SABBATICAL REPORT

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I was awarded a sabbatical leave for one academic year from fall semester 2013 to spring semester 2014. The first objective of the sabbatical leave was to devote time to research the current perspectives on the developmentally appropriate practice for young children. The second objective was to write a weekly column for the Chicago JoongAng Ilbo newspaper.

During the fall of 2013, I spent considerable time designing a qualitative research study to investigate the perceptions of in-service teachers on the developmentally appropriate practice for young children’s optimal learning and development. Also, I developed a questionnaire to use for the survey of developmentally appropriate practice at various early childhood programs. I read a variety of articles and books, and collected data and information in relation to teaching methods of developmentally appropriate practice. The survey questionnaire I developed for my qualitative research project included six questions in relation to current perspectives on developmentally appropriate practice.

During the spring and into the summer of 2014, I devoted my time to research early childhood programs in the Midwestern states. After selecting various early childhood programs for further investigation, I contacted the administrators of each program to visit, observe, and conduct a survey. This research was composed of two parts: observation and survey questionnaire. The following is the summary of the research methods:

1. Twenty-six in-service teachers participated in the survey questionnaire from various early childhood programs including Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, Bright Horizons, and play-based early childhood programs.

2. I observed each classroom to understand the nature of developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum models. This direct and on-site observation of each classroom of the in-service teachers who participated in the survey questionnaire provided the opportunity for me to better understand the teachers’ perceptions and teaching strategies in their survey responses.

From the research I conducted at the various early childhood programs, I have learned that in-service teachers believe that they need to consider children’s typical development and individual differences for the developmentally appropriate teaching practice regardless of the specific early childhood curriculum.
I analyzed the responses of the survey questionnaire and my anecdotal notes from my observations. The following are the results of the research project:

1. From the survey results, it can be concluded that in-service teachers commonly believe that there are seven essential characteristics of developmentally appropriate practice.

2. From my on-site observations, it is evident that in-service teachers use a variety of teaching and learning strategies and activities to support developmentally appropriate practice.

In addition to the research project, I have started writing a column on a weekly basis for the major Korean newspaper publishing company, the *Chicago JoongAng Ilbo*. My articles are about early childhood education and general education. For example, my topics cover theory of mind, electronic media, parenting styles, creativity, temperament, attachment, separation anxiety, stranger anxiety, emotional intelligence, etc. This writing experience has enabled me to enhance my knowledge and perspectives in education, while also broadening my communication network beyond college students. Furthermore, it provides me with opportunities to contribute my professional knowledge to the Korean community in the Chicago area.

Since my return to the UW-Platteville campus, I have been sharing my sabbatical research and experiences with colleagues at the university, as well as early childhood professionals beyond UW-Platteville. I presented my research findings at the Faculty Poster Session to share the results of my research project with colleagues on campus on September 30, 2014. Also, I presented the results of my research project at the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in Dallas, TX on November 7, 2014. In addition to that, I will provide a presentation of my sabbatical research at the School of Education faculty meeting on November 17, 2014.

Overall, my sabbatical leave was both productive and rewarding. This fulfilling experience during the sabbatical leave helped me to refine my pedagogy and gain new insights for my curriculum as a teacher educator. I would like to thank the University of Wisconsin at Platteville, Provost Dr. Mittie Nimocks Den Herder, and the members of the Improvement of Learning Committee for this opportunity.