



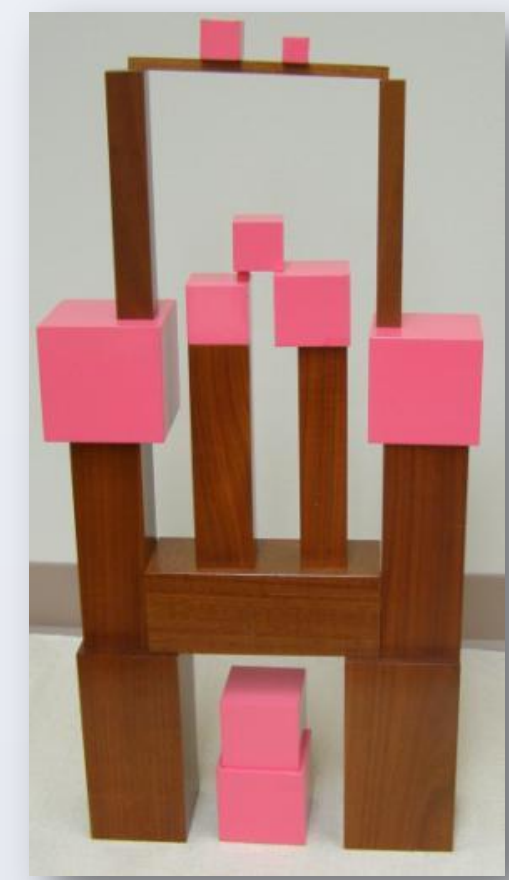
UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND THE PATH TO LEARNING IN A MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT

Lander UNIVERSITY

Dr. Christine M. Sacerdote

Introduction

The students were working toward their Montessori certification allowing them to teach in a Montessori school. The majority of the students were concurrently working towards a Master's degree in Education. The students had completed the academic phase of the Montessori course work during the summer. The majority of the students were in their first year in the classroom as head teachers. The student teachers began questioning children's use of the classroom materials. Were the children exploring or were they using the classroom materials inappropriately?



Research Questions

How do novice teachers determine what is appropriate exploration with classroom materials

How do novice teachers gain the understanding of the relationship between the line they establish in the classroom and classroom management strategies they adopt?

Methodology

This study used a mixed method design to take advantage of the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. The quantitative data came from the conference questions and responses, using technology from Turning Point for immediate responses from participants. The qualitative data came from the discussion during the sessions. The mixed method allows the qualitative data to tell the story with the quantitative data to support the findings. The participants used clickers to respond to questions during the conference sessions.

The best way to get the opinions of Montessori educators is to go to where they congregate. The researcher attends two Montessori conferences per year; a small internationally known conference in Sarasota, Florida sponsored by the Montessori Foundation and the largest annual Montessori conference held in a rotating location across the United States, sponsored by the American Montessori Society (AMS).

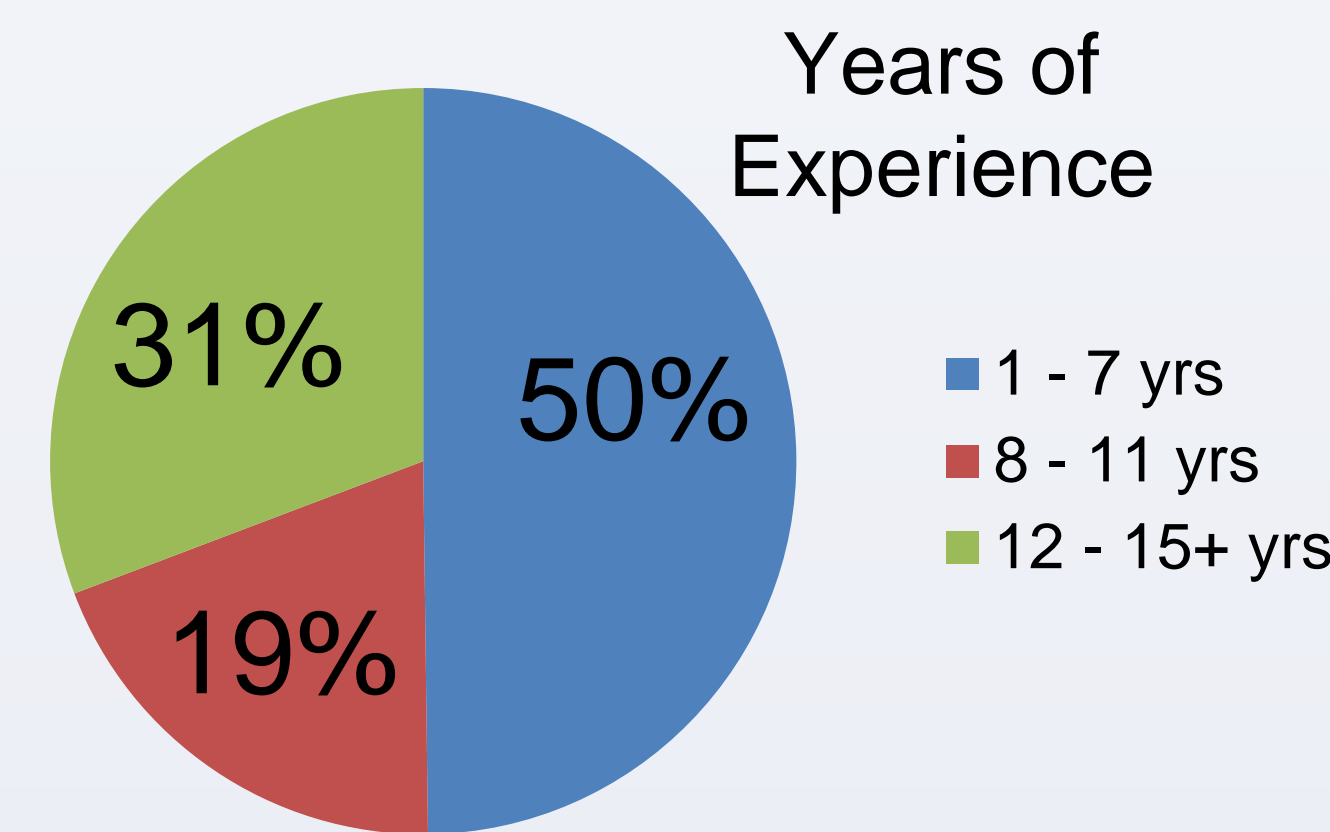
Selection of the participants at the conferences was a convenience sample. The study needed Montessori teachers to participate in the surveys. The conferences were gatherings of Montessori teachers. The participants were aware of the workshop sessions were data gathering sessions as described by the write-up in the conference brochure and by signing consent forms upon entering the room.

Statistics

Glasgow & Hicks (2003)

- 2 million new teachers in next 10 years
- 50% of new teachers gone in 3 to 5 years
- 17% of new teachers won't last the year
- It takes 5 years to embrace a sense of community

The Participants



Level	Number	Percent
Early Childhood (3-6)	194	79%
EC & Elem I (3-9)	10	4%
Elementary I (6-9)	2	1%
Elem I & II (6-12)	1	0%
Elementary II (9-12)	0	0%
All Levels	6	2%
No Answer	34	14%
Total	247	

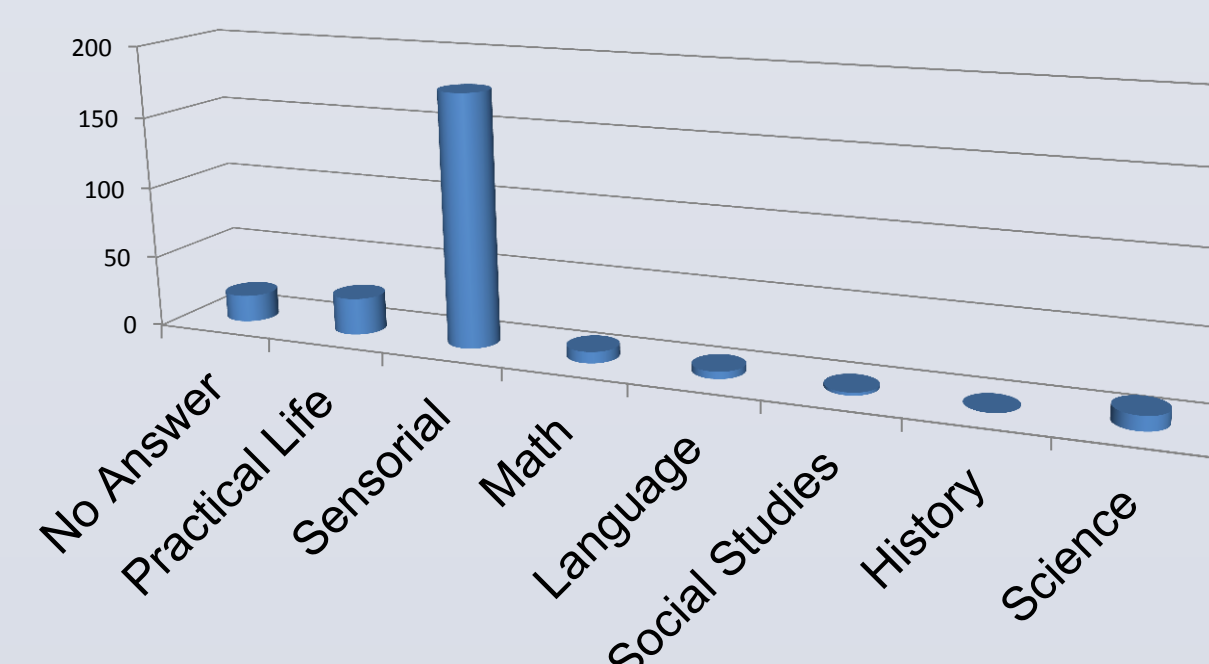
The Results

Definition Exploration

Exploration is looking, feeling and touching, judging and matching, juxtaposition and finding your own way or a new way to do something.

100% were in agreement with the definition

Materials Used for Exploration



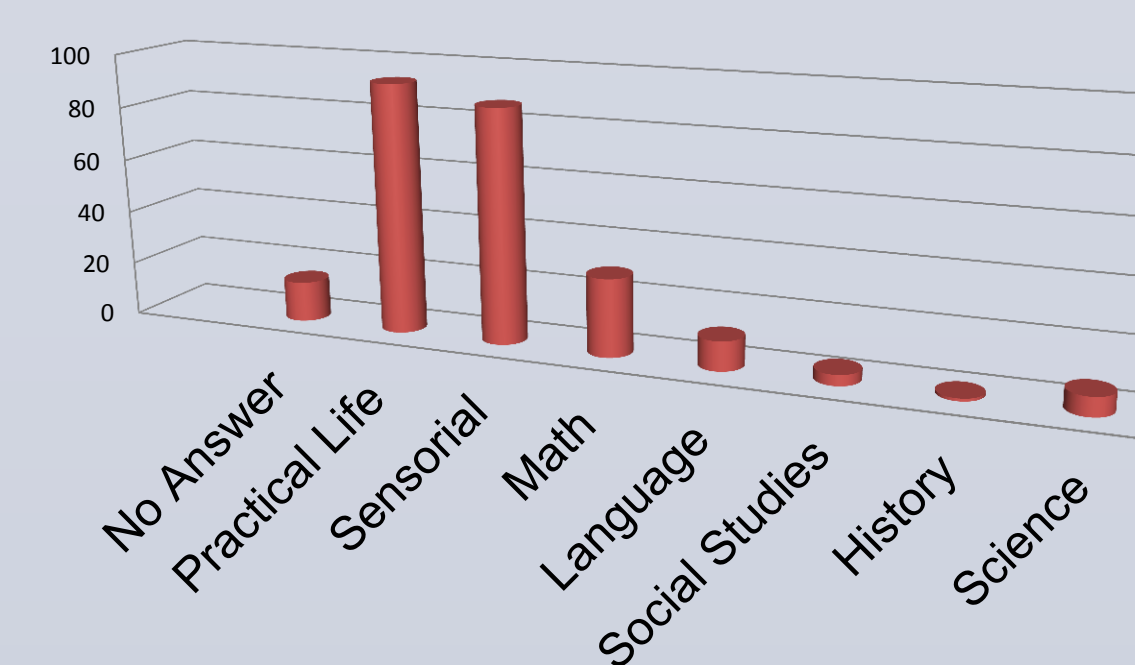
Definition Misuse

Misuse of classroom materials is hurting someone with the material, damaging the material, dangerous for the child and the materials, disrespect, swaying from the intent of the materials and using the materials with a lack of purpose.

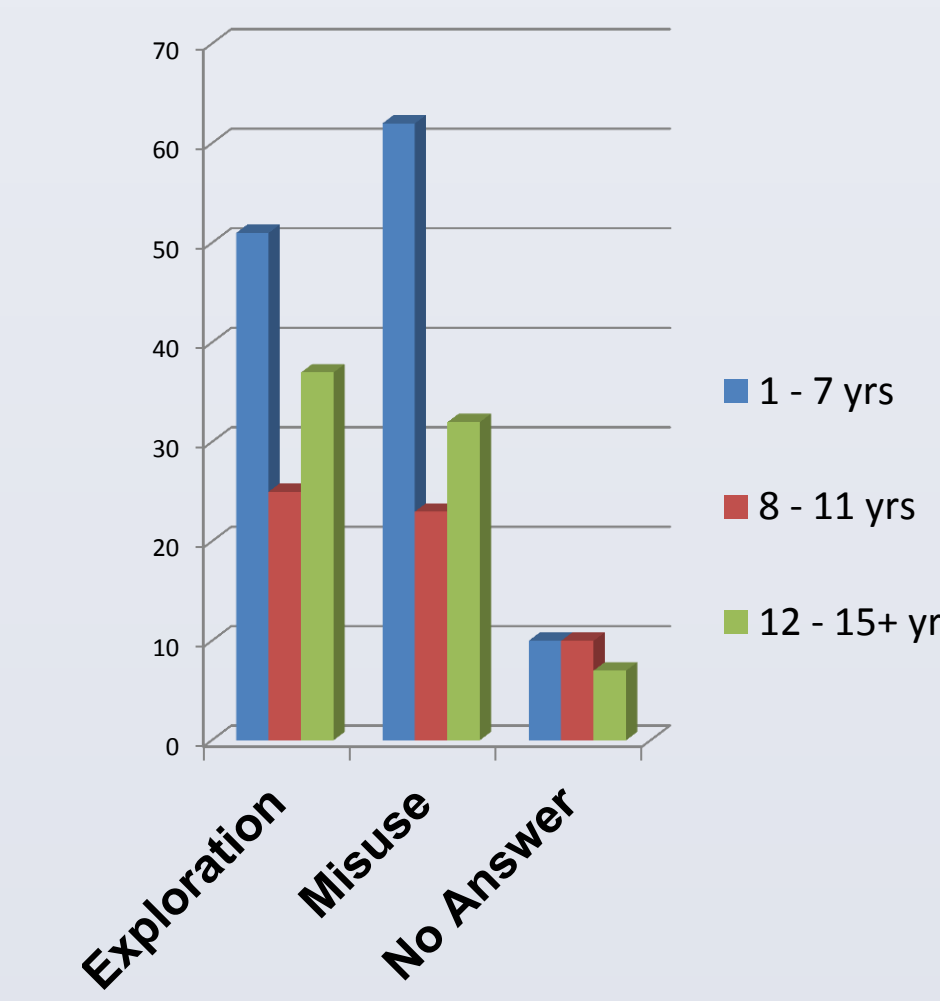
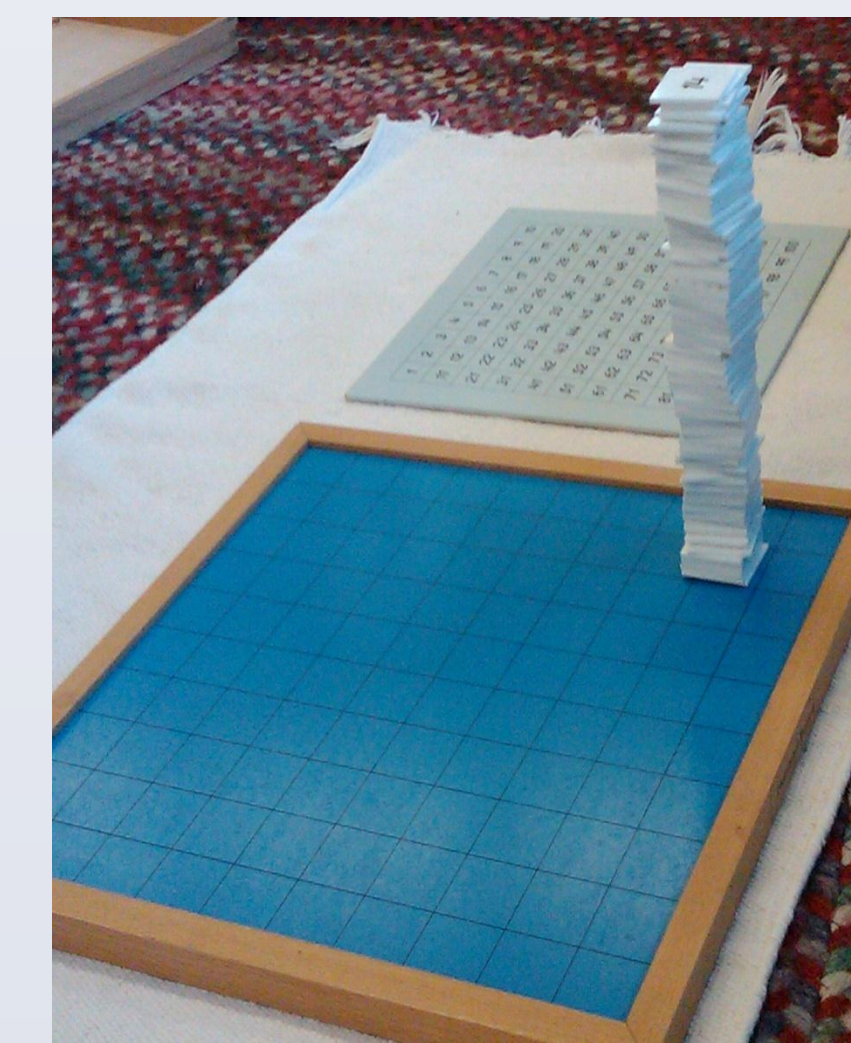
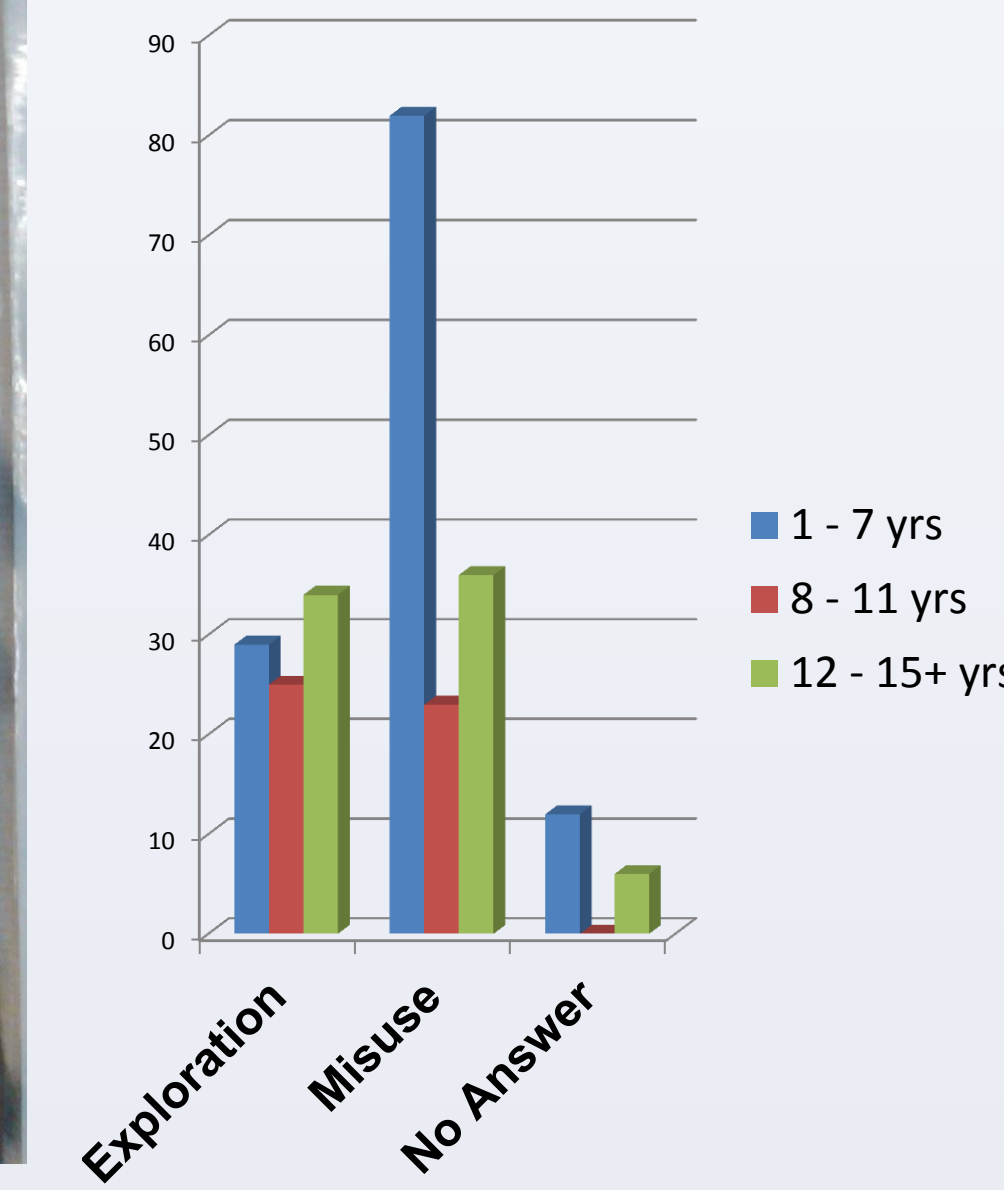
Agreement was split 50 / 50

The definition of misuse and the pictures displayed below

Materials Misused



Did the results match the definition?



The results from the polling of the participants of the two pictures were the materials were being misused. Going back to the definition of misuse the materials are not being damaged and children are not in harms way. What makes these pictures an example of misuse? The determining factor is the number of years of classroom experience.

1 - 7 Years Experience

	Exploration	Misuse	No Answer
Pink Tower/Stairs	108 49%	12 60%	3 43%
Bead Bars	101 47%	18 72%	4 44%
Division Board 3	67 45%	49 60%	7 41%
Division Board 6	52 48%	56 47%	15 71%
Africa	29 33%	82 58%	12 67%
Cubing	57 47%	38 49%	28 58%
100 Board	47 45%	52 54%	24 53%

12 + Years Experience

	Exploration	Misuse	No Answer
Pink Tower/Stairs	68 31%	7 35%	1 14%
Bead Bars	71 33%	3 12%	2 22%
Division Board 3	50 34%	19 23%	7 41%
Division Board 6	39 36%	34 29%	3 14%
Africa	34 39%	36 26%	6 33%
Cubing	38 31%	22 29%	16 33%
100 Board	34 32%	25 26%	17 38%

Conclusion

- Each teacher draws the line of acceptable behavior and use of classroom materials based on prior experiences.
- Novice teachers need to be able to recognize the difference between exploration and misuse of the materials and become comfortable enough to let the children explore with the materials.
- The study demonstrates more professional continuing education is needed to give the novice teachers the confidence they need to set the line in their classrooms.
- The slides demonstrate that the years of experience have an effect on the participant's responses.
- Teacher education programs need to present novice teachers with an understanding of the importance of classroom management skills
- The management of the classroom sets the tone for the learning process.
- If the children feel free to explore, then the learning will naturally occur through the exploration process.

References

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Garrahy, D. A., Cothran, D. J., & Kulinna, P. H., (2005). Voices from the trenches: An exploration of teacher's management knowledge. *Journal of Educational Research*, 99(1), 56-63.
- Glasgow, N. A., & Hicks, C. D. (2003). *What successful teachers do*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Gordon A. M., & Browne, K. W. (2004). *Beginnings and beyond* (6th ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Thompson Delmar.
- Lillard, P. P. (1972). *Montessori a modern approach*, New York: NY. Schocken.
- Malm, K. (1992). Behavior management in K-6 classrooms. *NEA Early Childhood Education Series*. Washington, DC: National Education Institute.
- Marzano, R., & Pickering, D. (2003). *Classroom instructions that works*. Alexandria, VA: Marzano & Associates.
- McCombs, B. & Miller, L. (2007). *Learner-centered classroom practices and assessment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Montessori, M. (1966). *The secret of childhood*. New York: NY. Ballantine Books.
- Montessori, M. (1967). *The discovery of the child*. New York: NY. Ballantine Books.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2007). *Our history*. Retrieved from: <http://naeyc.org/about/history>
- Perry, B. D. (2003). Why young children are curious. *Early Childhood Today*, 17(4), p. 26.
- Ramachandran, R. (Ed.). (1998). Creative development in the child the Montessori approach. Kalakshetra, India: Thiruvanniyur.
- Sokal, L., Smith, D. G., & Mowat, H. (2003). Alternative certification teacher's attitudes toward classroom management. *High School Journal*, 86(3), 8-9.
- Stormont, M., Lewis, T. J., & Beckner, R. (2005). Positive behavior support systems: Applying key features in preschool settings. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(6), 42-49.
- Turning Point Technologies (2012). Audio response system defined. Retrieved from: <http://www.turningtechnologies.com>
- Weinberg, D. R. (2011-12). Montessori, Maslow and self-actualization. *Montessori Life*, 23(4), 16-21.

Dr. Christine M. Sacerdote
Lander University
CPO 6011
320 Stanley Avenue
Greenwood, SC 29646
csacerdote@lander.edu