despite their late arrival, she risks either insulting her neighbors in the community, or ignoring the school's new policy and angering Lakeisha who wants to start her planned lessons promptly. School Director, Adrianna Garcia, sees the need for a consistent policy, but feels uncomfortable enforcing the rules with the school's Vietnamese families.

The Issues: The case raises issues pertaining to professional communications and relationships among members of a multicultural and multilingual staff and community. It highlights cultural differences in communicating with peers and supervisors and dealing with conflicts in the workplace. In particular, readers are encouraged to consider issues of culture and policy as inextricably linked and to consider such questions as:

- In what ways should the culturally specific contexts - of the school and the individual teachers - determine policies and practices?
- What skills and knowledge do school leaders need in order to negotiate situations with a culturally diverse staff?
- What observations can be made from this case study which are similar to issues in your own educational setting?

The Context: Although some K-12 educators might be inclined to dismiss a case situated in a preschool context, we believe this case provides a rich context for exploring somewhat universal issues of diversity in professional communities. Although the preschool program is somewhat distinct from the everyday realities of many K-12 school systems, parent and collegial interactions and the implementation of policy decisions are of deep concern to most educators, particularly when they are situated within a culturally complex context.

Breakfast Trash!

By Monica Ng and LaurieAnn Dunn

Anna Wei arrived at Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool with ten minutes to spare before circle time at 8:30 a.m. She was the lead teacher of the Ladybugs preschool classroom and was responsible for instructing the class of eighteen with her co-teacher, Quyen. As she approached the large preschool classroom where most of the school's students ate their breakfast each morning, Anna greeted Adrianna Garcia, the school's director, whose office was located next to her classroom.

“How are things?” asked Anna, stopping briefly in the doorway.

Adrianna motioned for Anna to come into her office. Anna sensed that something unwelcome had happened this morning as Adrianna's voice dropped to a hushed tone. “Well, I know we set a rule about breakfast ending by 8:20, but sometimes these kids are really hungry. I feel badly for Cuong,” she said shaking her head.

“What happened?”

“When Cuong came in today, Quyen had just put the food away and wouldn’t let him eat, even after his mother said he hadn’t had anything to eat this morning. He came in late, but nonetheless, sometimes we need to make exceptions, you know? I feel so badly for the poor little guy,” said Adrianna. “It didn’t seem right.”

Anna felt awkward about the conversation and didn’t know how to respond so she said she had better get to her room to start her lesson. She entered the classroom where Quyen was just beginning circle time. There was no opportunity now to discuss the morning’s events with Quyen—the quick pace of the preschool classroom required their full attention.

Later, Anna checked in with Quyen while they supervised the children during outdoor play time.

“What happened this morning?” asked Anna.

Quyen visibly tensed, realizing that Anna must have heard something about the morning’s events. She hung her head and unloaded, “You know, they told me no more food after 8:20! So I said, ‘No more food after 8:20!’ And you know Cuong’s mom? She not happy! She very upset with me! But they told me, ‘No more breakfast after 8:20,’ so I put food away—at 8:20!” She was clearly aggravated, but then quickly checked herself. “But okay. It’s okay...” Quyen waved her hands in front of her as if sweeping the moment away.

“Are you sure you’re okay?” Anna asked, leaning in to make eye contact and putting her hand on Quyen’s shoulder. She recalled their most recent staff meeting where Adrianna had told Quyen directly that she could no longer serve breakfast to children after 8:20 because teachers were reporting that children’s late arrival to class disrupted their schedules and the children’s ability to settle in for the day. Even Anna had been finding it challenging to keep the children focused during circle time while children came and went from a late breakfast at the other end of the large classroom.

“Yes. I threw it in the trash. No more. In the trash. Go home. In the trash. Gone!” Quyen shook her head, but before Anna could respond, a child pulled on Quyen’s arm, pointing to a boy who was crying near the sandbox.

Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool¹

While Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool was a relatively new program, the school had already been led by three different directors in the four years since its founding. Adrianna Garcia was now in her second year as director and things appeared to be stabilizing. The school was nearing full enrollment for the first time, due in large part to the newly licensed toddler room, a staff of certified lead teachers, dedicated assistant teachers, and a beautiful new space within the Vietnamese Community Center. The school was preparing for their initial accreditation visit from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) later in the month, which had already been a long and labor intensive process that began with help from the Southern California Urban Early Childhood Education Network.

Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool was part of a non-profit community center founded by active members of a Vietnamese immigrant community, many of whom had assimilated into American culture and language and successfully entered business, law and government policy. Through collaboration with community members, the founders established an impressive network of support services, ranging from small business and micro-enterprise development to civic engagement (Appendix A).

The community also clearly voiced their need for quality childcare; many parents and other family members worked full-time and sometimes held more than one job. They envisioned a high-quality bilingual Vietnamese-English preschool program, with some general hopes that children would remain connected to Vietnamese culture. Throughout its short history, however, the school had not yet clarified certain aspects of its mission. Given evidence that language retention is central to cultural maintenance, some wondered whether the school should provide instruction in Vietnamese or just use it to support English language acquisition? Would that be sufficient to maintain cultural ties? To what degree should the Vietnamese community’s needs and interests define the school program, and how would the school also serve the needs of non-Vietnamese students, whom they needed to maintain enrollment? Although these questions had arisen during the founding and early years of the program, they remained unaddressed in the program’s documentation and operation.

Although successful in business and community collaboration, the community center founders lacked expertise in early childhood education and the American school system. As a result, they sought qualified people from outside the community to

¹ See Appendix C for an overview of the professional context in many U.S. preschools.

establish and run the school. Proficient bilingual speakers who were certified teachers were ideal, but scarce. In its fourth year, the school had one lead teacher and two assistant teachers who were Vietnamese and spoke Vietnamese and English; two American teachers and one assistant teacher who spoke only English, and an American Program Director who spoke English and Spanish (Table 1).

Role/Program	# of Students	Staff Members	Assistant/Co-Teachers
Community Center Executive Director		Peter Li Ethnicity: Vietnamese Language(s): English/Vietnamese Education: Masters in Business	
Mop-Ba-Hai Program Director		Adrianna Garcia Ethnicity: Mexican Language(s): English/Spanish Education: Associate's Degree in Human Services	
Toddler Program	5	Lakeisha Williams Ethnicity: African-American Language(s): English Education: High School Diploma, Early Childhood Lead Teacher Certification	Tien Lam Ethnicity: Vietnamese Language(s): English/Vietnamese Education: Associate's Degree in General Science with early childhood coursework in progress
3-Year-Old Program	11	Cindy Vu Ethnicity: Vietnamese Language(s): English/Vietnamese Education: Associate Degree (Vietnam) with Early Childhood Lead Teacher Certification	Shannon O'Shea Ethnicity: European American Language(s): English Education: High School diploma with early childhood teacher certification
4-5 Year-Old Program	18	Anna Zhang Ethnicity: Chinese Language(s): English/Mandarin Education: Bachelor's Degree in Sociology, cum laude, with Early Childhood Lead Teacher Certification	Quyên Nguyen Ethnicity: Vietnamese Language(s): English/Vietnamese Education: High School diploma (Vietnam), with early childhood teacher certification

The toddler program had been recently licensed. There were five students in the toddler room, eleven children in the three-year-old preschool classroom, and eighteen children in the larger four- and five-year-old classroom (Table 1). Each class had one lead teacher and one assistant teacher and maintained student-teacher ratios that met the minimum standards set by local early childhood authorities and the NAEYC (Appendix B).

The preschool accommodated up to 40 children, yet the school had not reached full enrollment-- a necessity for the long-term financial viability of such a small preschool. In its fourth year, the school had 25 students from the immediate Vietnamese neighborhood. The other nine students were African American and Latino/a. Ten of the students paid full tuition, seven were low income subsidized (through a special community grant), and the remaining students received state-subsidized vouchers that provided partial or full tuition. (Table 2)

	Enrollment	Full Tuition	Low Income Subsidized	State Subsidy Vouchers
Vietnamese	25	8	4	13
African American	4	2	0	2
Latino/a	5	0	3	2

Each morning, the children could arrive as early as 7:30a.m for a federally subsidized free breakfast. Breakfast was served from 7:50 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. at which time the children were to transition into their school day. The lead teachers and director felt that

adhering to predictable morning routines provided a foundation for an effective day of teaching and learning. Children began morning circle time lessons in their individual classrooms by 8:30 a.m. each day.

Lakeisha Williams

Lakeisha Williams was a long-time resident in the urban neighborhood where the Vietnamese population had expanded over the past 20 years. While some residents were resentful of the recent influx of immigrants, she remained sympathetic to their struggles and befriended her Vietnamese neighbors. She was an experienced preschool teacher and was certified as an infant-toddler lead teacher. She was one of the first teachers hired to work at Mop-Hai-Ba when it opened, and although she had left after one year due to conflicts with the previous director, she was happy to return under a new director, especially now that she could be the lead teacher in the toddler room. As the most experienced teacher at the school, she felt her experience could help make Mop-Hai-Ba a successful, if not exemplary, school.

Lakeisha enjoyed creating a warm and inviting classroom with personalized name tags and handmade birthday signs on her classroom walls. She brought elegant decorations into her classroom that she felt welcomed students and made them “feel at home.” The canopy overhanging the cushioned reading area with colorful butterfly cut-outs exemplified her artistic touch.

Lakeisha enjoyed working at Mop-Hai-Ba because she felt at home in a school and neighborhood of working class immigrant families and felt like she could really connect with these children. Sometimes she felt that the Vietnamese parents, however, did not care enough about the children’s emotional well-being. One incident that had really bothered her was when one of the parents told her that her child was too fat and to stop feeding her and giving her milk. Lakeisha felt that making such comments in front of the child would damage the child’s self-esteem, but she didn’t know how to express her concern to the Vietnamese-speaking mother. Despite the communication barrier with many of the Vietnamese families, however, Lakeisha felt working at Mop-Hai-Ba was far more comfortable than working with the affluent, Anglo-American children she had served during her one year away from Mop-Hai-Ba, so Lakeisha was content to stay put, especially now that Adrianna Garcia was the director.

Things at Mop-Hai-Ba had been bumpy for quite a while. Previous directors had bent rules to keep the school open, sometimes even staffing the classrooms with uncertified teachers or having unsafe ratios of students to children, but with Adrianna on board, things seemed to be finally getting in order. Lakeisha appreciated the ease with which she could go to Adrianna for support when she felt frustrated. Though she found academic work difficult and tedious, she responded to Adrianna’s encouragement by enrolling in evening classes to work towards her Associate’s Degree. This would mean more pay and, once she had earned her degree, Lakeisha felt she would be on equal footing with Adrianna.

Breakfast time at Mop-Hai-Ba, however, had been a source of frustration for Lakeisha for quite some time. While she tried to adhere to the school schedule, she felt her colleagues were not helping by extending the breakfast time past 8:20 a.m. The two Vietnamese assistant teachers, Quyen and Tien, would serve breakfast to the latecomers whose parents would ask them to give their children something to eat. Lakeisha felt this was unfair to other families who made a special effort to arrive on time for breakfast, and it pushed back the entire schedule for the day, encroaching upon valuable classroom activity time.

Lakeisha wanted to be part of a professional community where teachers supported each other and adhered to the rules and regulations that were important for preschoolers. She conveyed this at a recent staff meeting, where she had argued, “If classes are supposed to begin at 8:30 am, breakfast has to end promptly at 8:20. Otherwise my plans for the day are all thrown off and I have a hard time getting the children back on track.” A part of preparing the children for kindergarten, she felt, was to help the children and their families learn to be on time. It infuriated Lakeisha when late families went directly to Quyen, said something in Vietnamese and, without fail, Quyen served them, throwing the day’s schedule off course. The worst thing, Lakeisha felt, was that when she raised these issues, she looked like the mean teacher when she was just trying to follow the school rules and provide predictable routines for the children.

Adrianna Garcia

Adrianna Garcia had been at the Mop-Hai-Ba preschool for just over a year and she was excited to be leading a preschool with the unique mission of serving this Vietnamese community through bi-lingual education. She didn’t know a great deal about Vietnam or this specific Vietnamese community, but she understood how valuable a bilingual community had been in her own life. She believed that when she had first come to the United States from Mexico, the Spanish-speaking community had been key to her successful integration into American society. She started working as a teacher in her daughter’s Spanish-English daycare while taking courses in the evening. She eventually earned her Associate’s degree in Human Services, taught for ten years, and

received her preschool director's license. She then became the director of a bilingual Spanish-English daycare program several blocks away from Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool. When that program had closed, Adrianna felt fortunate to find another program just down the street with a similar mission of serving its local immigrant community. The language and the culture were different, but she felt the experience was similar and that the bottom line was the quality of care that teachers provided.

When she had first arrived at the school, Adrianna had sensed the disorder that had preceded her tenure. Children and their families came and went throughout the day, children's meals were not delivered on time, teachers did not seem to communicate plans or coordinate activities with each other, as became evident in their first, rather chaotic monthly staff meetings. She decided that her first goal was to create a calmer, more consistent environment where teachers could focus, collectively, on teaching the children well and could draw on each other's skills and knowledge to do so. She was pleased that she had an experienced teacher like Lakeisha, community members like Quyen and Tien, and eager young teachers like Anna, all of whom supported the school in whatever ways they could. The teachers respected Adrianna's authority and she felt that her leadership had already led to increased enrollment. Adrianna felt optimistic that the upcoming NAEYC accreditation process would go smoothly.

But this breakfast issue was a persistent and troubling issue. She had tried to appeal to parents at the Open House a month ago to bring their children to school on time if they wanted their children to receive breakfast and she had announced in a staff meeting last week that breakfast should end promptly by 8:20 a.m. During the meeting, Quyen had protested a little, but Adrianna told her that, while she understood her difficult position, these policies needed to be strictly enforced to create a stable and predictable learning climate for children and teachers as they started their day in their classrooms. When young Cuong had arrived late, however, and Quyen had refused to give him any cereal, Adriana had regretted how this decision had played out. While she knew it was the mother they should be speaking with, she also felt Quyen could have given him something to eat. Adrianna felt Quyen was simply being too rigid.

It was obvious to Adrianna that Quyen was upset, yet Quyen had not come to her to talk about her concerns. Instead, Quyen talked to Tien and Shannon; they were her allies. Although Shannon struggled to understand everything that Quyen said, as an assistant teacher, she empathized with Quyen and the demands placed upon her. Although frustrated, Adrianna had grown tired of this persistent issue. She hoped it would all pass over in a few days and that Quyen would work out the breakfast routine with Cuong's mom without further ado.

Quyen Nguyen

Quyen arrived in the United States just a year before she started teaching at Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool. She came from a poor family in Vietnam, but was fortunate enough to earn her high school degree at a vocational school that prepared her to be a kindergarten teacher. She taught a classroom of 30 students in Vietnam for several years before immigrating to the United States. She came to live with the uncle who sponsored her, and her husband followed a year later. The community of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants in the city provided a safe and accepting space for her to socialize and make friends, but her first factory job was a far different story. She had often said, "I don't care" when she meant "I don't know" and then she would just smile and nod her head in response to the flurry of incomprehensible words that her supervisor would say in response. Her poor English skills often got her in trouble, but the factory manager kept her because he saw that she worked hard. When she learned that the new community center in the neighborhood was looking for Vietnamese-speaking assistants for their new preschool, she thought this would be a perfect fit for her. She was one of the first assistants to be hired for the school when it was founded four years ago. Her experience as a teacher in Vietnam, fluency in Vietnamese, familiarity with Vietnamese culture, and connections to the Vietnamese community made her a crucial bridge for many of the Vietnamese children in the neighborhood who would soon enter American school systems vastly different from those in their home country.

Quyen believed that her role as a teacher at Mop-Hai-Ba was to serve and support her Vietnamese community. She shook her head repeatedly as she considered that morning's incident. Cuong's family owned a grocery store in the neighborhood and she shopped there every week. Quyen felt ashamed that she had had to turn Cuong away with an empty stomach. She understood that many families were so busy running their businesses that they sometimes arrived late to school with their children. The Vietnamese parents had always come to her whenever they had a complaint or a concern because they could speak to her in Vietnamese and knew she would understand their point of view. Quyen worried, now that she had refused to serve Cuong, that they would feel she was not one of them and was not to be trusted.

Quyen knew that none of the other teachers – Vietnamese or American - would tell the parents that their children could not have breakfast after 8:20. Since Cuong's mom only felt comfortable communicating with her, the burden of enforcing the rule fell to

her, as well. Quyen knew she couldn't afford to get into trouble with Adrianna and she couldn't bear the fear of Lakeisha yelling at her in front of the others at a staff meeting again.

When Quyen finally told Anna how hard this was for her, Anna sympathized, but suggested that she talk to Adrianna. Anna felt she did not have any authority to change the situation. Quyen did not understand, and left her conversation with Anna muttering to herself in Vietnamese, "But she is in charge. She is a teacher and I am just an assistant. It is not my place to disagree with Adrianna. I cannot say in English what I am seeing and Adrianna does not understand what Vietnamese families need."

Anna Zhang

While Anna Zhang was the youngest member of the Mop-Hai-Ba staff, she was also the most educated, having received her Bachelor's Degree from a prestigious liberal arts college. She had chosen "intentional community living," a program organized by her church, which encouraged church members to live and work in underprivileged communities. Anna had given up a higher paying job to try community service-oriented work. Mop-Hai-Ba had been Anna's first and only teaching job, with most of her training occurring on the job. Anna had not received much support from previous directors or her colleagues at Mop-Hai-Ba, but her commitment to working in the community helped her to focus on the children and try to work through the conflicts.

Anna cared deeply about the community with all of its complexities. She tried to learn as much as she could about the Vietnamese culture and language since the school was designed to target these particular families and, because it was located in the midst of a neighborhood with a large Vietnamese population. She cared about the people and children from other cultures who lived in the community, as well. As a second-generation Chinese American who had been raised in an immigrant household, she had often experienced tensions between her family's culture and mainstream American life, so Anna recognized that the different cultures, values, and languages represented by the teachers at Mop-Hai-Ba probably contributed to staff conflicts. Anna often felt these conflicts within herself. Although she empathized with the Vietnamese teachers, whose cultural beliefs and poor English skills seemed to prevent them from standing up for themselves, she also valued adhering to American standards of safety, quality, and professionalism within the early childhood context.

Anna often felt that she had to serve as peacemaker between Lakeisha and Quyen, talking to each of them individually in the hopes that they would see the other person's point of view and eventually come to a place of resolution. She was tired of this role and this most recent incident with the breakfast made her desire for a cohesive professional team seem out of reach. Anna was frustrated by Adrianna, too. She hadn't supported Quyen, even though Adrianna's office was near the entrance to the school and she was well aware that Cuong had arrived after 8:15. She found herself feeling increasingly annoyed: Why hadn't Adrianna supported Quyen in the very rule she had told her to follow?

Anna felt that her work was being affected by the tensions at Mop-Hai-Ba. She tried to focus most of her energies on developing lessons with her co-teacher Quyen and arranging field trips for the students. She often tried to work with Adrianna to create more opportunities for the whole school, and had begun writing grants to get the school more supplies and equipment. At the same time, she knew that the school was far too small to have teachers isolating themselves from each other. Two days earlier, she had actually gone over Adrianna's head to Peter, the executive director of the Community Center, hoping that he might be able to provide some kind of support, but with the accreditation visit so close, he said he did not want to make any waves. He told her he'd provide more specific support once the accreditation process was finished, if issues persisted. In the meantime, Anna found the climate at Mop-Hai-Ba so tense that it was beginning to make her feel like calling in sick.

The Persistent Problem

The next morning, Adrianna heard some raised voices and looked up from her desk out toward the hallway. Cuong's mother was waving her hands at Lakeisha who had stopped her just before the classroom door to explain that breakfast time was over. Tien and Shannon were trying, unsuccessfully, to translate between Lakeisha and Cuong's mother. Cuong's mother peered inside the classroom, scanning for Quyen. Quyen was at the far end of the room, her back to the commotion, as she continued cutting paper to prepare for a class activity. Cuong, still in his jacket and hat, sat on the floor behind the adults, crying.

Discussion Questions

Stick with the evidence.

It is important to base case study discussions on the specific evidence presented in the case. At the start of a group discussion, work to build a common understanding of the facts of the case. It is helpful to encourage and model questions such as “What do we know about the specific context and characters in this case?” “Can you point us to where in the case you got that impression?” or “What evidence in the case led you to that conclusion?”

Structure the conversation.

To encourage group participation and equity in the case discussion, we recommend using a protocol. An excellent selection of protocols can be found at the National School Reform Faculty’s website (www.nsrfs.org) or in books such as McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, & McDonald’s (2007), *The Power of Protocols: An Educator’s Guide to Better Practice* or Easton’s (2009), *Protocols for Professional Learning*. To support well-informed, small group discussion of the case prior to large group discussion, a group may also choose to divide into subgroups. For example, each of five small groups might focus on understanding just the preschool context or one of the central characters. This helps to ensure that the facts of the case are well-represented in the discussion and encourages deeper exploration of some of the cultural and language interactions that may come into play in this case.

Warm-up Questions

1. Who are the central characters in the case and what do we know about them?
2. Using the Cultural Proficiency Continuum², where would the central characters in this case be located on this continuum? What evidence from the case supports your judgment?
3. What is the central dilemma, or dilemmas, in this case? What factors contribute to these dilemmas?
4. How would you describe the school culture at Mop-Hai-Ba? How are culture and language reflected in this culture?
5. In what ways do each of the central characters have power and/or leadership influence? How might culture and language shape their power and leadership?

Digging Deeper

1. In what ways can the different characters in this case use their power and/or leadership to affect the culture?
2. Based on a close reading of the case, role play a productive conversation (one that leads to positive outcomes for children and teachers) between any two characters in the case.
3. Identify three priority action steps that a specific school or teacher leader in the case can take to help resolve “the breakfast problem.”
4. What responsibility do you think non-Vietnamese staff and families have toward creating a school culture that adheres to the mission of the preschool? What responsibility do you think the Vietnamese staff and families have?
5. Is it to the school’s advantage to have such a diverse staff? If so, why? If not, what options does the school have?

Principles & Policies

1. In Appendix C, Lisa Kuh writes, “...the apprenticeship of observation that Lortie (1975, 2002) described is alive and well in early childhood. Teachers, even those who have gone through preservice training, can default to how they were taught, how they were parented and cared for, or even how they currently parent (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Einasdotir, 2003; Wilcox-Herzog & Ward, 2004). Thus, in early childhood, the apprenticeship is not limited to people’s experiences in school settings, but includes people’s experiences with their families of origin and cultures of care.” Given this context for many preschool educators, what professional development experiences may be important for early childhood teachers who work in culturally diverse school contexts?
2. Is it possible to have affinity networks for teachers to feel supported without creating divisions along racial, ethnic, or language group lines? What are the necessary conditions for this to occur?
3. What are the challenges of having a culturally diverse staff within a relatively mono-cultural (Vietnamese) school? In what ways might cultural and language issues collide and/or interface?
4. What staff hiring, mentoring & induction, and recruitment strategies might be advantageous (or necessary) for this school to thrive? How might issues of culture and language shape these strategies?
5. How might the school’s organizational structure influence the cultural dynamics of the school? How might the structure be changed to better honor the different cultures within the school and the community it is meant to serve?

² Lindsey, R., Roberts, L. M., & Campbell Jones, F. (2005). *The culturally proficient school: An implementation guide for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. See Massachusetts ASCD Perspectives, Winter 2010, available at www.mascd.org for a reprint of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum.

Massachusetts ASCD and the authors of this case welcome your feedback should you use this case study in your schools. Participate in a blog discussion at www.mascd.org!

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Appendix A

Vietnamese Association of Southern California's (VASC) Mission Statement and History

Founded by residents and community leaders, The Vietnamese Association of Southern California was founded to support the self-sufficiency and well-being of the Vietnamese community of Sunnyside. We promote the economic development and civic engagement of the Vietnamese community through a variety of programs including small business assistance, housing development, employment assistance, and high-quality childcare services.

Our 17,000 square foot community center provides a central hub for our community, where members of the Vietnamese community and our neighbors can gather for cultural and educational events. It is also the location of Mop-Hai-Ba Preschool.

Examples of ways that VASC has worked with the community:

Economic Development and Small Business Support

- Networking and relationship building among local businesses
- Annual community leadership conference
- Mentoring
- Excellence in Education Scholarship
- Employment Referrals
- Vocational Training Classes
- Affordable Housing Development

Civic Engagement

- Voter brochure translations and voter registration drives
- US Citizenship classes
- Police Advisory Committee

Personal and Cultural Enrichment

- Mental health counseling
- Toys for Tots
- Lunar New Year and Harvest Celebrations
- Twin Dragon Dance Troupe

Appendix B³

NAEYC TEACHER / CHILD RATIOS										
Age Group						Group Size				
	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
<i>Infants</i>										
Birth to 15 months	1:3	1:4								
<i>Toddler / Twos (12-36)</i>										
12 to 28 months	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:4						
21 to 36 months		1:4	1:5	1:6						
<i>Preschool</i>										
2.5-years-olds to 3-year-olds (30-48 months)				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4-year olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten								1:10	1:11	1:12

Appendix C

[Reprinted with permission from Kuh, Lisa Porter (2008). Practice and policy in early childhood education: Teacher collaboration in a Head Start, district, and university lab school. Unpublished dissertation. University of Washington, 1-3]

Practice and Policy in Early Childhood Education

Current research in early childhood education maintains a strong focus on the provision of “high quality” environments for children and much of this research points to the absence of teacher preparation for those working with young children (Ackerman, 2005; Saracho & Spodek, 2003). Research also shows that teachers with a bachelor’s degree or higher, in education or a related field, had classrooms that were of higher quality than those who had less or no education in the field (Saracho & Spodek, 2003). There have been efforts by some states to require that early childhood teachers have a bachelor’s degree, however, in general, many early childhood teachers are not required to attain such a level of education (Ackerman, 2005). As a result, the on the job professional development teachers receive becomes a critical component of how teachers in early childhood gain the knowledge and skills necessary to do their work.

However, the apprenticeship of observation that Lortie (1975, 2002) described is alive and well in early childhood. Teachers, even those who have gone through preservice training, can default to how they were taught, how they were parented and cared for, or even how they currently parent (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Einasdotir, 2003; Wilcox-Herzog & Ward, 2004). Thus, in early childhood, the apprenticeship is not limited to people’s experiences in school settings, but includes people’s experiences with their families of origin and cultures of care. What professional development experiences can early childhood teachers engage in that bring about an awareness of this disconnect and could bridge this theory to practice gap? What kinds of professional development policies have the potential to bring vitality to the policy to practice channel?

Professional development is typically centered around discrete “training” sessions, perhaps connected with standards, literacy goals, and accreditation processes (such as required by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the

³ Accessed from <http://preschool.univ.edu/documents/NAEYC%20RATIOS.pdf> on December 30, 2009.

National Head Start Association). However, a major venue for generating conversation in the workplace is during meeting times. Teacher meetings are a regular part of school culture and are used to disseminate general information, act as a forum for discussion of school-wide issues, and shape the culture of a school (Horn, 2005). Often, however, when teachers convene, an inordinate amount of time is spent negotiating matters that do not directly affect teacher practice and children's opportunities to learn (Little, 1999). What teachers consider desirable change turns out to focus on "remedies (that) lie in changing the environment, not in finding more efficacious ways to instruct" (Lortie, 1975, p. 209).

Such conversations, borne of the need for worker equity, and focused on scheduling, paperwork, and school-wide issues, can create barriers to professional activity that focused on teaching and learning. The lack of opportunity (or in some cases inability) to collaboratively focus on children's learning is an example of what Grossman and colleagues describe as "no authentic sense of shared communal space but only individuals interacting with other individuals (2001, p. 956). This raises questions about activity among early childhood educators that might promote collaborative experiences.