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## The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART): an investigation of reliability and validity

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THE SOCIOMORAL ATMOSPHERE RATING TEMPLATE (SMART): AN  
INVESTIGATION OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Ecology

by

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M.A., Oral Roberts University, 2002  
December, 2007

## **DEDICATION**

The culmination of my doctoral study provides me with an opportunity to reflect upon this distinct period of my life. The challenges that I have faced and the joys that I have known as a father of a child with special needs have informed and influenced every aspect of my journey to complete this degree. I would perhaps be a different person today if it were not for a little boy who I can truly speak of as a gift to my life, my son, Jonah Ryan Durham. I dedicate this dissertation to him.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of my doctoral degree represents a collaborative and cooperative effort. It seems necessary for me to mention some of the names of those who have both inspired me and helped me succeed.

I will begin by thanking my major professor, Dr. Robert Laird. His expertise and professionalism is, in my opinion, unsurpassed. All of the assistance that he has given me is valuable, but even more, I appreciate the way in which Dr. Laird allowed me to construct my own understanding of research methods, always providing support and patience.

Diane Burts served as my major professor until her retirement in January of 2007. However, I will always consider her a mentor and true friend. While her graduate assistant, she allowed me to hone my understanding of Developmentally Appropriate Practice through hours of discussions of classroom anecdotes and professional literature. I appreciate her steady recommendations to me about the requirements for making a contribution to the field of early education. Few others have made as significant an impact as Dr. Burts and I am privileged to have received her guidance and friendship.

So many times during my graduate study at LSU I found myself taking a side trip through the LSU Laboratory Preschool to seek out Dr. Joan Benedict. She always listened as I shared the details about a class I was teaching, a tantalizing thought I had read, or the pros and cons of a given strategy that I had concocted. She would listen and reply, “Yeah ...yeah,” giving me reassurance to follow my instincts and dreams. It is no wonder that she is a champion for children. Dr. Benedict opened the doors of the LSU Preschool to me when I was first inquiring about how young children should be educated. In one of my first graduate courses, she introduced me to the body of literature from which my dissertation would emerge. She saw me

through the finish line by serving on my committee and even collecting data with me in 20 classrooms. I value Joan Benedict as a colleague and close friend.

I hold each member of my advisory committee in the highest regard. I have never known a group of individuals of such caliber and kindness. I always sensed that they held my best interests at heart and provided me with the right mix of challenge and encouragement to guarantee my success. Thank you, Drs. Laird, Buchanan, Benedict, Marks, and Cassidy.

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Special appreciation is extended to Betty Zan at the University of Northern Iowa for her input on the development of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template. She graciously read several drafts of the instrument and provided valuable feedback both in writing and through several stimulating phone conversations. I feel that we are “kindred spirits” and I hope to make professional contributions that will advance our understanding of constructivist learning and practice.

I must also acknowledge Jimmy and Frances Swaggart and their family. I have enjoyed their personal friendship and appreciate their wholehearted support of my professional pursuits. The Swaggart family and ministry has contributed to my personal development and I am thankful what they mean to me and my family.

I cannot conclude these acknowledgements without mentioning my family. I am grateful to my parents, Richard H. and Deborah Durham for their constant love and support. My wife, Sabrina, sons, Noah, Matthew and Jonah, and my daughter, Olivia, have given of themselves in

so many ways in the last 4 years. It seemed to me that our lives were all “on hold” for a period while I was completing my dissertation. Through the many nights when I was attending class or working in the library, although they missed me, they never complained. The strength of their dedication was demonstrated when they spent 6 months away in another state attending a different school and living with my parents while I completed my data collection and the writing of this dissertation. I cannot write enough about the respect that I have for my wife who so many times was a “single parent” attending to the many duties of our household while I pursued this degree. Her work has been far more demanding than mine. However, she has been my consistent and steadfast support and encouragement.

I am certain that reaching this goal will open many personally and professionally fulfilling doors for me. I anticipate that I will continue to gain and share knowledge about the fascinating ways in which human beings develop and learn. My experience has shown me that the process of development and learning is influenced so profoundly by others within one’s realm of relationships. I am indebted to the many people in my life who have provided me with support and encouragement along my journey and hope that my life will provide such to others as well.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study describes the development of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART), an instrument designed to rate the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood classrooms, and an investigation of the instrument's reliability and validity. Results indicate that individuals can be trained to reliably use the SMART and that the measure is internally consistent. In addition to its face validity, results indicate that the SMART has convergent validity when compared to the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) and the Teacher Interaction Scale (Arnett, 1989). Comparisons at the subscale level suggest discriminant validity. Implications and plans for further research are provided.

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Research Problem

Of all children between the ages of 5 and 18 in the United States, 9 out of 10 attend school (cited in Ladd, Buhs, & Troop, 2002). But school experiences are common for many even younger children in contemporary American society. Recent figures state that 55% of children aged 3 and 4 are enrolled in early childhood programs and 84% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten programs (NAEYC, 2006). Because of the combination of the amount of time children spend in school (NAEYC, 2006) and the significance of adult-child relationships during the early years (Howes & Hamilton, 1992), examining what the early childhood educational experience is, continuing to consider what it should be, and studying its impact upon child development is required.

Studies have shown that early childhood programs can be successful at promoting development across domains (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, DeWolf, Ray, Manuel, & Fleege, 1993; Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, DeWolf, 1993; Dunn & Kontos, 1997; Hart, Yang, Charlesworth, & Burts, 2003; Huffman & Spear, 2000; Lay, 2005). Notable longitudinal studies have suggested that quality, child-centered early learning experiences provide long-term benefits (Ramey, Campbell, & Blair, 1998; Schwienhart & Weikart, 1997). With academic preparation in early childhood being viewed as a harbinger of school success, and the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Congress, 2002), early childhood education programs have been evaluated increasingly in terms of their ability to promote academic achievement. However, concerns have been raised that excessive emphasis upon standards, accountability, and student achievement may have negative effects upon psychosocial development (Blaustien, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Stipek, 2006a). Interestingly, Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman asserts that

“non-cognitive skills” greater determine life success. One’s ability to successfully negotiate the social domain, have personal qualities such as self-discipline, perseverance, trustworthiness, and proper personal motivation have been shown to be more effective at producing measures of success in life than academic knowledge. Unfortunately, Heckman states, educators presently do not measure the ability of schools to promote the development of important non-cognitive skills (Heckman, 2006; Heckman & Rubinstein, 2001).

Lawrence Kohlberg stated that 90% of what children receive from their school experience comes from the “hidden curriculum” (cited in Giroux & Purpel, 1983). The hidden curriculum has been defined as the numerous lessons children learn from their school experience through their interactions with adults, other children, and the school culture that are not planned for in the regular curriculum (Giroux & Purpel, 1983). Heckman’s (2006) statement can be viewed as a call to further examine the frequently hidden aspects of schooling that may be associated with the development of the skills and dispositions that are thought to be more predictive of quality of life.

The classroom sociomoral atmosphere is believed to be an important aspect of the school experience that has many implications for child development. Derived from Piaget’s theory of moral and social development, the concept of the classroom sociomoral atmosphere was introduced by Kamii and DeVries in their 1973 description of constructivist education and detailed in the work of DeVries and Zan (1994). The sociomoral atmosphere is akin to the hidden curriculum in that it is comprised of the entire network of relationships within a classroom – the child’s relationship with the teacher, peers, academics, and rules (DeVries & Zan, 1995). The sociomoral atmosphere is thought to be associated with numerous child outcomes such as motivation, moral development, autonomy, self-regulation, logico-

mathematical knowledge, and social adjustment – to a large degree, the types of non-cognitive skills Heckman (2006) emphasizes. Another feature of the sociomoral atmosphere is its potential to instill the value of democratic decision-making in young children – a timely benefit in today’s multicultural, global society (Teaching Tolerance, 1997). Research on classroom sociomoral atmosphere has been limited. Studies have examined the sociomoral atmosphere in classrooms, establishing pure prototypes of sociomoral atmospheres, and relating them to children’s levels of interpersonal understanding (DeVries, Haney, & Zan, 1991; DeVries, Reese-Learned, & Morgan, 1991). Carmines and Zeller (1979) caution that without adequate measurement models research does not yield greater understanding of any particular phenomenon under investigation. Current research is an opportunity to operationalize the sociomoral atmosphere, establish a reliable and valid measure that will allow further investigation of the construct and its implications in early childhood education.

### Rationale for the Study

Using seminal literature pertaining to the classroom sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood education, the author developed the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) for use in early childhood (Pre-Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade) classrooms. The measure consists of 30 items under the categories of Teacher-Child Relationships, Peer Relations, and Classroom Governance. Although the sociomoral atmosphere includes how the teacher builds a child’s relationship with academics, in an effort to establish the sociomoral atmosphere as a construct independent from curricular model, this measure does not evaluate specific teaching practices, or the types of educational materials present in the classroom. Previous research of the sociomoral atmosphere was conducted through in depth analysis and coding of teacher behaviors involving a lengthy process (DeVries, Haney, & Zan, 1991). The SMART is designed to rate a

classroom sociomoral atmosphere according to observed teacher behaviors and evidence of teacher decision-making in the realm of teacher-child relationships, peer relations, and classroom governance. The current study describes the development of the SMART and investigates its reliability and validity.

#### Research Aims

1. To determine whether the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) has face validity according to experts in the field of early childhood education and authors of sociomoral atmosphere literature.
2. To ascertain if the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) is a reliable measure of the sociomoral atmosphere in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms, having internal consistency and acceptable inter-rater reliability.
3. To examine the validity of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) based upon its correlation with other measures of adult-child interactions and established measures of early childhood program quality.

#### Definitions

1. The Sociomoral Atmosphere – The network of relationships within a classroom including the teacher-child relationship, peer relationships, the child’s relationship with academic content, and the child’s relationship with rules that makes up a child’s experience of school (DeVries & Zan, 1994).
2. Constructivist Learning Theory – The theory posited by Jean Piaget that knowledge results from an active mind that constructs relationships among objects (Forman & Kushner, 1983).

3. Constructivist Education – Education based upon Piaget’s constructivist learning theory. Piaget did not address himself to pedagogy, but others have assimilated his writing into programs for young children. Some entire programs may be described as “constructivist”; others may simply contain constructivist practices (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987).
4. Developmentally Appropriate Practice – A guide published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that emphasizes educational practice informed by typical child development, the development and individual characteristics of the child, and the cultural context in which the child lives (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).
5. Reliability – The consistency with which a measure assesses a given concept (Crano & Brewer, 2002). The current study determines reliability in two ways – internal consistency and inter-rater reliability. Internal consistency is an alternative to the once common “split-half” technique that uses Cronbach’s (1951) coefficient alpha to give the hypothetical value that would be obtained if all the items that could constitute a given scale were available, and randomly put together into a very large number of tests of equal size. The average correlation between all possible pairs of the “split-half” tests is approximated by coefficient alpha (Crano & Brewer, 2002). Inter-rater reliability or agreement determines whether the ratings of two or more observers who have witnessed the same event coincide to an acceptable degree. Cohen’s (1968) kappa is used to assess the extent of agreement between coders while controlling for chance. A kappa of .75 or greater is usually an acceptable result for observational research (Crano & Brewer, 2002).
6. Validity – The extent to which a measure is successful at measuring the construct that it is intended to measure (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). This study focused upon content and convergent validity. Content or face validity is concerned with the extent to which the

content of a measure represents the complete range of the construct under consideration. Assessment of content validity is a subjective endeavor based judgment of the person constructing the scale. A panel of experts reviewing the scale and providing their opinions on the adequacy of the scale is an acceptable means of determining content validity. Convergent validity is an examination of how well a measure relates to other measures with which a hypothetical relationship exists. While instruments may not measure a construct in the same ways, a measure with convergent validity would correlate with another measure proposed to epitomize the same theoretical construct (Crano & Brewer, 2002).

### Assumptions and Limitations

#### **Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that the sociomoral atmosphere can be measured based upon a single observation within the classroom. Although the sociomoral atmosphere is based upon numerous interactions among individuals in a classroom, it is assumed that a single observation will be indicative of the sociomoral atmosphere within a classroom over time.
2. It is assumed that teacher behaviors can determine the sociomoral atmosphere in the classroom. DeVries (2001) encourages teachers to make the establishment of a positive sociomoral atmosphere their first educational goal. In addition, the sociomoral atmosphere has been described as being subject to “the moral energy of the educator” (Kohlberg, 1970).
3. It is assumed that observers can be trained to recognize the characteristics of positive and negative sociomoral atmospheres and use the SMART effectively.

## **Limitations**

1. This study is limited by a small sample size within a mid-sized Southeastern United States city.
2. There is a general lack of information about the distinctive features of a constructivist sociomoral atmosphere within the early childhood community.
3. There are no other measures developed to rate the sociomoral atmosphere extant with which to compare the SMART.
4. The instrument does not include the perspective of children in describing the sociomoral atmosphere. Additional research is recommended to feature the voices of children in their experience of the classroom sociomoral atmosphere.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction

“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.” John Dewey, 1899

Dewey’s words still ring with conviction and logic. However, to this day, Americans have yet to reach consensus about what our “community” desires for the education of our children. American educational trends continue to fluctuate between traditionalism, progressivism, and eclecticism. The discussion about what American education should consist of remains a political, philosophical, religious, and methodological game – with many players striving to become “king of the hill.” Even in this game, however, it seems necessary to continue to try to uncover the type of educational experience that best serves *all* of the children within our community.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was mandated and passed into law by Congress in 2002. The well-intentioned law ushered in a new era of accountability in public education, holding school systems and teachers responsible for insuring that all children meet minimum standards in reading and math during their school years. However, educators have voiced concern that a heavy emphasis on academic skills proliferates unhealthy levels of stress upon children and dramatic surges in developmentally inappropriate teaching practices especially for young children (Blaustein, 2004; Hatch, 2002; Stipek, 2006b). While providing children with the academic skills that they need to be successful in life certainly qualifies as an appropriate educational goal, it seems that our community must materialize an educational experience that benefits the whole child (Noddings, 2005).

This notion of an education that benefits the “whole child” is not new. Notable educators have emphasized school’s capacity to promote a range of developmental benefits for over one-hundred years. Dewey (1899) envisioned education as a means of human development that impacted work ethic, motivation, social change, and feelings of worth, love, and harmony.

Proponents of both the strictly academic focus and the whole child focus boast of academic success (Engelmann, 1969; Project Construct, 2001). However, a plethora of research over the last twenty years has decried an overly academic focus in early childhood for its accompanying negative effects such as stress and risks to dispositions toward learning itself (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, Fleege, Mosely, & Thomasson, 1992; Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1992; Katz, 1999). Goldstein (2007), however, argues that the long battle of developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) versus traditional academic instruction is overshadowed by the realities that teachers face in the current educational climate. Her qualitative study of two kindergarten teachers supports the idea that school climate – the processes that create a child’s school experience and the context of that experience is more influential than what curriculum is used.

DeVries and Zan (1994) describe this issue of process and context in early childhood education likening it to a previous moniker, the “hidden curriculum” (Giroux & Purpel, 1983). They state that a child’s experience of school consists of far more than what is deliberately planned in the curriculum. They point to the “sociomoral atmosphere” – a network of relationships between the child and his/her teacher, peers, academics, and rules – as foundational to growth of the whole child. It is the investigation of this construct that prompted the current study. This review of literature contains: a) a discussion of the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere that includes findings from research conducted by its primary authors; b) a review of

research related to the constructivist conceptualization of teacher-child relationships, peer relations in early childhood education, and classroom governance; and c) a discussion comparing the conceptual dimensions of the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere, early childhood program quality as associated with developmentally appropriate practice, and teacher interactions that underlie the instruments used to examine the validity of the SMART.

### The Constructivist Sociomoral Atmosphere

Dimensions of what DeVries and Zan (1994) define as the sociomoral atmosphere have been addressed by educators, researchers, and early childhood professionals. Historically, John Dewey's progressive educational reforms are notably recognized for their emphasis upon the holistic educational experience and its potential for child development and social benefits (Tanner, 1997). Philip Jackson raised a furor in 1968 when he described *Life in Classrooms*. While his descriptions and concerns prompted much debate and disallowed ignorance regarding the "hidden curriculum" and its place as a major dimension of the school process (Giroux & Purpel, 1983), educators continue to investigate how certain behaviors, strategies, and practices contribute to the hidden curriculum. The sociomoral atmosphere has been described as a unique construct that is foundational to constructivist education – a curricular approach with holistic developmental aims that encompass most of the issues currently valued by the early childhood field (DeVries & Zan, 1994; DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, & Sales, 2002).

A discussion of constructivist education must be qualified. In early childhood education, many practices and programs carry the label "constructivist." Piagetian theory is not a theory of education, but it has been generously applied to educational thought (Fosnot, 2005). It is therefore important to understand that this label is very broad and may be misunderstood and misapplied. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), the guidelines for teaching advocated

by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), associates many early education programs with constructivism. These guidelines rely heavily upon the Piagetian concept of a construction of knowledge that derives from a child's active experience with adults, other children, and materials within his environment (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). However, it is argued that simply because a program may claim to adhere to developmentally appropriate practices it is not necessarily constructivist (Blasi & Enge, 1998; Bullard, 2003).

Among programs that strongly claim a constructivist philosophical position, differences are noted. DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) described and compared the Lavatelli, High/Scope, and the Kamii-DeVries translations of Piaget's theory into education in a highly detailed work. The Kamii-DeVries conceptualization of constructivist education is the origin of the construct of the sociomoral atmosphere (Kamii & DeVries, 1975/1977).

While the DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) work explains the theoretical and practical characteristics of the Kamii-DeVries approach, one must note that this approach is novel in its focus upon the Piagetian notion (1932/1965) that socioemotional aims are necessary for realizing cognitive objectives. Specifically, Kamii-DeVries state that the child should "feel secure in a noncoercive relationship with adults, to respect the feelings and rights of others and begin to coordinate different points of view (decentering and co-operating), to be independent, alert, and curious, to use initiative in pursuing curiosities, to have confidence in his ability to figure things out for himself, and to speak his mind with conviction" (Kamii & DeVries, 1975/1977 cited in DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987). This emphasis gave rise to their exploration of the significance of group dynamics and the role of social interaction (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987) and thus, the sociomoral atmosphere.

After identifying and comparing “pure prototypes” of educational models according to their sociomoral atmospheres (DeVries, Haney, & Zan, 1991), DeVries and Zan extend and articulate the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere in *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children* (1994). Here, the authors state that the cultivation of a sociomoral atmosphere is the first principle of constructivist education and supply its practical application to a variety of activities common to early childhood education. They provide the theoretical foundation from three parallels in Piaget’s theory of cognitive and psychosocial development (see Table 1). They explain that both cognitive and psychosocial development are “constructed” by the child through his/her experience with objects and materials in his/her environment and through actual, authentic experiences with others. They discuss the role of “affect” or feelings of interest or concern that serve as the motivational force in developing the intellect and creating and maintaining relationships with others. They emphasize the process of equilibration. Cognitive development or learning is achieved as the mind makes adjustments to former ways of thinking after experiencing cognitive conflict. Psychosocial development requires an affirmed self and respect for the points of view and experiences of others through the process of decentering with the goal being sharing meaning and social equilibrium. DeVries and Zan (2005) assert that the conditions that promote intellectual development are consistent with those that promote psychosocial or sociomoral development.

Table 1 – Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive and Psychosocial Development

Cognitive development	Psychosocial development
Knowledge of the physical world is constructed by the child	Psychosocial knowledge is constructed by the child
Affect (interest) is the indissociable motivational element in intellectual development	Socioaffective bonds (or the lack) motivate social and moral development

Table 1 continued

Cognitive development	Psychosocial development
Cognitive development involves the equilibration process of self-regulating thought and action as adjustment to error or cognitive conflict	Social and moral development involves affirmation of the self and conservation of the other as a desired partner, decentering to become conscious of different points of view, and adjustment to obtain shared systems of meaning and social coordination

To create an atmosphere supportive of both cognitive and psychosocial development, DeVries and Zan (1994) advocate for what Durham and Burts (2006) have interpreted as cooperative versus coercive teacher-child relationships, collaborative versus competitive peer relations, and democratic versus dictatorial modes of classroom governance. The cooperative teacher-child relationship is derived from Piaget’s (1932) statement that autonomous relationships, those based upon mutual respect, are preferable to heteronomous relationships based upon obedience to an authority figure (DeVries & Zan, 1994). The teacher builds a cooperative relationship by behaving as a mentor and friend who minimizes the use of authority. The teacher who “asks rather than tells, suggests rather than demands, and persuades rather than controls” takes away the pressure associated with obedience and allows children to feel acceptance and approval that opens the way for positive patterns for social interaction and a stable personality (DeVries & Zan, 1994, p. 50).

A competitive orientation among children is characterized by the teacher’s emphasis upon the individual child who is charged with doing individual work and being responsible for following the rules and instructions of the teacher regardless of what peers are doing. Teachers use a competitive orientation among children for the purposes of gaining behavioral compliance or as motivation toward academic work. In this type classroom, children may classify themselves

according to how their performances rate in terms of others (Durham & Burts, 2006). In contrast, the teacher fosters a collaborative form of peer relations first by providing opportunities, or “shared experiences,” that cultivate positive feelings among class members. By allowing children to play and work together, develop special friendships, and choose and participate in activities that are meaningful to them, affective bonds are formed that regulate children’s interpersonal behavior. Collaborative relationships among children that focus upon how one’s behavior impacts others within the community promote the decentering and perspective-taking that is useful to moral development and self-regulation.

DeVries and Zan (1994) define their perspective on classroom governance as a child’s relationship with rules. Indeed, their recommendations for classroom governance are consistent with the qualities they endorse for teacher-child relationships and peer relationships. In contrast to the practice of the teacher holding all authority, making all decisions, and enforcing all rules, they place behavior management within relationship contexts and empower the child and classroom community to self-regulate. While this style of classroom governance has been misunderstood as permissive and chaotic (DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998), *Moral Classrooms*, *Moral Children* (DeVries & Zan, 1994) requires that children’s behavior be upheld to the principle of mutual respect. The sociomoral atmosphere is effective at promoting moral development when children are actively involved in initiating discussions of classroom problems, considering moral dilemmas, voting on rules, and deciding on group activities.

*Moral Classrooms* goes beyond suggesting how these type relationships are thought to be advantageous. The authors describe the role of the teacher in facilitating each of these orientations in the typical early childhood classroom contexts. For example, in their chapter on clean-up time, they explain the opportunities for children to develop self-regulation, ideas about

consideration and fairness, and shared responsibility as the teacher explains the reasons for cleaning the classroom. They argue that explaining to children the advantages that accompany “caring for” the classroom and materials and the consequences of not doing so, makes clean-up something children feel compelled to do rather than coerced to do. The authors also address the sociomoral implications of common school routines such as lunch time, activity time, and nap/rest time.

### Elements of the Sociomoral Atmosphere

The sociomoral atmosphere has been defined as a network of relationships within a classroom that make up a child’s experience of school. These relationships include the child’s relationship with the teacher, peers, rules, and academics. While acknowledging that the sociomoral atmosphere impacts academic performance and the child’s feelings about academics, this discussion of the sociomoral atmosphere here will focus upon the child’s relationship with the teacher, peers, and rules in an attempt to clarify the sociomoral atmosphere apart from curricular model. While DeVries and Zan (1994) expound upon these relationships in practical detail, the following review will separately address teacher-child relationships, peer relations, and the child’s relationship with rules, or classroom governance, from a research perspective with the aim of lending further credence to the constructivist dimensions of the sociomoral atmosphere.

### **The Teacher-Child Relationship**

The teacher-child relationship has been described as possibly the most meaningful aspect of early education from a child’s perspective (Gable, 2002). The guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) strongly emphasize the importance of warm, positive relationships between children and adults. DeVries and Zan (1994) describe the type of

teacher-child relationship that creates a positive sociomoral atmosphere. They conceptualize a teacher-child relationship that is primarily cooperative – with the teacher exhibiting warmth and concern for children while cultivating supportive, respectful relationships. They contrast this type of relationship with others in which the teacher values children who are consistently obedient and often uses coercive strategies to gain children’s compliance. Warm, caring relationships among teachers and children have been examined in the field of early childhood and associated with positive adjustment to school and school success for both typical and at-risk students (Brophy & Good, 1974; Elicker & Fortner-Wood, 1995). Following is a review of both the emotionally supportive and autonomy supportive teacher-child relationship.

#### Emotionally Supportive Teacher-Child Relationships

Caring teacher-child relationships are a central feature of early childhood education as exhibited in the guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Attachment theory serves as the theoretical basis for caring relationships among teachers and children (Ainslie & Anderson, 1984; Howes, 1999; Howes & Hamilton, 1992; Howes & Hamilton, 1993; Howes & Matheson, 1992). Research has suggested that children in early care and education have the opportunity to develop attachment relationships with their teachers/caregivers. Howes and Hamilton (1992) found that 73% of children had formed secure attachments with their teachers, while 76% had formed secure attachments with their mothers. Honig (2002) applied attachment theory to child care and early education settings and asserts the necessity of emotional bonds and sensitive, responsive care over time.

The emotional quality and psychological closeness of teacher-child relationships have been associated with child outcomes. For example, Birch and Ladd (1997) examined the teacher-child relationships of 206 kindergarten children in terms of closeness, dependency, and conflict.

Teacher-rated conflict was associated with teacher's ratings of school liking, school avoidance, and cooperation within the classroom. Teacher-child closeness was related to child academic performance, as well as to teacher's ratings of school liking and self-directedness.

Pianta and Steinberg (1992) developed the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) as a means of evaluating student-teacher relationships from the teacher's perspective. The items within the STRS were derived from attachment theory and research on teacher-child interactions. The items were designed to tap issues of warmth/security, anger/dependence, and anxiety/insecurity. In 1995, using the STRS, Pianta, Steinberg, and Rollins found that children who were rated as having a positive relationship with their teacher in kindergarten were better adjusted to school in the spring semester of first grade. As well, children with warm, close, communicative relationships with kindergarten teachers were better adjusted and more positive in second grade than those with angry, dependent child-teacher relationships in kindergarten.

Pianta and Stuhlman (2004) state that the development of children's early competencies in several domains has been linked to and facilitated by the quality of the teacher-child relationship. Their study examined the extent to which preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers' perceptions of their relationship with students were associated with students' social and behavioral outcomes. The results of their study of 490 children and their families and teachers indicated that teacher reported conflict and closeness predicted children's academic performance, behavior problems, and social competence.

Hamre and Pianta (2001) suggest that early teacher-child relationships seem to determine the trajectory that children travel toward a wide range of school outcomes. From a sample of 179 children, teacher-child relationships, as experienced and reported by kindergarten teachers, were unique predictors of academic and behavioral outcomes in early elementary school, with

mediated effects through eighth grade. The study also suggests that the quality of teacher-child relationships is a stronger predictor of behavioral than of academic outcomes. A later study by these researchers reported that students labeled “at-risk” had achievement scores and student-teacher relationships commensurate with their low-risk peers at the end of first grade when given strong instructional and emotional support by their teacher (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

The interactions between teachers and children have received more focus of late. The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute reported in 2005 that results from a multi-state Pre-K quality study indicated low levels of interactions among teachers and children. This study revealed that in Pre-K, teachers spend more time during the day issuing task demands than providing meaningful, supporting conversations or instruction. During observations of 240 randomly-selected state-funded programs representing 211,000 children, children experienced higher-level verbal interactions with their teachers on average less than 3% of the time. Seventy-three percent of the time, observers recorded no teacher-child interactions. This finding is consistent with other studies that reveal that, by and large, quality interactions between teachers and children are hard to come by (Kontos & Wilcox-Hertzog, 1997; Layzer & Goodson, 2006).

A measure of teacher-child interactions and support has been developed by LaParo, Pianta, and Stuhlman (2003) in which early childhood program quality is assessed by teacher-child interactions, management, and instructional support. Use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in six states again verified that teachers generally do not engage in interactions with children more than 20% of the time. Most of the communication between teachers and children centered upon brief, evaluative feedback and issuing instructions rather than on extended discussions or instructional support.

## Autonomy Supportive Teacher-Child Relationship

Researchers have examined another aspect of teacher-child relationships that seems to correspond to the autonomous orientation advocated by constructivists. While not identical to the constructivist model, “autonomy-supportive” teachers have been found to be beneficial to child outcomes. In a classic study comparing authoritarian, laissez-faire, and democratic leadership styles, Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) found that a democratic leadership style influenced student motivation, participation, and task completion in the absence of the leader among a group of 10- and 11-year-old boys. Descriptions of the autonomy-supportive teacher emerge from the discussion of self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). SDT is concerned with promoting an interest in learning in students, a valuing of education, and a confidence in their own capacities and attributes. Within early childhood education, SDT is often a framework for discussing intrinsic/extrinsic motivation toward learning tasks. Grolnick and Ryan (1987) found that elementary students who reported more autonomous (intrinsic) motivation to doing schoolwork evidenced greater conceptual learning and better memory than did children who reported less autonomous motivation.

Reeve, Bolt, and Cai (1999) observed autonomy-supportive high school teachers and reported that they listened to students more, allowed them to manipulate instructional materials more, were more likely to ask about student wants and less likely to give solutions or use directives. These behaviors are quite similar to those promoted by DeVries and Zan (1994). Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, and Barch (2004) found that in high schools, teacher could be trained to use more autonomy supporting teaching strategies and experience more engaged students.

Reeve (2006) provides a detailed review of autonomy-supportive teaching that he associates with students' positive motivation and engagement.

### **Peer Relations**

The implications of early education for children's social development have been widely considered. A child's feelings of confidence, ability to communicate successfully with others and control aggression are just some outcomes that have been associated with a child's early social experiences (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Early peer relationships contribute to children's long-term development in many ways (Hartup & Moore, 1991; Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Parker & Asher, 1987). [For thorough reviews of research on peer relationships in early childhood, see work by Ladd (1999), and Ladd, Buhs, and Troop (2002)]. DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, and Sales (2002) relate that the same mutual respect and cooperation that characterizes teacher-child relationships should be fostered among children within a classroom. They suggest that ample time especially at the beginning of a school year be devoted to helping children gain social competence. They point to shared experience and affective bonds as a means to a caring community where children learn to consider the feelings and effects of personal actions upon the group.

Wittmer and Honig (1994) state that children learn to enjoy interactions with others when they experience adults who are positive, caring, loving, and responsive. Evidence from their review of research supports the role of the teacher in facilitating positive peer relationships. They state that positive peer relationships have been found among children in classrooms where the teacher maintained caring relationships with students and used positive classroom management strategies. Kemple and Hartle (1997) provide teachers with many suggestions for making their classrooms rich in potential for peer interactions and social development. They

focus initially upon the teacher's role in providing children with emotional safety and security which enables children to be open to peer relationships. Practical instructions for planning for peer relations in the classroom are provided. Kemple and Hartle offer recommendations for enhancing peer interactions during scheduled activities such as snack times and group discussions, but focus upon the responsibility of the teacher to use sensitive and individually appropriate strategies when dealing with interpersonal challenges.

Schmidt, Burts, Durham, Charlesworth, and Hart (2007) report that children from classrooms where teachers used positive guidance strategies consistent with DAP and the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere developed higher levels of shared experiences and negotiation strategies over a three month period. Conversely, children from classrooms where teachers used negative guidance strategies exhibited negative social behaviors (harsh emotional outbursts, hitting) and negotiation strategies (power assertion), resembling those of their teacher.

The Schmidt et al., (2007) study was based upon the larger work examining child outcomes according to sociomoral atmosphere. DeVries, Reese-Learned, and Morgan (1991) examined children's enacted interpersonal understanding in direct instruction, constructivist, and eclectic kindergarten programs. The results suggest that children's social-cognitive and moral development is hindered by teacher-centered, heavily academic programs.

Howes (2000) describes the social behaviors of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders as predicted by the socio-emotional climate, teacher-child relationships in preschool and their contemporary (current) teacher-child relationship. Findings suggest that considerable individual variations (e.g., behavior problems and gender) influence children's social competence. However, particular pathways were observed. Aggression and disruption as a second grader was best predicted by being a four-year-old boy whose teacher perceived him to have behavior problems and therefore

constructed a conflictual relationship within a conflictual classroom climate. Second graders who appear to have withdrawn from peers were best predicted by being a child with low levels of behaviors problems as a four-year-old enrolled in a preschool with a conflictual social emotional climate. Social competence with peers appears to be best predicted by early opportunities to engage with peers.

Opportunities that children have to interact and develop with peers have been shown to be important to a number of outcomes for children. Addressing the issue of school adjustment, Ladd (1990) discussed the advantages associated with a child's ability to make friends. Looking at peer relationships of 125 children in the initial weeks of kindergarten and throughout the school year, Ladd considered friendships and social status within a classroom peer group. The major finding of this study was that peer relations are a precursor for later school adjustment. Ladd reported that having friends at school was related to positive feelings about school and that the stability of school friendships serve as an important stabilizing force as children experience increasing school demands. New friendships were also found to be important. This study suggested that friendships formed by working with peers on educational tasks fostered learning and achievement. Peer rejection predicted less favorable school attitudes, increased school avoidance, and lower levels of performance throughout kindergarten. For a review of research on peer acceptance and rejection in childhood, see Hymel, Vaillancourt, McDougall, and Renshaw (2002).

### **Classroom Governance**

While the influence of supportive teacher-child relationships and positive peer relationships has been established, the issue of classroom governance may be pivotal in determining how positive a classroom sociomoral atmosphere might be. Classroom governance

includes many of the day-to-day management tasks that teachers must accomplish. What to do when someone misbehaves, how to plan activities, who should participate in maintaining the physical classroom are all issues that teachers often address without regard to how they affect the sociomoral atmosphere. The phrase, “the devil is in the details” may accurately describe this component of the sociomoral atmosphere. One meta-analysis covering 11,000 statistically significant findings (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1990) suggests that the way in which the classroom is managed is more influential than any other variable (cited in Watkins, 2005). The constructivist approach to classroom governance emphasizes a democratic style of classroom governance. In addition to the practice of encouraging children participation in the government of the class is the unique way in which the constructivist teacher handles conflict and facilitates moral development within the classroom.

Considering a classroom as a community of learners having a degree of input into the affairs of the community is not novel in early childhood education. Developmentally Appropriate Practice names this as the first of its five guidelines (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). This type of community includes fair treatment of individuals for the good of the group, discussions among group members, and maintenance of the learning environment (Logan, 1998). DeVries and Zan (1994) detail more specific components of the classroom community. In the constructivist community, children participate in making the rules for behavior; have greater decision making power concerning class activities; and show ownership of their physical environment by participating in decorating the class and working to maintain materials and appearance. Voting is used at times to determine the will of the community when consensus cannot be reached.

A notable educational program that has produced research to support a community approach to education is the Child Development Project (CDP). The Caring School Community

Program features class meetings, a cross-age buddies program, home-side activities, and school-wide community building. Schaps (2003) describes class meetings as times for building peer relationships, unity among the group, and identifying and solving problems. He describes the buddies program, homeside activities, and community building activities as ways to foster connectedness within the entire school community. Schaps emphasizes the importance of developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence through giving children a voice in classroom agenda and climate. The Developmental Studies Center reports a number of positive outcomes associated with its emphasis on a caring community. In a six school district study comparing students from 12 CDP schools with 12 matched schools, among elementary students the CDP was associated with a greater sense of school as a community, higher academic performance, better conflict resolution skills, and less use of alcohol and marijuana. The influence of the CDP was reported in middle schoolers having higher grades in core courses, higher achievement test scores, less delinquency, and higher aspirations (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). A previous study (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, and Schaps, 1995) studied relationships between students' sense of school community, poverty level, and student attitudes, motives, beliefs, and behavior and found that some of the strongest positive effects of school community occurred among schools with the most disadvantaged student population.

DeVries and Zan (1994) argue that moral development is fostered through interpersonal conflict, in which one has the opportunity and is aided, when necessary, to take the perspective of another; and through exposure to moral dilemmas that emerge either in the context of community life or through discussion of hypothetical dilemmas presented by an adult or through children's literature. As early as 1977, Thomas Lickona wrote about the class meeting as

“democracy for kids” and the benefits associated with children’s rule-making and enforcement of rules. In a review of research on classrooms as learning communities, Watkins (2005) cites studies that suggest that involvement in class decision-making and problem solving is associated with higher level moral reasoning. For a review of research on moral development using these and other strategies, see the Synthesis of Research on Moral Development (Nucci, 1987).

### Comparison of Conceptual Dimensions of DAP and Constructivism

#### **Common Elements**

To justify the convergent and divergent validity of the SMART by its relationship to established measures of early childhood program quality (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) and teacher interactions (Arnett, 1989) a comparative discussion of the conceptual issues involved is necessary. The suggestion that a measure of early childhood program quality would generally relate to a measure of sociomoral atmosphere is based upon the two constructs’ common theoretical base. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provided the definition of program quality and promoted the use of quality measures like the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) in the 1980’s. Through the NAEYC’s early childhood accreditation program, measures like ECERS became widely used. After NAEYC’s publication of guidelines for “developmentally appropriate practice” in 1987 (Bredekamp) and 1997 (Bredekamp & Copple), the ECERS was revised to reflect changes in the field of early education advanced by the DAP guidelines (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). While the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) does not claim to be a measure of DAP, it is the most widely used rating tool to examine early childhood program quality that is largely informed by DAP. While DAP has created the standards for what early childhood program should be, the ECERS has assessed thousands of programs’ alignment with

these standards (Warash, Markstrom, & Lucci, 2005). These guidelines that include the principles of developmentally appropriate practice are based on prominent theories that view intellectual development from a constructivist perspective (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Edwards (2005) writes that one of the most prominent bases of developmentally appropriate practice is Piagetian constructivism. Blasi and Enge (1998) examined developmentally appropriate practice and detailed its constructivist features. First, they describe DAP's characterization of children as active learners who "construct" their own understandings through experience with their physical, social, and cultural environment. Second, they quote NAEYC's advocacy for curriculum that is based upon the needs and interests of the child. Third, they discuss the role of play – its importance in early childhood programs and the guidelines that recommend ample time for play and necessary reflection to make play meaningful in a Piagetian sense. Finally, they highlight the role of the teacher as an active curriculum developer who understands children's individual development and provides learning environments that foster children's initiative and active exploration.

The four features of DAP that Blasi and Enge (1998) present as consistent with constructivism would also be important to a classroom's sociomoral atmosphere. The first feature, that intellectual development is actively constructed through the child's experience with his environment begins with the NAEYC position statement on developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). A recent article by Geist and Baum (2005) addresses the challenges that teachers currently face in implementing curriculum based upon constructivist theory. The authors suggest that high levels of commitment to DAP, advocacy, and innovative teaching and assessment strategies such as project work and portfolio assessment can be effective strategies to support an active/interactive approach to learning. This theoretical

orientation toward an active/interactive learning experience is especially important to the sociomoral atmosphere. DeVries and Zan (1994) describe the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere as one in which the teacher actively promotes the child's activity in learning pursuits, but also in relationships with both the teacher and his/her peers. The actions and reactions that occur among adults and children within a classroom are stated to be important to the child's construction of the self, of others, and of subject-matter knowledge (DeVries & Zan, 2005).

The second constructivist feature of DAP, the provision of activity that is sensitive to the needs and interests of the child, is also important to the sociomoral atmosphere. Respect for and inquiry into children's interests is frequently presented as a developmentally appropriate catalyst for meaningful learning (Jablon & Wilkinson, 2006; Seitz, 2006). Friedman (2005) compiled several examples of early childhood teachers using subjects of interest to children, such as babies, toads, and football to explore social studies issues. Science learning has been accentuated in classrooms of children interested in hissing cockroaches and goldfish (Korte, 2005; Lewin-Benham, 2006). Constructivists agree that an active, motivated mind is necessary for the construction of knowledge and would appeal to children's interests, purposes, and reasoning in similar ways as those described (DeVries & Zan, 2005). DeVries and Zan (1994) also assert that affect, or positive feelings, provide children with motivation and personal interest in regulating interpersonal relationships in cooperative ways.

The observation of play is central to determining the developmental appropriateness of an early childhood program. The NAEYC has disseminated a large volume of information on the use of play in early education through various publications. For example, NAEYC devoted the May 2003 volume of its journal *Young Children* to play and has published a number of books

supporting play-based curriculum (Koralek, 2004; Owocki, 1999; Rogers & Sawyers, 1988). Likewise, the NAEYC position is in keeping with constructivist theory that recognizes the many developmental implications of play contexts. In *Developing Constructivist Early Childhood Curriculum*, DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, and Sales (2002) document various interpretations of play within the curriculum and evaluate these interpretations in terms of their alignment with constructivist theory. This will be discussed further as we consider the aspects of the sociomoral atmosphere that may not be realized in an assessment of developmentally appropriate practice.

Finally, Blasi and Enge (1998) discuss the role of the teacher as a decision-maker as mutually important to both developmentally appropriate practice and constructivist theory. The NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice detail the teacher's use of multiple sources of information such as the typical developmental trajectory for his/her students, the individual strengths and differences of students, and cultural/social contexts of children to plan for both group and individual learning and developmental experiences. Although Fosnot (2005) cautions that constructivism is a theory of learning, not a theory of teaching, she writes that to be able to support children's learning effectively, constructivist teachers must become adept at split-second decision-making in the context of multiple teaching/learning acts and connect those interactions with the overall context of the entire classroom.

### **Unique Dimensions of the Constructivist Sociomoral Atmosphere**

While it can be generally assumed that measures of quality in early education like the ECERS-R and sociomoral atmosphere should correlate due to their common theoretical base, a number of important features of the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere may not be evident in such a measure. As previously stated, the nature of constructivist learning theory is diverse and

complex and there is no monolithic, agreed upon concept. Dangel, Guyton, and McIntyre (2004) cite five attempts to articulate constructivist pedagogy and four different definitions of constructivist classrooms. Their recent review is consistent with DeVries and Kohlberg's (1987) observations of differences among three Piagetian approaches to curriculum. The present study, however, concerns the construct of the sociomoral atmosphere that emerged from the Kamii-DeVries (1975/1977) constructivist program that DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) suggest are most aligned with Piagetian theory. They identified autonomy as the primary, inclusive objective in constructivist pedagogy – making this focus unique among constructivist programs. “Kamii and DeVries (1975/1977) took great pains to make it clear that socioemotional objectives were their first priority and that this conclusion was based on Piaget’s discussion of the importance of increasing autonomy (self-regulation) for the construction of moral ideas and values, personality, intelligence, and knowledge” (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987, p. 58). It appears that the importance of the sociomoral atmosphere, minimal expression of teacher authority, cultivation of positive affect, the process of negotiating interpersonal conflict, and active involvement in group dynamics are unique features of DeVries and colleagues’ conceptualization of sociomoral atmosphere

When considering the relationship between the general principles endorsed by DAP and those described by DeVries and colleagues, initially one must acknowledge the primacy of the sociomoral atmosphere – its specific definition and its argued value – within DeVries and colleagues’ conceptualization. Their writings place the sociomoral atmosphere, specifically the teacher’s responsibility to create it, at the forefront of the teaching effort and assert that such either “promotes or retards development” (DeVries, 2001; DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987; DeVries & Zan, 1994). DeVries states that while constructivism can be characterized in terms of certain

types of activities, the activities do not constitute constructivist education. “The first principle of constructivist education is to create a sociomoral atmosphere of mutual respect that is continually practiced” (p. 38). While DAP charges the teacher to create a caring community of learners (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), it is less specific in how this should be accomplished and does not seem to identify children’s growth toward autonomy as the central aim of classroom relationship networks.

DeVries and colleagues argue passionately that children cannot become intellectually or morally autonomous in authoritarian relationships with adults. In the key documents in which they describe the sociomoral atmosphere, DeVries and colleagues present the contrasting types of authority described by Piaget and the developmental implications of each (DeVries, 2001; DeVries, et al., 2002; DeVries & Zan, 1994; DeVries & Zan, 1995; DeVries & Zan, 2005). This issue of psychological size (Vaughn, 2005) in the teacher-student relationship, where the teacher is a “friend,” “guide,” and “equal” is unique. Furthermore, his degree of equality is not specified in the NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and not assessed by the ECERS-R. While NAEYC publications have supported giving children opportunities to make decisions and choices, most maintain a traditional teacher role that exists as an authority figure within the classroom with unilateral power to make the majority of decisions. For example, in a recent NAEYC article concerning giving children power to make rules, a teacher is quoted, saying, “the whole question of letting go of power just flies in the face of established practice” (Wein, 2004, p. 2).

The basis for the cooperative model of teacher-child relationships and respectful peer relations is sustained by what Piaget called mutual affection. This exists as another distinct quality of DeVries and colleagues’ conceptualization of sociomoral atmosphere. When

discussing constructivist early education for moral development, DeVries, Hildebrandt, and Zan (2000) emphasize feelings of mutual affection, stating that a child may obey an adult's demand out of love for a trusted adult who has established a caring relationship (p. 12). While this mutual affection is accompanied by warmth, verbal expressions, and physical expressions – revered qualities among early childhood professionals - DeVries and Zan (1994) value “shared experience” as a pathway to mutual affection. As classroom community members share humorous experiences, secrets, and reflect upon pleasurable events, individuals are affirmed and interpersonal bonds are formed. DeVries and Zan (1994) described mutual respect and mutual affection as the incentive behind cooperative forms of conflict resolution featured in their constructivist program.

A final aspect of the DeVries colleagues' conceptualization of sociomoral atmosphere that may not be as commonplace in many programs even considered as being of higher quality is the degree of shared decision-making and ownership among students. The intentional involvement of children in rule-making, voting, and community meetings is an “integral part of the sociomoral atmosphere in constructivist classrooms” (DeVries & Zan, 1994, p. 145). Practitioners have recommended similar activities to contribute to classroom community (Rightmyer, 2003; Wein, 2004). However, specific instructions and applications of democratic practice as described by DeVries and Zan (1994) do not appear in the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and are not evaluated in the ECERS-R.

Developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) is based in part upon constructivist learning theory. The concept of the sociomoral atmosphere also derives from constructivist theory and implementing a constructivist sociomoral atmosphere would be

developmentally appropriate. Furthermore, several items and indicators within the ECERS-R rate constructivist elements of early childhood practice such as providing children with ample time to play with materials in the environment, encouraging conversation among children, and involving children in resolving their own conflicts. Because of this conceptual overlap, aspects of DAP, capable of being measured by the ECERS-R, and the constructivist sociomoral atmosphere, measured by the SMART, may coexist within a classroom. However, as noted, the use of what may be considered developmentally appropriate or of high quality may not explicitly include practices that are thought to promote a constructivist sociomoral atmosphere as conceptualized by DeVries and Zan (1994). Evaluations of early childhood educational programs using the ECERS-R that is informed by DAP's constructivist links, may relate in particular ways to evaluations of the sociomoral atmosphere using the SMART. However, one should not assume that they are one and the same. The current study suggests that measures of classrooms evaluated by the ECERS-R and the SMART will overlap to some degree. Analysis and interpretation of the data is likely to reveal that the two instruments are measuring different constructs.

## METHODS

### Development of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART)

The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART; see Appendix C) was designed by the researcher to assess the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood classrooms. The measure consists of 30 items within three categories – Teacher-Child Relationships, Peer Relations, and Classroom Governance. In the book that conceptualizes the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood education, DeVries and Zan (1994) define the sociomoral atmosphere as the network of relationships within a classroom that make up a child's experience of school. They refer specifically to the child's relationship with the teacher, peers, rules, and academics.

### Development of SMART Items

Items for this measure were derived from an extensive review of literature relating to the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood education. Because the 1994 work of DeVries and Zan most clearly conceptualized the construct, items for the measure were organized under three categories of relationships that DeVries and Zan suggest comprise a classroom's sociomoral atmosphere – the child's relationships with the teacher, peers, and rules. The child's relationship with academics, although considered important by DeVries and Zan, is not assessed in the SMART in an effort to develop a measure that does not draw an observer's attention toward a critique of the curricular model or teaching strategies used within a classroom. Using the three headings, Teacher-Child Relationships, Peer Relations, and Classroom Governance, literature pertaining to the sociomoral atmosphere, beginning with *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children* (DeVries & Zan, 1994), was examined to delineate the positive and negative characteristics of a classroom sociomoral atmosphere. Other works by the primary authors (DeVries, Hildebrant, &

Zan, 2000; DeVries & Zan, 1995; DeVries & Zan, 2003) and the DAP guidelines (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997) were surveyed and common themes associated with the constructivist conception of the sociomoral atmosphere were recorded. Recurring themes were appropriately categorized under the three headings and items were developed associated with each theme. Since the DeVries et al. work (1991) had described “prototypes” of sociomoral atmospheres, it seemed that a measure of sociomoral atmosphere might provide “templates” or patterns of positive and negative sociomoral atmospheres that an observer could compare an observed classroom to and rate its association to either a positive or negative template. Initially, 33 items were developed. After some consideration, 5 items were consolidated into other items as indicators, leaving 28 items. After review, it was determined that the literature warranted that 2 of these items should be retained leaving a total of 30 items. To aid the observer in deciding whether an observed classroom was more similar to the positive or negative template, examples and indicators were included with each item. The indicators and examples were derived from the mentioned literature, the teachers’ coding manual (DeVries, Haney, & Zan, 1991), discussions with experts, and anecdotal records from the researcher’s classroom observations.

Although it is acknowledged that the sociomoral atmosphere consists of a large network of influences, this instrument focuses primarily upon the behaviors of the classroom teacher. It is assumed that the quality of a classroom’s sociomoral atmosphere, much like the quality of instruction within a classroom, is dependent upon the teacher. In short, a theoretical position of this study is in agreement with Kohlberg’s (1970) statements that emphasize the moral energy of the educator and DeVries’ (2001) admonition that teachers consider the creation of the sociomoral atmosphere the first educational goal.

When items for the SMART were selected and organized, the instrument was reviewed by four early childhood professionals – professors in child development and early childhood education - who were familiar with the constructivist concept of the sociomoral atmosphere and the work of DeVries and colleagues. These professionals provided feedback related to organization of the items and offered scoring recommendations. As well, several of the examples that support and clarify items were supplied by these reviewers. Upon four occasions, Betty Zan, an author of the literature on the sociomoral atmosphere, reviewed the instrument and supplied meaningful suggestions and confirmed the merits of the instrument. All of the reviewers agreed that the SMART's items theoretically and practically characterized the components of a classroom sociomoral atmosphere. The content of the SMART was also compared to common themes of constructivist pedagogy that emerged from a qualitative study by Dangel, Guyton, and McIntyre (2004) that observed the teacher practices of six classroom teachers from Master's degree programs based on constructivist principles. All of the items on the SMART corresponded to the findings of Dangel and colleagues (2004).

Before the instrument was used for data collection, the researcher questioned the internal consistency of the SMART. Based upon personal classroom observations, he considered that, for example, a teacher may be particularly warm and caring toward students, warranting a higher score on the Teacher-Child Relationship Subscale, yet manage the classroom in ways that might produce a lower score on the Classroom Governance Subscale. Therefore, questions emerged about how internally consistent the SMART would prove to be. Streiner (2003) argues, however, that some measures, or “indices” of *causal* indicators may contribute to a construct, here, the sociomoral atmosphere, but not be highly correlated with one another. He indicates, in such cases, that dependence upon theory and prior research should drive the development of a

thorough census of items believed to be associated with the construct of interest. Since this suggestion would concurrently satisfy the requirements for content validity, SMART items were again reviewed and justified according to their theoretical and practical weight.

### **Scoring**

During an approximately 2 ½ hour classroom observation, observers make notes of teacher behaviors and decisions in relevant sections of the SMART. For example, an observer noting a teacher kneeling down to listen to a child and then offering feedback would make note of that encounter in the SMART section, Teacher-Child Relationships, Respect, Listening to Children (p. 10). After sufficient time observing and making notes, the observer decides which of the two templates most closely resembles the classroom being observed. Then, the observer decides to what degree the classroom resembles the template and chooses “a” if the classroom is very much like the classroom, or “b” if the classroom is only somewhat like the template. Upon completion, a total mean score can be calculated as well as sub-scale scores.

The instrument was used by the researcher and a member of his advisory committee in a pilot observation of a kindergarten classroom at the university’s laboratory school. From this experience, adjustments were made in the layout of the instrument and some items were re-worded for clarification. It was also decided to randomly arrange the templates so that negative and positive templates were not always in predictable places. It was thought that a random arrangement would promote closer examination of the items by the observers. In addition to the small pilot, twenty-six students in a course taught by the researcher titled, Adult-Child Relationships, used the SMART to conduct an observation of teacher-child relationships in early childhood programs. The students’ comments and questions about scoring, as well as insights

about the wording and readability of the items were considered and minor modifications were made in the physical layout and scoring instructions.

### Participants

Data were collected from a convenience sample of 20 Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms in a mid-sized Southeastern United States city. An IRB exemption based upon normal educational practices was granted and permission from the local school district and principals was obtained. Eight Pre-K and 12 Kindergarten classrooms were observed within five public schools and three private schools. Written consent was obtained from individual classroom teachers who participated in the study (see Appendix A). A teacher profile requesting demographic information was also completed by each teacher (see Appendix B). Ten teachers had B.S or B.A. degrees, ten had M.A. degrees. Ten teachers had certification in early childhood education, six had certification in elementary education, one had certification in both. Three Pre-K teachers had no certification. The average number of years of experience for these teachers was 12.

### Procedures

Eight undergraduate early childhood teacher education students and one graduate student were recruited to participate in data collection. A member of the researcher's advisory committee also volunteered to participate in the training and data collection. All students had knowledge of child development and early childhood education that supported training on the research instruments. Data collectors had prior training and experience using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). The researcher facilitated two training sessions on the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART), the ECERS-R, and the Teacher Interaction Scale (TIS; Arnett, 1989). The first

training session provided an overview of the measures, rating instructions, and explanation of each item in the SMART. The second training session established the reliability criteria for raters using the SMART. In this session, training participants rated a video-taped observation of a Pre-K classroom using the SMART. Following their scoring from the videotape, individuals' ratings of the items were compared and discussed. Questions about scoring were answered and additional clarification was given about individual items that were either unclear or misunderstood. The training participants' ratings were analyzed and compared to that of the researcher to determine which participants would meet the reliability criteria established by the researcher, a .75 Cohen's Kappa. Cohen's Kappa scores ranged from .64 to .85 for all the training participants (See Table 2). Five of the ten training participants met the reliability criteria (.75) and observed classrooms using the SMART. The remaining observers rated classrooms using the other two measures.

Table 2 - Cohen's Kappa Scores from Reliability Training

Training participants	Cohen's Kappa
1.	.85
2.	.84
3.	.79
4.	.79
5.	.75
6.	.73
7.	.70
8.	.68
9.	.67
10.	.64

Observations were scheduled to take place during "typical" school daily routines. Observers were able to visit the classrooms and complete observations on all three instruments within a period 2.5 – 3 hours. Twenty classrooms were observed using the SMART, the ECERS-R, and

the TIS. Each of the classrooms was observed by two different observers. One observer used the SMART and the second used the ECERS-R and the TIS. In seven of the twenty classrooms, the researcher rated the classroom using the SMART to provide data to investigate inter-rater reliability. The researcher contacted school principals and scheduled observations during eight school days in the spring 2007 semester.

## Measures

### **The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART)**

The SMART (see Appendix C) was used to rate 20 classrooms. Raters were trained to reliability evidenced by .75 Cohen's Kappa. Reliability checks were performed in 7 out of the 20 classrooms. SMART administrations were reliable as evidenced by coefficient alpha of .97 for the composite score. Alphas indicating reliability for the SMART subscales are provided in the Results section.

### **The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)**

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) is a revised version of a measure developed in 1980 to measure global quality in early childhood education. The ECERS-R is a frequently used tool to measure aspects of early childhood program quality and is used for training and technical assistance in every state and at least a half-dozen countries (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2003). The ECERS-R contains 7 subscales containing 42 items. Subscales used in this study include: Space and Furnishings, 8 items; Personal Care Routines, 6 items; Language-Reasoning, 4 items; Activities, 10 items; Interaction, 5 items; and Program Structure, 4 items. Due to this study's focus upon the classroom and teacher, the subscale pertaining to parents and staff was not administered. Harms, Clifford, and Cryer (1998) state that field studies indicate that the ECERS-

R has acceptable reliability and validity and that ECERS-R scores represent meaningful aspects of the early childhood program environment. Scoring the ECERS-R takes place during a period of at least 2 hours. On a 1-7 continuum with 1 being “Inadequate” and 7 being “Excellent,” ratings are made based upon a current classroom situation comparison to 4 sets of indicators/examples for each item. Cronbach’s alpha for reliability is provided in Table 3.

**The Teacher Interaction Scale (TIS)**

While the ECERS-R is a noted measure of global quality, Perlman, Zelman, and Le (2004) identify the Teacher Interaction Scale (Arnett, 1989) as another type of quality measure that focuses in some depth upon specific *process indicators*. The TIS allows for the rating of dimensions of observed teacher/caregiver behavior. It has also been used under the names Teacher Sensitivity Scale and Caregiver Interaction Scale. This instrument consists of 26 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Observers are expected to rate a teachers degree of warmth, control, discipline strategies, and other interpersonal behaviors. Scoring yields a total mean score of 0-4. This measure has been used to accompany quality rating scales in early care and education. Cronbach’s alpha for reliability is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 - Reliability of ECERS-R and TIS

Subscale	Cronbach’s alpha
Classrooms (n=20)	
ECERS-R	
Space and furnishings	.842
Personal care routines	.813
Language-reasoning	.867
Activities	.940
Interaction	.782
Program structure	.888
TIS composite	.862

## RESULTS

The aim of this study was to examine the internal consistency, inter-rater reliability, content, and convergent/divergent validity of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART). It was hypothesized that analysis of data would reveal that the SMART is internally consistent, evidenced by a coefficient alpha greater than .70. Prior to data collection, observers were trained to use the SMART reliably, with a Cohen's Kappa of at least .75 when compared to the researcher's coding of a video-taped PreK classroom. It was hypothesized that acceptable Kappas would also be found through reliability checks performed by the researcher in 7 of the 20 classrooms observed. Finally, it was hypothesized that the SMART, a proposed measure of early childhood program quality, would be correlated with other such measures, the ECERS-R, a widely-used measure of global program quality, and the TIS, a common process quality measure of teacher interaction, punitiveness, permissiveness, and detachment. It was posited that analysis of data would reveal that the SMART measured phenomenon not measured by the other two instruments. The presentation of results will begin with descriptive statistics on the SMART, ECERS-R, and TIS subscales. Means and standard deviations of the SMART's thirty items will also be provided to show how scores were distributed and which items had the most variance. Reliability analyses, the internal consistency of the SMART and inter-rater reliability results will follow. Finally, Spearman's correlations of the SMART, ECERS-R, and TIS will be presented to provide evidence of convergent/divergent validity.

### Descriptive Statistics

SMART subscales (Teacher-Child Relationships, Peer Relations, Classroom Governance) scores (N=20) ranged from a minimum of 1.57 to a maximum of 4.0 on a 4-point scale (see Table 4). The SMART scoring system involves the use of letter and number

combinations (see Appendix D). An item score of “1a” indicates that the classroom is a lot like the one described in template one. A “1b” indicates a little like template one, 2a indicates a lot like template two, and “2b” indicates a little like template 2. For data analysis, these scores were converted into a 1-4 scale with 1a = 1, 1b = 2, 2a = 4, and 2b = 3. Scores for the SMART subscales, Teacher-Child Relationships, Peer Relations, and Classroom Governance, were calculated as a mean score of the items within the subscale. Composite SMART scores were computed as a mean across all 30 items.

Table 4 - Descriptive Statistics for SMART Subscales

SMART subscale	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
Teacher-child relationships	1.71	4.00	2.80	.799	20
Peer relations	1.57	4.00	2.86	.862	20
Classroom governance	1.56	3.78	2.45	.659	20

ECERS-R subscales (Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure) scores (N=20) ranged from a minimum of 1 to 7 on a 7-point scale (See Table 5). ECERS-R subscale scores were computed as a mean across each item within the subscale. A composite ECERS-R score was computed as the mean of all 37 items used in this study.

Table 5 - Descriptive Statistics for ECERS-R Subscales

Subscale	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
Space and furnishing	2.25	7.00	4.41	1.22	20
Personal care routines	1.75	7.00	4.40	1.41	20
Language-reasoning	1.00	7.00	4.25	1.68	20
Activities	1.40	7.00	3.53	1.50	20
Interaction	2.40	7.00	4.78	1.33	20
Program structure	1.67	7.00	4.00	1.69	20

TIS composite scores ranged from 2.46 to 3.65 on a 4-point scale. The mean score was 3.04 with a standard deviation of .40.

Concerning the 30 items contained in the SMART, scores ranged from 1 to 4 on a 4-point scale (N=20). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 6. The items rating the lowest within the scale (means < 2.5) were Respecting Children’s Perspectives, Non-Verbal Expressions of Authority, Motivation, Consequences, Rules, and Classroom Décor. These items represent the sometimes “hidden” aspects of children’s classroom experiences that DeVries and Zan (1994) assert are influential to the sociomoral atmosphere. Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, Respect for Children’s Physical Needs, Supporting through Interactions, and Signs of Mutual (Peer) Affection had the highest mean scores (mean > 3). These items, representing warmth, care for children’s physical needs, positive teacher-child interactions, and friendly peer relationships, while valuable to an assessment of sociomoral atmosphere, are also widely recognized indicators of quality early education perhaps making them more evident in this sample. Items with the highest standard deviations (> 1.2) were Conversations with Children, Modeling Interpersonal Relations, Peer Friendships, and Child Choice. These items measured specific constructivist behaviors that may have been more difficult to score therefore contributing to the greater variability.

Table 6 - Means and Standard Deviations of SMART Items

SMART items	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
Teacher-child relationships			
Verbal communication	3.11	1.12	20
Non-verbal communication	3.37	.84	20
Children’s physical needs	3.07	1.07	20
Children’s feelings	2.81	1.00	20
Individual abilities	2.59	1.12	20
Children’s perspectives	2.44	1.20	20
Listening to children	3.00	1.00	20

Table 6 continued

SMART items	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
Justification of teacher authority	2.85	1.06	20
Non-verbal expressions of authority	2.30	1.10	20
Use of authority	2.70	.95	20
Conversations with children	2.55	1.22	20
Play with children	2.48	.89	20
Supporting through interactions	3.14	1.06	20
Modeling interpersonal relations	2.78	1.22	20
Peer relations			
Play	2.85	1.13	20
Conversation	2.90	1.19	20
Friendships	2.85	1.23	20
Room arrangement	2.89	1.15	20
Children working cooperatively	2.85	.95	20
Signs of mutual affection	3.07	1.00	20
Conflict resolution	2.63	1.18	20
Classroom governance			
Control	2.52	.85	20
Motivation	2.48	1.05	20
Rules	2.48	.85	20
Consequences	2.30	1.17	20
Community group discussions	2.52	.70	20
Classroom community	2.89	.89	20
Child choice	2.52	1.22	20
Classroom maintenance	2.59	1.04	20
Classroom décor	2.30	.91	20

### Internal Consistency

An acceptable alpha as a measure of internal consistency would indicate that the items within the measure are sufficiently correlated to justify their existence within the measure. An alpha of .70 is a general cutoff point in social science research (Crano & Brewer, 2002). The SMART demonstrated a high level of internal consistency in this study. Coefficient alpha for the SMART (N=20) was .97. In addition, in a Spearman's correlation, SMART subscales were also high correlated with one another (See Table 7). As presented in the methods section, when

developing the SMART, the researcher was unsure if internal consistency should be anticipated. Citing Streiner's (2003) advice to provide a census of items when internal consistency might not be expected, the researcher relied upon constructivist theory and literature, as well as input from experts in the study of the sociomoral atmosphere when developing SMART's items. However, analyses reveal that the SMART's items do seem to measure an underlying construct based upon its high level of internal consistency.

Table 7 - Spearman's Correlations of SMART Subscales

Subscale	1	2	3
Classrooms (n=20)			
1. Teacher-child relationships	<b>.94</b>		
2. Peer relations	.82**	<b>.88</b>	
3. Classroom governance	.80**	.80**	<b>.93</b>

\*\*p < .01., Cronbach's Alpha in bold

#### Inter-rater reliability

SMART training prior to data collection produced 5 out of 8 raters with .75 Cohen's Kappa or better. To determine the success of training in the research setting and minimize coder drift, the researcher conducted reliability checks in 7 of the 20 (35%) classroom observations (see Table 8). Cohen's Kappa values ranging from .75 to 1.0 indicate that reliability training using a classroom format and a videotape coding exercise was effective in producing reliable raters for a research setting.

Table 8 - Cohen's Kappa Scores for Reliability (N=7)

Reliability check number	Cohen's Kappa value
1.	.84
2.	.75
3.	.88
4.	1.0
5.	1.0

Table 8 continued

Reliability check number	Cohen’s Kappa value
6.	.85
7.	.75

Convergent- Divergent Validity

It was expected that the total mean scores of the SMART, ECERS-R and the TIS would generally correlate and that subscale scores would correlate to different degrees (see Table 9).

Table 9 - Expected Correlations among the SMART, ECERS-R, and TIS

		SMART SUBSCALES		
		T/C relationships	Peer relations	Classroom governance
ECERS-R	Space and furnishings	Low	Mod	Mod
	Personal care routines	High	Low	Mod
	Language – reasoning	High	Mod	Low
	Activities	Low	Mod	Low
	Interaction	High	High	High
	Program structure	High	Mod	Low
TIS		High	Low	Low

Since rank order variables were used in this study and due to the sample size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004), Spearman’s correlation was selected to compare scores among the three instruments for evidence of convergent/divergent validity. High Spearman’s correlations among the three instruments are presented in Table 10 providing evidence for convergent validity of the SMART.

Table 10 - Spearman's Correlation of Three Instruments' Total Mean Scores

Subscale	1.	2.	3.
Classrooms (n=20)			
1. ECERS-R	-----	.74**	.69**
2. TIS	.74**	-----	.77**
3. SMART	.69**	.77**	-----

\*\*p < .01.

Further evidence of the SMART's validity can be found when viewing the results of Spearman's correlations among SMART and ECERS-R subscales and the TIS in Table 11. It was also expected that varying degrees of correlation would exist among the three instrument's subscales. The relationships posited at the subscale level (Table 9) were based upon an informal comparison of the items contained within the subscales. For example, it was expected that the relationship between a SMART score of Teacher-Child Relationships and an ECERS-R score of Space and Furnishings would be low because the ECERS-R Space and Furnishings subscale assessed more physical aspects of the classroom environment rather than issues pertinent to teacher-child relationships. Analyses revealed a range of relationships among measures that generally coincide with those informally proposed as low, moderate, and high. Spearman's correlations among all three instruments' subscales ranged between .40 and .84. The labels, low, moderate, and high were given according to correlations within the range of < .40, .40 - .64, and > .65 respectively. As expected, SMART's Teacher-Child Relationship subscale correlated highest with ECERS-R's Interactions subscale, .72, and the TIS, .84. SMART's Peer Relationships subscale correlated highest with ECERS-R's Language-Reasoning subscale, .70. While it was proposed that this relationship would be moderate (.40 - .64), further examination of this ECERS-R subscale's emphasis upon areas within the classroom for interaction, encouraging children to communicate, resolve conflict, ask questions and provide answers

reasonably justifies the high correlation. Likewise, the ECERS-R Activities subscale was highly correlated to SMART's Peer Relations, .66, perhaps because the Activities subscale contained 10 items relating to play and other activities within the classroom likely to influence peer relations. The SMART subscale, Classroom Governance had the lowest levels of correlation with the other measures. Correlations between Classroom Governance and the ECERS-R subscale, Space and Furnishings, .37, and Personal Care Routines, .24, were not significant at the .05 level. Its highest correlation to the ECERS-R, while only moderate, was to the Interactions subscale – the only Classroom Governance/ECERS-R relationship proposed to be high prior to data collection. The Classroom Governance subscale did significantly, moderately correlate with the TIS. This may perhaps be explained by the TIS factors of punitiveness and permissiveness that underlie aspects of this SMART subscale's assessment of the types of control a teacher exercises over the class, the consequences dealt to children's misdeeds, and a teacher's involvement of children in planning their school experience.

Evidence from these results indicates that the SMART has convergent validity with the ECERS-R and the TIS. While correlations exist among the subscales, results may also be interpreted as evidence of discriminant validity. Most (12 of 18) of the correlations among the SMART and ECERS-R are within the moderate range. However, this number of moderate correlations may be influenced by the smaller sample size. Given this number of moderate correlations, one may note that the SMART can only be highly correlated with three of the six ECERS-R subscales. Also, discriminant validity can also be argued based upon the weaker relationship between the SMART Classroom Governance subscale and the other subscales. Classroom Governance was not significantly related to two of the six ECERS-R subscales and only moderately related to the TIS.

Table 11 - Spearman's Correlations for Subscales of ECERS-R, SMART, and TIS

Subscale	Teacher-child relationships	Peer relations	Classroom governance
Classrooms (n=20)			
ECERS-R			
Space and furnishings	.54**	.56**	.37
Personal care routines	.40*	.44*	.24
Language-reasoning	.56**	.70**	.50*
Activities	.57**	.66**	.43*
Interactions	.72**	.64**	.52**
Program structure	.60**	.63**	.48**
TIS	.84**	.71**	.59**

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

Because results revealed many significant, albeit moderate, correlations among the SMART, ECERS-R, and the TIS, due to the small size of the sample, we sought to locate individual instances of wider variability among the measures. To this end, all 20 classrooms were ranked according to their SMART and ECERS-R scores. Then, classrooms were classified into quartiles of five from highest SMART and ECERS-R scores to lowest. Two variables were created to represent the ranked SMART and ECERS-R scores. These two variables were crosstabulated. Results show that 14 out of the 20 classrooms had comparable SMART and ECERS-R scores. A two quartile difference was noted in two of the classrooms providing evidence of divergence of SMART and ECERS-R scores of a single classroom. Again, results suggest that the SMART produced valid measures of a phenomenon independent of the ECERS-R. Additional discussion of these two cases follows in the next chapter.

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The results of this study indicate that the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) offers reliable and valid measurement of the sociomoral atmosphere in Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms. Analyses of data collected from twenty classrooms suggest that raters can be trained to reliably use the instrument and that the SMART is internally consistent. As well, the components of the SMART are correlated with components of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) and the Teacher Interaction Scale (TIS; Arnett, 1989) indicating that evaluating a classroom using the SMART would be consistent with aspects of what has been accepted as early childhood program quality. In addition, one may interpret the results to also support the idea that the SMART measures a unique construct, the classroom sociomoral atmosphere as conceptualized in constructivist literature.

An initial concern for the researcher was whether raters could be trained for reliable use of the SMART. Understanding that most leaders in education are unfamiliar with the underpinnings of the sociomoral atmosphere (Kamii, 1998), training college students to recognize the indicators of the sociomoral atmosphere and reliably code them seemed daunting. However, it appears that among the volunteer students in child development and early education, the training exercises were effective in producing reliable coders who maintained the reliability criteria within the actual research setting.

Because it was unknown whether the SMART should be expected to meet the standards for internal consistency, the researcher followed Streiner's (2003) recommendation to develop the SMART as a census of the construct through a thorough review of literature,

conceptualization, and expert review. While this concurrently established the content validity of the SMART, its reliability was further supported by evidence of internal consistency established by an alpha of .97.

Although the current study provides strong support for the reliability of the SMART, first impressions of the correlations among the SMART, ECERS-R, and the TIS prompt more critical interpretation of the results. The number of significant correlations among subscales may challenge whether the SMART is indeed measuring a construct distinct from the ECERS-R and the TIS.

It seems that support for the SMART as a measure of a unique construct may be gathered by finding meaning in some of the discrepancies observed in the data. First, it should be acknowledged that the sample size in the current study makes drawing firm conclusions difficult. It is assumed that greater variability can usually be found in larger samples.

Second, it seems that the SMART subscale, Classroom Governance, is notable. It is the only subscale that wasn't significantly correlated to other subscales and not highly related to any other subscale. It is important to note that several of the constructivist practices, such as actively involving children in rule-making, the rejection of the use of rewards and punishments, and the emphasis upon child choice, advocated by DeVries and Zan (1994) are included in this subscale and may be less prevalent in many early childhood classrooms.

Third, while results indicate that the SMART is consistent with other widely-accepted measures of early childhood program quality, one should not assume that a positive or negative measure of program quality as provided by the ECERS-R means that a classroom's sociomoral atmosphere is of the same quality. This can be illustrated through two examples revealed when the scores from the SMART and ECERS-R were arranged by quartiles, highest to lowest. In this

analysis, two classrooms emerged with a 2-quartile difference between the ECERS-R and SMART scores.

The first classroom had a higher ECERS-R score, a total mean score of 5.27 within the “good” range, and a lower SMART score, a moderate total mean score of 2.40. Upon review of the actual observation, it was noted that this classroom was within a magnet program and the teacher had 31 years of experience teaching. Her high ECERS-R scores were a result of having a spacious classroom with many quality materials, excellent supervision and safety practices. Her teaching techniques would have been observed as being very acceptable traditional teaching techniques. She had actually been awarded an outstanding teaching award in the current school year. However, her orientation toward the students in her classroom was largely, as Piaget (1932) described, heteronomous – an obedience-based relationship with children that maintained most of the authority and decision-making power. This teacher’s SMART scores were lowest in the areas of teacher authority, respecting individual abilities, supporting peer relations, motivation, and child choice. This type scenario – one in which a classroom may globally appear to be of high quality, but in which children’s development may actually indeed be hindered is one that may be argued would become more frequently observed in a larger sample.

The second example features a classroom with a lower ECERS-R score, a total mean score of 3 in the “minimal” range and a higher SMART score, a total mean score of 3.63 out of 4.00. This classroom was contained within a Pre-K program of primarily low SES population. The low ECERS-R scores resulted from limited classroom materials, lack of quality furnishings and space, minimal free play time and children’s group involvement. This was the teacher’s first year to teach in this program, perhaps a reason for less classroom materials. This program had a mandated scripted academic program that disallowed free play and required that much of the

children's focus be upon the teacher. However, this teacher held a graduate degree in child development and early childhood teacher certification from a university program that emphasizes constructivist learning. In this situation, some physical aspects of this program would be considered of lower quality. However, even with the constraints associated with this type program, the interpersonal dynamics and management of this classroom were representative of what DeVries and Zan (1994) would qualify as very supportive of children's intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development. SMART scores were highest for the teacher's respect for children's physical needs, and feelings, supportive conversation, modeling interpersonal behavior, positive peer conflict resolution, positive classroom community and the children's participation in classroom maintenance.

These two examples suggest that the sociomoral atmosphere is an independent construct not necessarily included in the comparative measures in this study. In the first example, one can infer that although this classroom may be recognized for offering good education to children within the class, its sociomoral atmosphere may be laced with negative developmental consequences. It is useful here to repeat DeVries and Zan's (2005) assertion that intellectual development and psychosocial development are not exclusive of one another – the sociomoral atmosphere has the potential to benefit both. The second example provides an opportunity to glean insight into a teacher's self-efficacy. In spite of particular limitations, and a low rating of global quality, positive teacher-child relationships, peer relationships, and classroom governance were found.

The results of this study suggest that the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template is a reliable and valid measure. Therefore, it appears that this measure offers the potential to advance understanding of child development in school contexts. Dickinson (2003) supports the

assessment of early childhood programs with a “toolkit” approach, understanding that evaluation tools that broaden our understanding of child development in school contexts will allow the field to raise the bar on what is considered quality early education. The value of additional construct-specific measures has been echoed by LaParo, Pianta, and Stuhlman (2004) as a means to advance policy, practice, and a professional development agenda that can improve prekindergarten and early elementary settings. The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template may benefit the field of early education and child development by providing additional information about the conditions that best promote early learning and development.

The ability to measure the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood classrooms also provides an opportunity to better understand the role of constructivist learning theory in early education. Kamii (1998) wrote of the need the educators operate within a “scientific theory of knowledge.” The study of the sociomoral atmosphere may allow researchers to develop a better understanding of this construct that will aid in the progression of the theory of knowledge and inform practice. The need for deeper understanding of constructivist theory and its application in early education has been identified by Bullard (2003) as she observed eclectic, developmentally inappropriate techniques adopted by teachers trained in constructivist practices soon after beginning their teaching careers. She attributes this regression to a lack of understanding of the theory behind constructivist practice.

Perhaps the most promising implication of this study is the SMART’s usefulness in investigating child outcomes that may be impacted by the classroom sociomoral atmosphere. Schmidt, Burts, Durham, Charlesworth, and Hart (2007) reported that children’s interpersonal behaviors became more like those of their teacher (positive or negative) within a three-month period. Comparison of social behaviors among children from classrooms with positive vs.

negative sociomoral atmospheres could be accomplished using the SMART. Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, and Kirk (1990) compared stress behaviors among children from different classroom types. An extension of this research examining the effects of classroom sociomoral atmosphere as a variable in child mental health could potentially further legitimize advocacy efforts for best practices in early education. Because of the insistence that the sociomoral atmosphere impacts the quality of the child's learning (DeVries & Zan, 1994), numerous associations between classroom sociomoral atmosphere and academic outcomes could be explored.

The current study, while providing interesting and promising results, also possesses limitations that require additional investigation to strengthen the generalizations that might be suggested. First, additional studies using the SMART should include opportunities to draw additional conclusions about the validity of the instrument by increasing the sample size. A larger sample size would allow opportunities for scenarios such as those discussed here to emerge – where SMART scores clearly are differentiated from other similar scales. Second, this study was limited to one region of the country and was conducted primarily in local public schools. It is important that any discussion of the sociomoral atmosphere be inclusive of different school locations, climates, and program types.

Future investigation of the ability of the SMART to measure the sociomoral atmosphere in different school settings and different locations would provide greater confidence in the measure's reliability. As well, investigation of the SMART's test-retest reliability would be informative so that researchers could examine how consistent a classroom's sociomoral atmosphere is over time and what factors might exist that influence any fluctuations observed.

An additional study that seems advantageous is pertinent to teacher preparation and professional development. Being that the sociomoral atmosphere is identified as an essential component of developmental education (DeVries, 2001), and being that the SMART focuses heavily upon the behaviors of the classroom teacher, an opportunity exists to identify what teacher qualities may be associated with different types of sociomoral atmospheres. The impact of different variables such as teacher preparation, or as Goldstein (2007) suggests, pressures within the workplace, or personal efficacy and temperament may be influential upon the type of atmosphere that a teacher creates among a classroom of students.

The evidence for the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template as a reliable and valid instrument provides a new avenue into the study of the impact of school contexts upon child development. Numerous studies underscore the importance of emotionally- supportive (Ainslie & Anderson, 1984; Howes & Hamilton, 1992; Howes & Hamilton, 1993; Howes & Matheson, 1992; Howes, 1999) and autonomy-supportive (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Reeve, 2006) teacher-child relationships. Pianta and colleagues (Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004) have provided convincing evidence that teacher-child relationships have long lasting effects upon school performance. The aim of this investigation of reliability and validity of the Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template is to initiate research into a construct that purports powerful, holistic implications for children's development. It is the intention of the researcher that this initial step will culminate into a meaningful contribution to the field of child development and early education and ultimately, mankind.

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## APPENDIX A

### CONSENT FORM

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study, “The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART): An Investigation of Reliability and Validity.”

This study is being conducted to test how a new classroom evaluation measure relates to other similar measures. Other early childhood classrooms in East Baton Rouge Parish are being observed. Data gathered from the observations will be analyzed to determine the SMART’s effectiveness at measuring an aspect of classroom quality.

The investigators of this study are:

Sean Durham, Ph.D. candidate, LSU School of Human Ecology, 225-802-3055

Robert Laird, Ph.D. Associate Professor, LSU School of Human Ecology, 225-578-1730

You may contact the investigators M-F, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm if you have additional questions about the study.

You are agreeing to allow your classroom to be observed for an approximate period of 2 hours. The observers will not interfere with your duties or the classroom schedule. They will sit within your classroom and observe the normal activities and make notes from their observation. They may move around the classroom at times to better observe what is happening. As well, we ask you to complete the brief teacher profile and return to the observers before they leave. Understand that individual information will never be published or shared and that any publications using the data will present only group summaries.

Your participation in testing this educational measure will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the elements of quality early education.

There are no known risks to you for participating in this study. Every effort will be made to insure confidentiality with all research materials kept in a locked cabinet to which the investigator has sole access. You may choose not to participate in the study or withdraw your participation at any time.

Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, you may also contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692.

I have been informed about this study and hereby give consent to participate in the study as described here.

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Signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX B

### TEACHER PROFILE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years at this school \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Degree Earned \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years teaching \_\_\_\_\_

Certification \_\_\_\_\_ ECED \_\_\_\_\_ ELED \_\_\_\_\_ ECED & ELED \_\_\_\_\_ None of these

Grade Level Currently Teaching \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years teaching this grade \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the following statements about educating children. Circle whether you strongly disagree (SD), mildly disagree (MD), are not sure (NS), mildly agree (MA), or strongly agree (SA).

	SD	MD	NS	MA	SA
1. Since parents lack special training in education, they should not question the teacher's teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Children should be treated the same regardless of differences among them.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Children should always obey the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Preparing for the future is more important for a child than enjoying today.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Children will not do the right thing unless they must.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents if they feel their own ideas are better.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Children should be kept busy with work and study at home and at school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The major goal of education is to put basic information into the minds of the children.	1	2	3	4	5
9. In order to be fair, a teacher must treat all children alike.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The most important thing to teach children is absolute obedience to whoever is in authority.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Children learn best by doing things themselves rather than listening to others.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Children must be carefully trained early in life or their natural impulses will make them unmanageable.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Children have a right to their own point of view and should be allowed to express it.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Children's learning results mainly from being presented basic information again and again.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Children like to teach other children.	1	2	3	4	5

Modernity Scale, Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985

APPENDIX C

THE SOCIOMORAL ATMOSPHERE RATING TEMPLATE

***The Sociomoral Atmosphere  
Rating Template  
(SMART)***

Sean Durham  
Louisiana State University  
2007

# ***The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART)***

The Sociomoral Atmosphere Rating Template (SMART) is designed to rate the sociomoral atmosphere in early childhood classrooms. Every classroom has a sociomoral atmosphere that either promotes or hinders a child's development (DeVries & Zan, 1994). The constructivist sociomoral atmosphere supports children's **autonomy** – intellectual, social, moral, physical, and emotional. Scores are derived from observations of teacher's (or other influential adults present) behaviors and decisions in respect to aspects of teacher-child relationships, peer relations, and classroom governance.

To ensure the most accurate representation of a classroom, users should plan to spend an appropriate amount of time within the classroom – 2 hours is recommended. Observations should be coordinated with the classroom teacher to determine that a typical school routine is observed.

At the scheduled time, observers should enter the classroom, briefly greet the teacher, and locate a vantage point conducive to careful observation and listening. The observer must remain unobtrusive but may relocate when necessary for accurate observation.

Observers should initially spend several minutes getting a feel for the general "tone" of the classroom. After becoming oriented to the classroom, the observer should begin to make notes in appropriate sections that will later aid in scoring the individual items. Scoring will be based upon how the classroom relates to two templates accompanying each item. Detailed observational notes are essential. These allow the observer to reflect upon the relationship between the observed classroom and the two templates.

Scoring is completed in two steps. **First**, for each item, the observer must decide which of the two "templates" that the classroom being observed most closely resembles. *Circle "1" or "2" in the score box.* **Second**, the observer should determine if the observed classroom is *a lot* like the template or *a little* like the template. In other words, how strong is the comparison between the observed classroom and the template? Classrooms that are a lot like the template should be scored "a" and classrooms that are a little like the template should be scored "b". *Circle "a" or "b" in the score box.* Each item will have a numerical and alphabetical score, e.g., 1a, 2a, 1b, 2b. *Write the number/letter combination in the score box. Examples* for each template are provided, but rating decisions should be based upon the *template statements*. Observers should not rate based solely on the number of examples recognized in the classroom. **No items should be scored "not observed" or "not applicable."** At the conclusion of the observation, place all your scores on the score sheet at the end of the instrument packet.

Observer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children in classroom \_\_\_\_\_ Number of adults \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Record

Time	Activity

Special Comments


# I. Teacher-Child Relationships

## A. Affect

### 1. Verbal Communication

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher's verbal communication supports positive affect</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher makes kind statements to children</li> <li>• Teacher uses a pleasant casual tone of voice with children</li> <li>• Teacher verbally, genuinely expresses warmth, acceptance, and care to children</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="613 632 922 905"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="613 632 922 688">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="613 688 781 724">Template</th> <th data-bbox="781 688 922 724">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 724 781 781"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="781 724 922 781"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 781 781 837"></td> <td data-bbox="781 781 922 837"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="613 837 781 894"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="781 837 922 894"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher's verbal communication doesn't support positive affect</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher makes harsh statements to children</li> <li>• Teacher uses a harsh or loud tone of voice with children</li> <li>• Teacher verbally humiliates children</li> <li>• Teacher may use a phony, "sing-song" voice with children that seems insincere</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Non-Verbal Communication

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher's non-verbal communication supports positive affect</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher smiles at children</li> <li>• Teacher offers patient, physical assistance to children</li> <li>• Teacher gives appropriate physical touch (returns a hug, pats on back)</li> <li>• Teacher seems to enjoy being with the children</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="656 380 964 653"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 380 964 436">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 436 834 472">Template</th> <th data-bbox="834 436 964 472">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 472 834 529"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="834 472 964 529"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="656 529 964 567"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 567 834 653"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="834 567 964 653"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher's non-verbal communication doesn't support positive affect</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher frowns, scowls, or has unpleasant facial expression</li> <li>• Teacher rolls eyes or sighs in exasperation</li> <li>• Teacher is physically intimidating – physically overwhelms, grabs or pulls</li> <li>• Teacher is distracted or may seem as if he/she would rather be somewhere else</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## B. Respect

### 1. Children's Physical Needs

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher does not consider children's physical comfort</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher dictates toileting and feeding schedules</li> <li>• Periods of rest are not allowed as needed (e.g., sleepy children criticized)</li> <li>• Teacher requires children to sit within a particular posture during group (criss-cross applesauce) or for long periods of time</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 449 966 722"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 449 966 510">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 510 829 548">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 510 966 548">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 548 829 600" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 548 966 600" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 600 966 638"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 638 829 722" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 638 966 722" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher considers children's physical comfort</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children encouraged to manage their own toileting with assistance as needed</li> <li>• Periods of rest are allowed as needed</li> <li>• Children are allowed to sit as they feel comfortable</li> <li>• Teacher may change activities if needed when children appear tired, uncomfortable – <i>evidence of discomfort includes children beginning to ask to visit restroom, blow nose, wander in the classroom</i></li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Children's Feelings

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher validates and is respectful of all children's feelings</p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher may ask a child "what's the matter?" or may say, "You look sad." or, "I can tell that you are angry."</li> <li>Teacher may ask a child how he/she feels about a situation</li> <li>Teacher expresses genuine empathy or sympathy, say "I'm sorry." or "I know you are upset (sad, concerned)."</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 441">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 441">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 441 833 491"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 441 963 491"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 491 833 531"></td> <td data-bbox="833 491 963 531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 531 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 653 971 831"><b>If the teacher is not observed disregarding or being disrespectful of children's feelings, score this item "1b".</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher disregards and is disrespectful of children's feelings</p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher tells upset child to "hush crying"</li> <li>Teacher shames or ridicules children for expressing feelings e.g., "You're acting like a baby."</li> <li>Teacher does not validate and recognize children's feelings</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Individual Abilities

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher does not support the individual abilities of children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher requires the same skills and <i>routines</i> of all children</li> <li>• Teacher emphasizes “right” answers</li> <li>• Teacher consistently <i>corrects</i> children</li> <li>• Teacher may chide children for not listening to the teacher or reading the book closely enough – “You weren’t paying attention!”</li> <li>• Teacher does not give sufficient time to reason or consider other possibilities</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 338 964 611"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 338 964 396">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 396 829 434">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 396 964 434">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 434 829 493"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 434 964 493"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 493 964 531"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 829 611"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 531 964 611"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher supports the individual abilities of children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher is flexible and supportive to children regardless of their skill/ability level</li> <li>• Teacher encourages children’s reasoning and reflection even when they aren’t “correct” - May say, “That’s an interesting way of thinking about that.” Or ask, “How did you decide upon that answer?”</li> <li>• Teacher provides different activities and/or materials according to children’s abilities and interests without distinguishing the child’s need</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

#### 4. Children's Perspectives

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher seems to value children's perspectives</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher seeks children's opinions about classroom problems</li> <li>• Teacher asks children questions and accepts their understanding of situations</li> <li>• Teacher seeks children's input about the schedule or their preferences for activities</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 338 964 611"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 338 964 396">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 396 829 434">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 396 964 434">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 434 829 485"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 434 964 485"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 485 964 527"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 527 829 611"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 527 964 611"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher doesn't seem to value children's perspectives</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most issues within the class are handled by the teacher and children are informed or instructed by the teacher (e.g., class problems, activities, schedule)</li> <li>• Teacher rarely seeks children's input</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 5. Listening to Children

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher does not appear to actually listen to children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher ignores children's comments</li> <li>• Teacher silences children (e.g., "just be quiet" or "just do your work")</li> <li>• Teacher makes generic comments such as "that's nice" without giving attention to what child is saying</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 829 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 401 963 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 829 495"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 436 963 495"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 495 829 531"></td> <td data-bbox="829 495 963 531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 829 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 531 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Focus upon the teacher's degree of engagement with the child.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher listens and offers eye contact with children when they speak</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher offers thoughtful <i>responses</i> to children's initiations</li> <li>• Teacher's conversations with children indicate that he or she pays attention to what children say – "So, that is what you think happened?"</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## C. Authority

### 1. Justification of Teacher Authority

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher may justify his/her actions and decisions in terms of authority and power.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher makes statements about being “the teacher” or “the boss” etc</li> <li>• Teacher does not relate his/her behaviors as the teacher to a sense of care for the children</li> <li>• Teacher employs authority on “me” terms (You are wasting <i>my</i> time or Because I said so)</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 415 966 474">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 474 829 510">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 474 966 510">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 510 829 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 510 966 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 562 829 598"></td> <td data-bbox="829 562 966 598"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 598 829 684" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 598 966 684" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher may rarely justify his/her actions and decisions</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher doesn't make statements about his/her authority</li> <li>• Teacher may describe his/her responsibility for the children in terms of his/her deep caring for the children (I cannot allow you to throw blocks – someone will be hurt)</li> <li>• Teacher gives reasons or justifies in “we” terms (“We should begin cleaning up now.” – if the teacher is indeed helping)</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Non-verbal Expressions of Authority

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher does not express authority/power in non-verbal ways</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher assumes no obvious position of power in the classroom</li> <li>• Teacher often sits with children, even on the floor with them during group times</li> <li>• Teacher uses a casual conversational tone of voice with appropriate volume</li> <li>• Teacher may be in the “background” interacting with individuals or small groups</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 380 964 436">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 436 834 472">Template</th> <th data-bbox="834 436 964 472">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 472 834 529" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="834 472 964 529" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="656 529 964 567"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 567 834 646" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="834 567 964 646" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher expresses authority/power in non-verbal ways</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher maintains position/postures of authority (stands in front of class, carries pointer/yardstick)</li> <li>• Teacher rarely places herself on the same level as children (rarely sits on floor or at child’s level)</li> <li>• Uses a commanding tone of voice or volume</li> <li>• Teacher is the “center of attention” (long periods of group instruction)</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Use of Authority

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher's actions and relationships seem to be based upon his/her authority as the teacher</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher requires and emphasizes <b>obedience</b> in performing tasks or following routines</li> <li>• Teacher seems to view himself/herself as the classroom leader and children as followers</li> <li>• Teacher may demand that children do particular things with no explanation</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 963 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 493 963 529"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 529 833 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 529 963 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher's actions and relationships seem to be based upon cooperation and caring</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher solicits children's <b>cooperation</b> in performing tasks and following routines</li> <li>• Teacher seems to view himself/herself as an equal with children with reciprocal leading and following</li> <li>• Teacher may explain things to children in language they can understand</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## D. Interactions

### 1. Conversations with Children

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher engages in frequent, genuine, meaningful conversations with children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's conversations with children include diverse topics – family, children's interests, non-school activities</li> <li>Teacher encourages or is open to children initiating conversations with him/her</li> <li>Teacher purposefully assures that conversations are interactive and equally satisfying</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 415 966 474">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 474 833 510">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 474 966 510">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 510 833 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 510 966 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 562 833 598"></td> <td data-bbox="833 562 966 598"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 598 833 684" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 598 966 684" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher rarely engages in genuine, meaningful conversations with children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's conversations are <i>limited to classroom management and/or academic work</i></li> <li>Teacher's conversations with children may be superficial or "phony"</li> <li>Teacher "talks down" to children</li> <li>Teacher dominates conversations with children – doesn't provide sufficient wait time for children to answer</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Play with Children

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher rarely participates in child-centered play</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In play situations, the teacher dominates the play e.g., may lay down the rules for play, impose play themes, or instruct children how to play</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 966 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 966 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 966 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 493"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 966 493"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 493 833 529"></td> <td data-bbox="833 493 966 529"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 529 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 529 966 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 653 987 758"><b>If play is not observed in the classroom, score as “1a”.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher frequently participates in child-centered play</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher follows the child's lead in play situations</li> <li>Teacher may accept a child's instructions for rules for a game or play scheme</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Supporting Through Interactions

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher does not support children’s learning through positive individual interactions</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher seems primarily focused upon group progress</li> <li>• Teacher quickly “moves on” after “teaching” a lesson</li> <li>• Teacher may provide a correction to wrong answers or directly tell child how to perform a task</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="656 380 966 651"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 380 966 436">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 436 829 472">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 436 966 472">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 472 829 529"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 472 966 529"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 529 829 585"></td> <td data-bbox="829 529 966 585"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 585 829 642"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 585 966 642"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher supports children’s learning through positive individual interactions</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher monitors individual children’s progress</li> <li>• Teacher makes time to help children figure out concepts and ideas</li> <li>• Teacher supports children’s problem solving skills – “That’s an interesting way to ..., what if you...?”</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

#### 4. Modeling Interpersonal Relations

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher provides children with a model of cooperative interpersonal relationships</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher emphasizes treating others in a way in which one may wish to be treated</li> <li>• Teacher promotes and solicits children's perspectives on fairness</li> <li>• Teacher emphasizes how misdeeds threaten relationships or hurt feelings, etc.</li> <li>• Teacher is polite and considerate</li> </ul>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Score</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Template</td> <td>Template</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>A</b></td> <td><b>B</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>a lot</td> <td>a little</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Score</b>		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	a lot	a little	<p>Teacher provides children with a model of hierarchical relationships</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher emphasizes following the teacher's rules for rules' sake</li> <li>• Teacher may arbitrarily issue orders without considering how children may feel</li> <li>• Teacher reacts to misdeeds, focusing upon rules broken or punishment deserved</li> <li>• Teacher is impolite and inconsiderate</li> </ul>
<b>Score</b>												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>											
a lot	a little											

## II. Peer Relations

### A. Opportunities for Shared Experiences

1. Play – (child-selected with materials, toys, dramatic or pretend, or games)

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children have many opportunities to play with one another in the classroom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher provides activities designed to promote peer interaction</li> <li>• Teacher values play by providing extended play times</li> <li>• Areas within the classroom may be designated specifically for play</li> </ul>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Template</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Template</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">a lot</td> <td style="text-align: center;">a little</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Note: Academic or “learning games” do not count as play here.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	a lot	a little	<p>Children have few, if any, opportunities to play with one another in the classroom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher provides no apparent activities to promote peer interaction</li> <li>• Teacher may view play as a distraction from learning</li> <li>• No visible areas in the classroom for play</li> <li>• Play may be used as a reward and its removal a punishment (losing recess, etc.)</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>											
a lot	a little											

## 2. Conversation

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children's conversations are discouraged</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's conversations are infrequent</li> <li>• Teacher may praise or reward the class for being quiet</li> <li>• Teacher requires permission for children to talk</li> <li>• Children's conversations may be clandestine and rarely allowed to develop</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 489" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 963 489" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 489 963 531"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 833 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 531 963 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children's conversations are encouraged</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's conversations are frequent</li> <li>• Teacher may ask children to quiet themselves when conversations interfere with the class or others</li> <li>• Children may be observed engaging in meaningful, interactive conversations</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Friendships

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children's friendships are encouraged</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special friendships are allowed to develop</li> <li>• Teacher gives children opportunities to choose partners and groups</li> </ul>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 338 961 396">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 396 829 434">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 396 961 434">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 434 829 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 434 961 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="656 493 961 531"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 531 829 611" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 531 961 611" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children's friendships in the classroom are discouraged</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends may be separated or required to play with others</li> <li>• Teacher assigns children to partners and groups</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

#### 4. Room arrangement

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Arrangement provides little or no opportunity for interaction or engagement</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may be segregated, (e.g., boy/girl)</li> <li>• Children seated most of the day in desks</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 966 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 966 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 966 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 493"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 966 493"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 493 833 529"></td> <td data-bbox="833 493 966 529"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 529 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 529 966 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Arrangement provides many opportunities for interaction and engagement</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may have personal areas to work, but are free to move</li> <li>• Areas designed for peer play (interest/activity areas/centers) are obvious</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## B. Evidence of Peer Relations

### 1. Children working cooperatively

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children work cooperatively</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children frequently share ideas, seek information, and collaborate on projects</li> <li>• Teacher refers children to each other for assistance (peer tutoring)</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 415 963 688"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 415 963 474">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 474 833 510">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 474 963 510">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 510 833 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 510 963 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 562 833 604"></td> <td data-bbox="833 562 963 604"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 604 833 688" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 604 963 688" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 726 980 947"><b>The emphasis here is on children working together to solve problems of mutual interest – can be in a play or project context.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children work separately</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children spend most of their classroom time working on individual work/assignments</li> <li>• Teacher warns children about “cheating” – may say, “do your own work”</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Signs of mutual affection

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children's displays of affection are rare</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may show evidence of dislike or each other (verbal, physical aggression, insulting, etc.)</li> <li>• Children remain physically distanced from each other and appear emotionally distant to one another</li> <li>• Children may appear to be threatened by one another, be overly competitive, or territorial</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 438">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 438">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 438 833 497"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 438 963 497"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 497 963 535"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 535 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 535 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children's displays of affection are common</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children show evidence of liking each other (share secrets, invite each other to play, cooperate on projects, etc.)</li> <li>• Children enjoy their physical proximity and express emotional closeness through holding hands, mutually joking, laughing, smiling, etc.</li> <li>• Children relate to one another within a general tone of friendliness and sharing</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Conflict resolution

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children seem to look to the teacher to resolve conflicts</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher takes control of children's conflicts and makes arbitrary decisions to resolve conflicts ("give that marker back to him and go sit down")</li> <li>• Teacher acts as a judge and children come to him/her with their "cases" and she decides how to resolve issues</li> <li>• Conflicts may be overlooked, unresolved</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 964 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 964 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 829 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 401 964 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 829 495"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 436 964 495"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 495 829 531"></td> <td data-bbox="829 495 964 531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 829 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 531 964 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>"Tattling" may be evidence of Template 1.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children seem to "own" their conflicts and try to resolve them</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher displays an attitude of helpfulness when supporting children in conflict resolution</li> <li>• Teacher may help child to consider other's point of view</li> <li>• Teacher may offer strategies or language to assist children in resolving conflicts – "I see that you are upset. Why don't you tell Bill how you feel?"</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### III. Classroom Governance

#### A. Behavior Management

##### 1. Control

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher relies upon and supports children’s abilities to control themselves</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher guides behavior through modeling, and negotiation</li> <li>• Teacher provides a stimulating environment and interesting activities</li> <li>• Appropriate control is in place – important safety/protection issues not up for negotiation</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 667 967 940"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 667 967 730">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 730 833 762">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 730 967 762">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 762 833 825"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 762 967 825"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 825 833 856"></td> <td data-bbox="833 825 967 856"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 856 833 940"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 856 967 940"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 982 971 1236"><b>If active use of a behavior management system (marking charts, moving a clothespin) is observed, score this item “2a”.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher executes external control over children’s behavior</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher issues many threats of punishment or encounters with authority figures</li> <li>• Teacher may emotionally or physically overwhelm to obtain compliance</li> <li>• Teacher has inappropriate expectations for children’s behavior (expecting children to sit for long periods in silence, or not compete for limited materials)</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Motivation

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children are expected to follow the teacher's interests, purposes, and reasoning</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher offers rewards/bribes for good behavior/work</li> <li>• Teacher appeals to children's "responsibility" to perform, or be obedient</li> <li>• Teacher use children's desire to please for setting up competition among children ("I like the way Suzy is sitting.")</li> <li>• Teacher invokes fear of punishment or ridicule to motivate ("You will look like a baby if...") or ("There will be no recess for the green table if...")</li> </ul>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="656 338 961 396">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="656 396 829 434">Template</th> <th data-bbox="829 396 961 434">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 434 829 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="829 434 961 493" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="656 493 961 531"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="656 531 829 590" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="829 531 961 590" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children helped to follow their interests, purposes, and reasoning</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher does not offer external rewards</li> <li>• Teacher appeals to children's interest and cooperation</li> <li>• Teacher uses encouraging comments that support children's autonomy by simply stating what he/she has observed the child doing - "You listened with interest," "You used red paint," "You seem happy to have solved that problem"</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### 3. Rules

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children <i>actively</i> participate in making the rules in the classroom</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules are responses to genuine needs and problems that children are concerned about in the classroom (such as, care for materials, how to treat others, etc.)</li> <li>Rules may not be visible or may be displayed in children's language or handwriting</li> <li>Evidence exists that children are self-regulating according to rules they value even if rules aren't visible or emphasized.</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 438">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 438">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 438 833 497"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 438 963 497"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 497 833 535"></td> <td data-bbox="833 497 963 535"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 535 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 535 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 653 980 940"><b>You may ask the teacher, “Describe the children’s participation in making classroom rules.” “When might children be allowed to vote on an issue or rule?”</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher independently makes and displays rules</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displayed rules may be “universal” or school based</li> <li>Displayed rules are made by adults in adult language</li> <li>Teacher emphasizes the requirement for obedience to rules – “Jill, we have a rule about that. What is the rule?” (If the rule is a “school” or “teacher” rule.)</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

#### 4. Consequences

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Consequences are arbitrary</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher makes child pull a card, stand in the corner, lose recess</li> <li>• Teacher frequently mentions/threatens punishments</li> <li>• Teacher relies upon a behavior management system to dictate consequences</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 495"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 963 495"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 495 963 531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 531 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Consequences are logical, reasonable, and related to misdeed</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher leads child to restore an object they damaged or may require close supervision when child acting hazardously</li> <li>• Teacher emphasizes breach in relationship, feelings and safety of others</li> <li>• Seeks to work out conflict in terms of fairness, mutual needs, and relationships</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## B. Group Experiences

### 1. Community group discussions

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Class group meetings are a forum to discuss “community” issues</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community problems are raised and discussed with children as active participants</li> <li>• Children are given opportunity to vote and make decisions</li> <li>• Group time is used as a vehicle for community building with much discussion from children about topics they value</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 415 967 688"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 415 967 474">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 474 833 510">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 474 967 510">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 510 833 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 510 967 562" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 562 833 598"></td> <td data-bbox="833 562 967 598"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 598 833 688" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 598 967 688" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Note: Group time is not necessarily a class meeting. Group discussions must be of <i>interest and value to the children.</i> If the group participates in discussions that consider problems or make decisions, score “1a”. If the group meeting is interactive, with strong participation and engagement, rate “1b”.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Class group meetings do not focus upon “community” issues</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class problems are raised by the teacher and he/she tells children how problems should be solved</li> <li>• Most all decisions about the class are made by the teacher</li> <li>• <i>Group time is used predominately as a skill review/teaching context</i></li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## 2. Classroom Community

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Little sense of classroom community observed</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher may emphasize the individual – property, individual work, individual responsibilities</li> <li>• Teacher promotes competitiveness among children (may discriminate between “hard-workers” and “players,” rule-keepers and rule-breakers, etc.)</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 967 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 967 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 834 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="834 401 967 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 834 491" style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="834 436 967 491" style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 491 967 527"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 527 834 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="834 527 967 615" style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="626 653 961 758"><b>If no examples from Template 2 are observed, score “1a”.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Rich sense of classroom community observed</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community may be identified by name, mascot, etc.</li> <li>• Teacher facilitates group shared experiences (field trips, special songs or poems, favorite stories)</li> <li>• Teacher prompts group to recount memorable experiences</li> <li>• Classroom displays chronicle group activities</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

### C. Child Choice

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher provides children with many choices</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may choose activities, who they play with, how much time to spend on activities</li> <li>• Teacher actively involves children in decisions about their school experience</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 966 613"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 966 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 966 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 493"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 966 493"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="654 493 966 529"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 529 833 613"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 529 966 613"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher provides children little or no choices in their daily activities</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may have assigned seating, a list of “board work” to accomplish, and a rigid schedule</li> <li>• Teacher predominately plans children’s school experience</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## D. Classroom Maintenance

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Children do not participate in classroom responsibilities</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher may communicate his/her personal ownership or the "school's" ownership of the classroom and materials ("You'd better take care of my markers!") ("You're not coming into my class and make a mess like that.")</li> <li>Children only care for the classroom as directed by the teacher</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 964 613"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 964 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 964 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 491"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 964 491"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 491 833 527"></td> <td data-bbox="833 491 964 527"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 527 833 613"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 527 964 613"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Observe carefully here. Children's obedience to the teacher's instruction to clean-up does not indicate that they feel a sense of ownership of the classroom and its materials/supplies.</b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Children share in classroom responsibilities</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher speaks about all the classroom members' responsibility of care for the classroom and materials for the benefit of all (Children help water plants, care/organize materials, clean)</li> <li>Children seem to value the classroom and its materials</li> <li>Children remind each other to take care of materials</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## E. Classroom Décor

Template 1		Template 2										
<p>Teacher <i>shares decisions</i> about classroom décor and involves children</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom displays are meaningful to children – it appears that <i>they have taken an active role in creating them</i></li> <li>Children’s work and projects are prominent</li> <li>Classroom displays are relevant to ongoing activities</li> <li>Children have posted pictures, artwork, etc at their eyelevel.</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="654 342 963 615"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="654 342 963 401">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="654 401 833 436">Template</th> <th data-bbox="833 401 963 436">Template</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 436 833 495"><b>1</b></td> <td data-bbox="833 436 963 495"><b>2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 495 833 531"></td> <td data-bbox="833 495 963 531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="654 531 833 615"><b>A</b> a lot</td> <td data-bbox="833 531 963 615"><b>B</b> a little</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Note: Large amounts of children’s work posted in the classroom does not indicate that <i>the children had a voice in placing it there. Look for evidence that children feel comfortable adding to the classroom décor.</i></b></p>	Score		Template	Template	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little	<p>Teacher appears to make all decisions about classroom décor</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom displays are “professional” pre-fabricated and primarily commercial</li> <li>Classroom displays are overwhelmingly “academic” – ABC or skill charts</li> <li>Behavior and/or academic performance is on display</li> <li>Displays are located in areas out of children’s reach or not at their eye level.</li> </ul>
Score												
Template	Template											
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>											
<b>A</b> a lot	<b>B</b> a little											

## VITA

In 1992, R. Sean Durham received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama. That year he began teaching English at a non-public school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During his tenure there, Sean earned a Master of Arts degree in educational administration from Oral Roberts University through a four-year summer residency program in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His experiences in administration and curriculum development along with support that he received from faculty in Louisiana State University's School of Human Ecology led him to pursue a Ph.D. in human ecology focusing upon child development and early education. After the defense of his dissertation, Sean accepted the position of Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of the Early Learning Center for Research and Practice at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. He presently resides in Knoxville with his wife, Sabrina, and their four children. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be awarded in December, 2007.