

Abstract

Title of Capstone: LITTLE VOICES, BIG LANGUAGE:
EXPLORING HOW PRE-K EDUCATORS
ADAPT INSTRUCTION FOR MULTILINGUAL
LEARNERS THROUGH A HYBRID
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
EXPERIENCE

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Leadership

In Maryland, multilingual learners in kindergarten statistically perform below their native English-speaking peers (Hopkins, 2024). Local, state, and national data show that multilingual learners in kindergarten are underperforming on early childhood readiness assessments. This gap reveals the problem of practice: current prekindergarten language and literacy practices are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten. Using improvement science through PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) cycles, this study explores how a hybrid professional development course can support equitable language and literacy practices for multilingual learners in prekindergarten classrooms. The professional development focuses on building knowledge of second language acquisition and strategies for working with young multilingual learners. Utilizing a qualitative case-study lens, including empathy interviews, reflections, and classroom observations, I will address the following research questions:

- How do prekindergarten educators who work with young multilingual learners describe how hybrid professional development impacts their instructional practice?
- How do prekindergarten educators modify lessons for their multilingual learners based on the hybrid professional development cycle?

**A Capstone Proposal Project:
LITTLE VOICES, BIG LANGUAGE:
EXPLORING HOW PRE-K EDUCATORS ADAPT INSTRUCTION FOR
MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS THROUGH HYBRID PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

by

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Capstone submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of UMD-PGCPS Ed.D. in School System Leadership-
Specialization in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Dual
Language Education
2026

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Preface

Professors often ask us what changes we want to see in our school system and in education. As leaders, what changes can we make to the systems we operate within? Ultimately, how will this capstone project lead to changes for multilingual learners in the Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools¹? Change has been a driving force throughout this program because, as Handy (1995) states, “*Change is only another word for growth, another synonym for learning.*”

With each course, I explored topics I believed could serve as a catalyst for change in Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (PATH). The various topics I researched and analyzed included: using machine translation during instruction, curricula for newcomers, assessment reliability and validity for multilingual learners, and screening multilingual learners for the English language development program. Every topic felt equally important to me until I began exploring our youngest multilingual learners and realized that their first educational experiences set them up for participation in the system.

Maryland’s plan to transform education, known as “The Maryland Blueprint for Maryland’s Future,” first sparked my interest in prekindergarten multilingual learners, or dual language learners (I will explain these terms shortly), because they are often overlooked. Furthermore, the importance of starting schooling with a strong foundation in both language and literacy cannot be understated. The multilingual learner (ML) Blueprint workgroup recommendations include providing direct English instruction to English learners starting in prekindergarten (Maryland State Department of Education, 2022). See the recommendations in Appendix A.

¹ Pseudonym used to protect the identity of the school district

The workgroup's recommendations sparked my interest in multilingual learners in prekindergarten classes, despite my own limited experience working with this subset of students. Through various assignments and research, I integrated this target population into my coursework. For my Language and Education (TLPL 740) course, I focused on screening prekindergarten students for English language development programs, including the different screening tools to ensure they were appropriate for prekindergarten learners. For Research Foundations of Second Language Education (TLPL 744), I delved into teaching strategies for effectively supporting multilingual learners in prekindergarten. My interest during these courses led to an apprenticeship working with the Early Learning Office. In this capacity, while working at PATH's English Language Development (ELD) office, I provided professional development to prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals. This work included participation in the Dynamic Impact Implementation Academy with the Early Learning Office to examine data, set goals to increase rhyming skills for prekindergarten students, and increase the implementation of the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) with pre-k teachers. These experiences led to the current version of the capstone project proposal you are reading here.

Dedication

To my husband, Andrew, who did not realize when I started the program that he would take on another job as an unofficial editor. Your proofreading skills are the best, especially at finding all my unnecessary commas. To my children, Eleanor and Cecila, remember we can do hard things!

To my mother and late father, who had no idea what a capstone project was but knew I was determined to be the first in the family to complete it, and supported me throughout!

To my UMD Cohort 1 classmates, I am grateful for all your endless support and motivation. You have all brought something unique to the experience, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have gone through this journey with all of you!

Acknowledgment

My deepest appreciation goes to Dr. Maggie Marcus. Whenever I was “all over the place” (which was often), Dr. Marcus patiently supported me with encouragement and feedback. She provided much-needed, constructive, and insightful feedback that kept me grounded in my work and pushed me to think more deeply. I am beyond grateful for all the meetings, time spent reading my paper, and suggestions for improvement. There is no way I could have completed this journey without Dr. Marcus’s expertise and guidance!

I would also like to acknowledge the Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools for creating this opportunity to grow professionally. Dr. Melissa Kanney, I appreciate the resources and support you have provided throughout, and for the opportunity to have this experience.

Last but not least, thank you to my committee members for your expertise and support!

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Section 1: Introduction

When you walk down the hall of a Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools elementary school and past the prekindergarten (pre-k) classrooms, you likely hear the sounds of children giggling, songs about letters and numbers, and even songs about washing your hands. You may also hear the occasional sound of a child crying. If you are lucky enough to *visit* a pre-k classroom, the four-year-old students will greet you with huge smiles, waves, and maybe even a hug. Each pre-k classroom is unique, with diverse backgrounds of both the students and teachers. In Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (PATH), educators teach students from many countries who speak a variety of languages. Currently, in the 2025-2026 school year, approximately 33,400 multilingual learners are enrolled, representing over 100 languages and 25.6% of the total student population (PATH, 2025). Early childhood is the foundation of education. “The elementary school years are a critical time for beginning to acquire content area knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for more advanced learning” (National Academies Press, 2017, p.291). Research such as the Abecedarian Project, the Perry Preschool Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers study documents that early childhood education has benefits for academics, social skills, and behavior (Meloy et al., 2019). As schools increasingly see linguistic diversity in early childhood classrooms, it is vitally important that the youngest linguistically diverse students can access the curriculum and materials. Teachers must explore strategies to modify lessons to support language and literacy skills and to understand how these strategies impact young multilingual learners in early childhood classrooms.

Descriptions of Terms

There are many terms used to describe students who speak a language other than English at home. In education, people use terms such as English language learner (ELL), multilingual

learner (ML), linguistically diverse student, or emergent bilingual (EB) to describe students who are learning English. People often use these terms interchangeably.

The organization World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) describes “dual language learners” as “children, age birth to five years, who are learning two or more languages” (WIDA, 2014, p 2). Other early childhood practitioners also refer to the term dual language learners to describe young learners, such as Partika et al. (2021), who stated, “children whose families speak a language other than English at home are often referred to as dual language learners, or DLLs. The label DLL is used to describe children who are learning and developing two languages simultaneously” (p.125).

While the terms “dual language learner” and “multilingual learner” seem similar, there is a slight difference, especially in how Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (PATH) defines these learners. One criterion in PATH’s definition of multilingual learners is “a student whose English language proficiency falls within the range established by the state for an English language development [ELD] program.” This would exclude pre-k students, since they are not screened or tested for a language proficiency level. While the term dual language learner is not defined in PATH, the county uses the term “dual language” to describe the immersion schools and schools that utilize a dual language program, where students learn content in both English and a target language such as Spanish, French, or Chinese. PATH uses the term “multilingual learner” as an asset-based approach. Many other districts and agencies are also beginning to use the term “multilingual learner.” However, the federal term is “English learner” (EL), which highlights what students lack rather than the skills they already have. In this paper, I will use the following terms, as they appear in the literature: “young multilingual learners,” “English learners” (ELs), “multilingual learners” (MLs), “emergent bilinguals,” and “dual language

learners” (DLLs). PATH uses the term "DLL" to refer to students enrolled in dual language programs. To avoid confusion, I will refer to these learners as multilingual learners (MLLs). I will only cite DLLs.

In PATH, professional development is collaborative planning, content-based training, mentoring and coaching, or coursework. How professional development is delivered also ranges from in-person sessions to online asynchronous or synchronous sessions. PATH’s Office of Professional Learning and Leadership states, “The range of professional and personal learning opportunities focuses on the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge, enhancing employee performance and satisfaction as a professional” (PATH, 2025). I use “professional development” (PD) to refer to educators' learning to improve their practice. I will also refer to “self-paced learning” or “self-paced course” as a professional development opportunity for teachers. Self-paced learning is “when students have a deadline but complete learning activities at their own pace” (Robinson & Persky, 2020, p. 293). I will refer to participation in self-paced modules as “asynchronous learning.” The term “hybrid learning” refers to “asynchronous online lessons that are supported with a smaller number of face-to-face lessons” (Mumford & Dikilitas, 2019, p. 1).

A Brief History of Early Childhood

Early childhood education has been shaped by various theorists and models, including well-known figures such as Martin Luther, Maria Montessori, Loris Malaguzzi, and David Weikart. Early childhood education dates back to the 1500s, with Martin Luther's beliefs that family and home were the most important educational institutions, along with Protestant values (Campbell, 2015). He encouraged more than rote memorization, adapted teaching to age and ability, and believed that girls should also receive education (Campbell, 2015). While these ideas

of change sound like obvious education strategies, they were considered radical concepts in the 1500s (Campbell, 2015).

Maria Montessori is also a name often associated with early childhood. She is the creator of the Montessori Method. When describing the method, Maria Montessori stated, “Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand ...but to so touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones” (1989, p. 11). The Montessori Method derives from constructivist theories that promote self-directed or student-choice learning based on the individual learner (Burbank et al., 2020).

Montessori’s beliefs influenced the development of the Reggio Emilia model following World War II. This model promotes “the positive image of the child. It builds on the premise that each child has the desire to connect with others, to engage in learning, and to enter into a relationship with their environment” (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011, p.236). Reggio Emilia's schools and classrooms draw on social constructivist theories informed by the ideas of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011). In Reggio Emilia schools, “educators believe that the school is not a place of transmission of knowledge. Rather, it is an environment that allows the child to be a producer of culture and knowledge—the child is a knowledge maker” (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011, p.236). While Reggio Emilia and Montessori are similar, there are differences: Montessori emphasizes mixed-age groups, while Reggio Emilia's approach favors small groups of the same age, and the environment is more structured in Montessori models (Edwards, 2002, & Dodd-Nufrio, 2011).

David Weikart founded “HighScope” and believed that “poor performance at secondary schools correlated with attendance at elementary schools in poor neighbourhoods” (French, 2011,p.127). Like Reggio Emilia schools, HighScope draws on the work of Piaget and Dewey

(French, 2011). The HighScope approach is grounded in active participatory learning and the idea that “learning through play is fundamental to the full development of human potential” (French, 2011, p. 129), along with key developmental indicators (KDI) and student assessments through observation processes.

Head Start was established in 1965 as part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty (Hines, 2017) and is a federally funded program that supports children ages 3 and 4 in families of low income. Head Start follows a Family-Centered Preschool Model (Hines, 2017), which supports families and helps them make decisions about their children. Early childhood education's development has been deeply rooted in deficit thinking, which still impacts students today. In Mical Raz’s book, *What’s Wrong with the Poor* (2013), she examines how deprivation theory impacts early education. The book presents maternal deprivation, nutritional deprivation, and cultural deprivation as factors leading to the start of the Head Start program. “Head Start was designed to provide preschool-age children with experiences and training perceived to be lacking in their impoverished homes and offset the effects of deprivation” (Raz, 2013, p.99). First Lady Lady Bird Johnson had deficit views, claiming children had no language when introducing Project Head Start (Raz, 2013, p. 101). Deficit views targeted African Americans or families of lower socioeconomic status. While Head Start programs are still used nationwide for low-income families, there is now more of an asset-based view of early childhood than in the past.

Currently, early childhood is recognized as a public good that “can improve opportunities for various individuals across society: parents, early educators, business owners, and most importantly, young children” (Peeks, 2024, p. 1). Early childhood education is at the forefront of The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. Pillar 1 focuses on Early Childhood Education. Its goals include making pre-k more affordable for three- and four-year-olds based on federal poverty

levels, supporting early childhood educators, and expanding programs such as Judy and Patty Centers (MSDE, 2025). Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools has 225 prekindergarten classrooms in over 100 schools, with many schools working towards accreditation (Mary Hale², personal communication, September 27, 2024).

Throughout the country, many different early childhood models and curricula are being used in early childhood centers and prekindergarten programs. Please see Appendix B for other early childhood curricula and models, as well as the key components of each model. In Maryland, early childhood programs are required to align with the Maryland Early Learning Standards for children from birth to age 48 months, while College and Career Ready standards are used with children in four-year-old prekindergarten programs. State-funded pre-k programs must follow set criteria to gain Maryland Accreditation. Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) website recognizes the value of implementing curricula of historical significance. Per the MSDE website, HighScope, Montessori, and Waldorf have been "recognized for historical significance and merit. These programs have also been identified because of the strength of their teacher certification and accreditation programs" (MSDE, 2025).

While PATH does not endorse a specific model for the school-based pre-k programs, the Director of the Early Learning Office stated, "We [PATH] do not follow a model within the prekindergarten program. We ensure that our prekindergarten program is developmentally appropriate and meets the high-quality standard established by MSDE" (Mary Hale, personal communication, February 7, 2025). Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is defined by NAEYC as "methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning" (NAEYC, 2020, p. 5).

² Pseudonym used for all personal communication to maintain participant confidentiality

Background

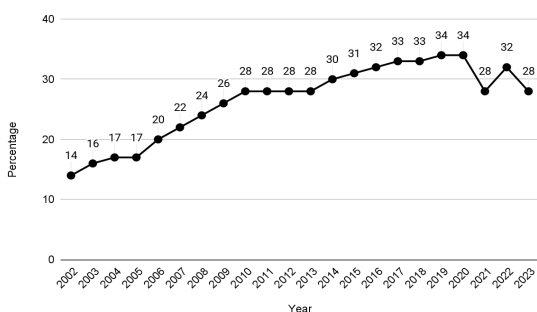
For many children, preschool or prekindergarten is the first step in their educational path. “Child care and early learning programs are foundational to any well-functioning society, providing large and lasting economic and societal returns and setting children up for success in school and beyond” (Schneider, 2025, pg. 1).

National

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in the fall of 2021, over 1.4 million children were enrolled in prekindergarten programs or schools. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) reported that enrollment is on the rise, and during school year 2022-2023, there were 1,631,968 children attending state-funded preschools (Friedman-Kraus et al., 2024), and enrollment has doubled in the last 20 years (Friedman-Kraus et al., 2024). As seen in Figure 1, the percentage of four-year-olds enrolled is increasing.

Figure 1

Percentage of U.S. Population Enrolled in Preschool (4-year-olds)



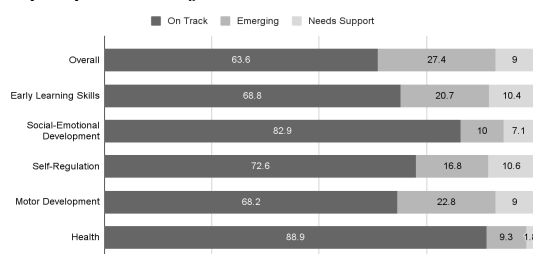
Note. Recreated to show the National Institute for Early Education Research enrollment of 4-year-olds in preschool

Over a similar period, the NCES (2021) also notes that the number of English Learners (ELs) enrolled in schools increased by over four hundred thousand, with over 5 million ELs

enrolled throughout schools in the United States over the past ten years (2021). Figure 2 summarizes three- to five-year-old children on track for kindergarten, according to the Health Resources & Services Administration (2023). The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) directed the National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) for 2022 school readiness. The data shows that 63.6% of children ages 3-5 years are on track to meet the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program’s National Outcome Measures for School Readiness. Domains for readiness include early learning skills, social-emotional development, self-regulation, motor development, and health. This data shows that “9.0% or 1 million children need support in 2 or more domains” (NSCH, 2023, 1). These domains include early learning skills, self-regulation, and motor development. While these domains differ from Maryland’s kindergarten readiness domains, they highlight the need to reform early childhood practices.

Figure 2

The proportion of 3-5-Year-Old Children Who Were On Track, Emerging, and Needing Support



Note. Adapted from *National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) School Readiness 2022 Data Brief*, by the Health Resources & Services Administration, 2023, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

State: Maryland

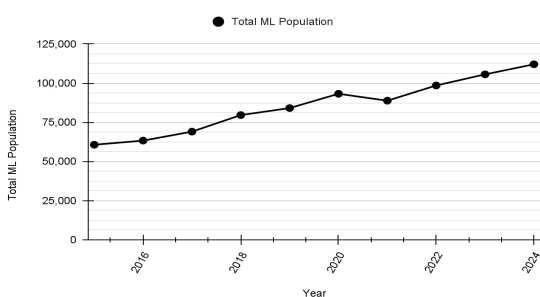
When examining Maryland’s early childhood data, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) reported that the state had 31,907 children enrolled in preschool during the 2022-2023 school year (2023). In Maryland, all school districts offer state

prekindergarten programs (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2024). Maryland also has eighty-two Judy Centers, which “serve as comprehensive hubs where families can engage in learning experiences with their children from prenatal stages through age 5 and access support services” (MSDE, 2026), and are located in Title 1 schools across the state during the school year 2022-2023.

In Maryland, multilingual learners (MLs) are also among the fastest-growing student groups (NIEER, 2023). Despite a slight drop in ML enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a steady growth in the ML population over 10 years (MSDE, n.d) (See Figure 3).

Figure 3

Maryland State ML Population



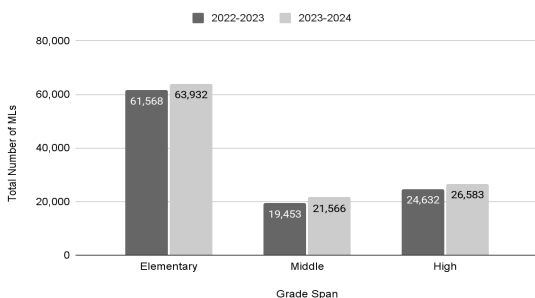
Note. From MSDE (2023-2024 EL Data)

According to the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE), over 105,653 English learners were enrolled in Maryland schools in the 2022-2023 school year (MSDE, n.d).

Figure 4 shows the number of MLs enrolled in the state across the grade bands over the past two years. The largest number of MLs are enrolled in elementary, followed by high school-aged MLs and a slightly smaller number in middle school.

Figure 4

MLs Across Grade Bands

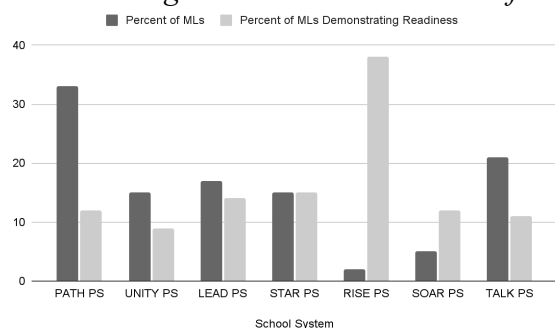


Note. From MSDE (2023-24 EL Data)

According to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (MSDE, 2025), only six of the local school systems, including Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Caroline, Carroll, Washington, and Worcester counties, provide English language development (ELD) or English as a second language (ESOL) services to prekindergarten students (Maryland State Department of Education, 2021). As shown in Figure 5, all but one of these counties met or exceeded the state average of 12% of kindergarten multilingual learners demonstrating readiness at the start of their kindergarten year. There is room for improvement in these counties, but this study focuses on PATH, and only 12% of its kindergarten multilingual learners demonstrate readiness for kindergarten.

Figure 5

LEA Providing ELD in Pre-K: Percent of MLs vs Percent of MLs Demonstrating Readiness



Note. Adapted from *Readiness Matters SY23/24 Kindergarten Readiness Report*

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was developed to improve the quality and equity of education based on the recommendations from the Kirwan Commission (MSDE, 2025). The

Blueprint focuses on five major pillars: Early Childhood Education, High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders, College and Career Readiness, More Resources for Students to be Successful, and Governance and Accountability. The early childhood education pillar emphasizes the importance of preschool education, and one of the core components of the More Resources for Students to be Successful pillar emphasizes linguistically diverse students, or MLs. Combined, these pillars explore how young multilingual learners in preschool who are developing multiple languages perform and what instructional practices are being used by educators to support linguistically diverse students.

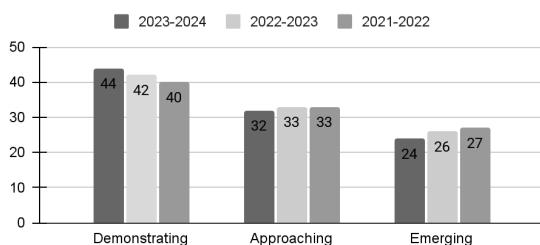
Kindergarten Readiness

The Maryland Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) assesses kindergarten students at the start of each school year. It assesses students' skills, focusing on four domains: Social Foundations, Mathematics, Language and Literacy, and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development. It is important to note that the state (review) found "potential bias in the current assessment against multilingual learners" (MSDE, 2024), and PATH and other school systems did not administer the KRA during the 2024-2025 school year. Maryland will utilize a new KRA assessment, the Social Academic and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS), and Star Literacy and Star Math, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Star Literacy and Star Math are computer-adaptive assessments, while SAEBSR consists of a 19-question questionnaire for the teacher to complete. Star can be adapted to read in English or Spanish. Teachers will also have access to Star Evaluaciones, a Spanish assessment designed to monitor and develop Spanish literacy. The state does not mandate Star Evaluaciones; guidelines are expected for which students can also take the assessment.

Over the past three years (2021-2023), the KRA has shown small growth in the number of kindergarten students demonstrating overall readiness and a slight decline in the number of students at the emerging level statewide. As previously stated, during the 2022-2023 school year, 30,718 students were enrolled in pre-K across Maryland. However, only 44% of these students showed readiness when they entered kindergarten the following year (Hopkins, 2023 & 2024) (See Figure 6).

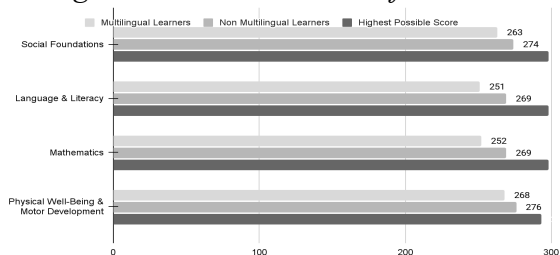
Figure 6

Maryland Kindergarteners Demonstrating Readiness



Note: Hopkins, R. L. (2024). (rep.). *Readiness Matters 2023-2024 Kindergarten Readiness Report* (pp. 1–35). Baltimore, MD: Ready at Five.

Kindergarten multilingual learners historically underperform on the KRA compared to their English-fluent peers. In the 2022-2023 school year, only 10% of multilingual learners demonstrated readiness on the KRA compared to 48% of fluent English students demonstrating readiness across the state. The Readiness Matter reports indicate a minimal increase in the 2023-2024 school year, with 12% of MLs demonstrating readiness (Hopkins, 2024) compared to 50% of non-multilingual students demonstrating readiness. On average, MLs fall behind their English-fluent peers in all four domains of the KRA (see Figure 7). The most significant gap is in the Language and Literacy domain, with an average gap of 18 points (Hopkins, 2024).

Figure 7*Average Domain Scale Scores for MLs, Non-MLs, and Highest Possible Scores*

Note. Source: Hopkins, R. L. (2024). *Readiness Matters SY 23/24 Kindergarten Readiness*

Report

During the 2024-2025 school year, Maryland did not assess kindergarten students with the KRA or pre-K students with the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). The ELA is a formative assessment used to monitor student growth, using skill, knowledge, and behavior rubrics. The ELA was administered to prekindergarten students in Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools three times throughout the school year. The ELA assessed standards in Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Well-Being, and Motor Development. Like the KRA, a new assessment will be utilized, however, Maryland counties needed to opt in for the 2025-2026 school year.

County: Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools

Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools, located outside our nation's capital, is the 18th-largest school system in the United States, according to the PATH website (2026). The school system has over 200 schools and centers with over 133,000 students enrolled in prekindergarten (pre-K) through twelfth grade (PATH, 2024). Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (PATH) is a diverse school system. Our students and staff come from many different backgrounds. See Table 1 for the school system's student demographics.

Table 1*PATH SY 2022 Student Demographics*

Demographic	Total	Percentage
Hispanic/Latino of any race	51, 561	39.32%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	491	0.37%
Black or African American	68, 499	52.23%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	257	0.20 %
Asian	3, 577	2.73%
White	5, 009	3.82%
Two or more races	1, 746	1.33%

Note: Data retrieved from <https://www.PATH.org/about-PATH/facts-and-figures> (2023)

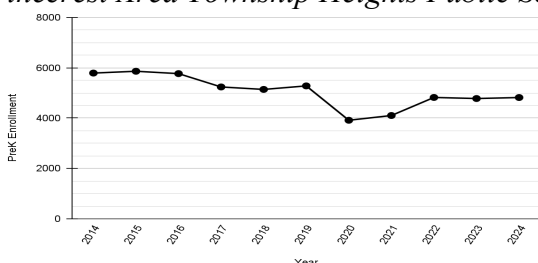
Approximately 25.6% of students are multilingual learners enrolled in the English Language Development (ELD) program, speaking more than 107 languages (PATH, 2024). While Spanish is the most commonly spoken language among PATH students enrolled in the ELD program, with approximately 89% of multilingual learners speaking it, many other languages are also represented.

During the 2024-2025 school year, approximately 4,821 prekindergarten students were enrolled in a PATH prekindergarten classroom or early childhood center. Similar to the national prekindergarten enrollment data, Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools has seen an increase in enrollment after a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen in Figure 8.

Increases in enrollment can also be attributed to the Pre-K Expansion Grant funding that can be used to extend public pre-k access.

Figure 8

Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public School's Prekindergarten Enrollment



Note. Data is generated yearly on Sept. 30 by PATH and includes ECC enrollment.

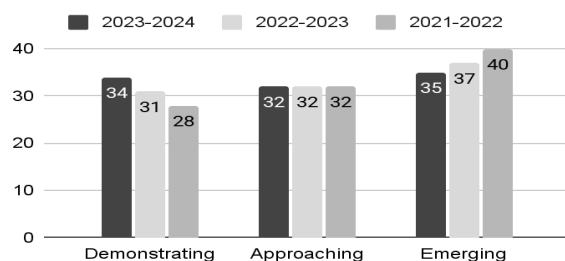
While Maryland is home to 24 local school systems, Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (PATH) leads Maryland in the number of multilingual learners enrolled in English language development (ELD) programs. Over 34,000 multilingual learners attend kindergarten through 12th grade in PATH schools. However, people often overlook a unique student population growing within the linguistically diverse school community. Each year, thousands of multilingual learners in prekindergarten are screened for future ELD services during their kindergarten year. However, these students do not receive ELD services as prekindergarten students.

Kindergarten enrollment in PATH declined slightly between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, from 9,064 to 9,048 students. In both years, multilingual learners represented approximately 33% of the kindergarten population. The KRA data shows that multilingual kindergarten students in PATH are lagging behind their English-speaking peers. Looking at PATH data, we see how kindergarten students perform on the KRA over the past 3 years. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of students who are demonstrating readiness. There is a similar trend between the state and PATH's kindergarten readiness data. Figure 9 shows that less than 50% of

kindergarten students demonstrate readiness at the start of their kindergarten year in Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools.

Figure 9

PATH Kindergarten Readiness Data

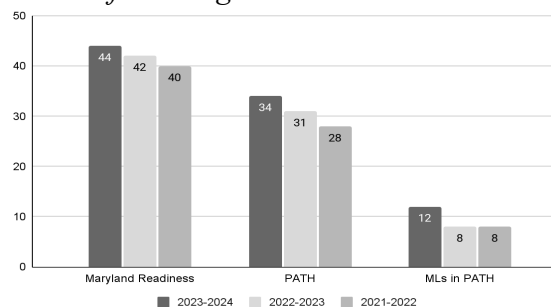


Note. Hopkins, R. L. (2024). (rep.). *Readiness Matters 2023/24 Kindergarten Readiness Report*

In the 2022-2023 school year, only 9% of MLs demonstrated readiness. During the 2023-2024 school year, there was a slight increase, with 12% of MLs demonstrating readiness. The slight increases in readiness are seen at the state and county levels with MLs in kindergarten. Figure 10 shows a graph of the state and the county's kindergarten students' readiness, as well as MLs in PATH readiness over the past three years. The graph shows the gap between kindergarten students and kindergarten MLs demonstrating readiness. The data point highlights the need to understand why MLs are underperforming on the readiness assessment compared to their English-fluent peers.

Figure 10

Percent of Kindergarten Students Demonstrating Readiness: State and County



Note. Hopkins, R. L. (2024). (rep.) *2023-2024 Kindergarten Readiness Report* (pp.

1–35). Baltimore, MD: Ready at Five.

It is important to note that the state released updated KRA data for the 2025–2026 school year in January 2026. I designed this study using data collected prior to the implementation of this new assessment. I acknowledge the updated results to ensure transparency. The STAR Literacy assessment has three performance levels: Beginning Skills, Developing Skills and Established Skills. Statewide, per this new KRA assessment, 57% of kindergarten students who were administered the STAR Literacy assessment scored at the Established Skills level. Per MSDE, “students at this level demonstrate the early literacy and math skills that support learning based on Maryland’s kindergarten learning standards. They are ready to build on these skills and take on new challenges throughout the year” (MSDE, 2025). In comparison, 22.1% of multilingual learners scored at the Established Skills level. Although the new assessment reflects an overall increase in the percentage of students demonstrating “Established Skills” compared to the previous assessment, a gap remains between multilingual learners and their peers. The revised KRA also includes a Spanish version, Star Evaluaciones. According to the Spanish version, 50% of students who completed this assessment scored at the Established Skills level. Additional data, including aggregated reports specific to PATH multilingual learners, is still pending release as of this writing (April 2026).

Table 2: Percentage of Students Scoring Established Skills on KRA Assessments

Assessment	State Percentage	State ML Percentage	PATH Percentage
STAR Literacy	57%	22.10%	46.3
STAR Math	55.3%	38.8%	54.1
STAR Evaluaciones	50.3%	48.0%	unavailable

Introduction to the Potential Problem of Practice

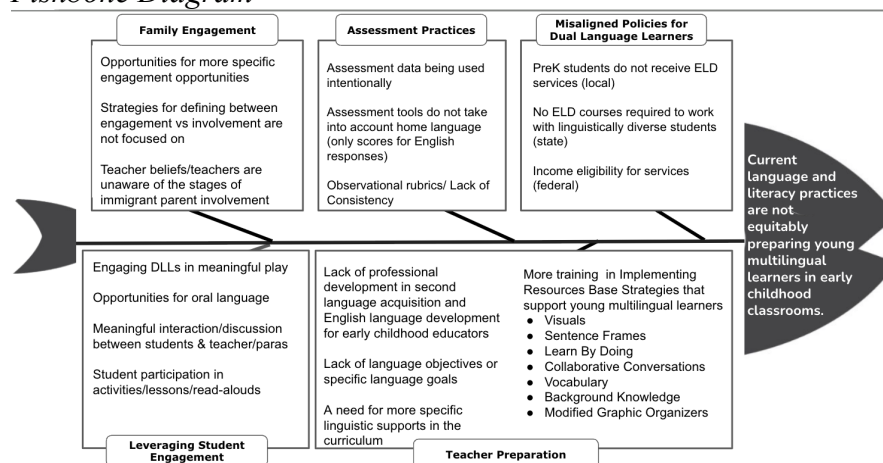
The data above show a need to better prepare *all* rising kindergarten students for kindergarten instruction. Alarming, however, the poor performance of young multilingual learners indicates the urgent need to meet the needs of this subset of students. Both state and county data indicate a need to understand why multilingual learners underperform compared to their English-fluent peers. This data is at the core of my problem of practice: current prekindergarten language and literacy teaching practices are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten.

Causal Factors and Causal System Analysis

Using the fishbone diagram below (see Figure 11), an improvement science tool, I identified five causal factors in the inequitable language and literacy teaching practices for young multilingual learners, including 1) family engagement, 2) assessment practices, 3) misaligned policies, 4) student engagement, and 5) teacher capacity. Each factor is discussed below.

Figure 11

Fishbone Diagram



Family Engagement

Research shows that family engagement positively impacts students' academic and social outcomes (Halgunseth, 2009; McWayne et al., 2013; Epstein, 2013; Curry & Holter, 2019). Yet

the term family engagement can mean many things. For example, in an excerpted conversation (Turner, 2019), Paratore defined family literacy and engagement as “almost anything that caregivers and children do together” (Turner, 2019, p.18), while Sabol, Sommer, Sanchez, and Busby (2018) defined family engagement as “the activities and strategies that ECE [early childhood education] centers implement to engage and support families in their children’s learning” (p. 2). According to the Maryland State Department of Education, family engagement is defined as:

Family engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth into the school-age years; and it occurs across the various early care and learning settings where children are.

Family engagement means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent–child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. It reflects culturally competent and universal design approaches, encompassing the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and activities of all families, as well as early care settings that support all children’s positive development. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood settings, school, and community.

Sustainable family engagement operates with adequate resources, including public-private partnerships, to ensure meaningful and effective strategies that have the power to impact student learning and achievement. (MSDE, n.d., p. 6)

Regardless of how family engagement is defined, it is a causal factor that can affect early childhood educators' language and literacy practices.

Curry & Holter (2019) found that parents are interested in being involved with the school, “parents will become involved if they believe that they possess the skills and knowledge

to help their children, believe that they can teach or assist their children, and believe that they can find necessary resources to help their children succeed” (p. 541). Epstein (2013) emphasizes that goal-linked partnerships must be established to support student achievement and promote positive attitudes about school during engagement events.

Maryland has a Family Engagement Framework. This framework sets common goals and strategies to support families and states, “Family engagement is a critical component of high-quality early child care and education” (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d., p. 1). We know that “improving parents’ own capacities, skills, and human capital thus has the potential to improve the quality of parent-child relationships and the home environment, leading to better outcomes for children” (Sabol et al., 2018, p.3).

Conversations with parents of PATH prekindergarten students revealed mixed ideas concerning family engagement. The conversations revealed different perspectives on family engagement, such as defining it as school events, such as spirit week, and even defining it as homework help. Increasing family engagement can give parents the skills and knowledge to help their children grow their academic abilities. “Collaborative efforts among families, schools, and communities hold much promise for improving the success of young people (Ishimaru, 2019, p.351). Zepeda et al. also state that:

When working with young DLLs, it becomes crucial for the teacher to establish good communication and collaboration skills with families to learn about the child and the values and beliefs of the family. Early educators need to learn from families about their strengths and assets, their expectations and views about their children’s development, and the child’s early experience in the home. (2011, p. 12)

Assessment Practices

In 2016, the United States Department of Education conducted a four-state case study, including Maryland, to assess teachers' capacity regarding assessment implementation. The case study revealed that teachers need more support in the assessment. Teachers were unsure when administering the assessment: "Teachers in all four states reported feeling confused about the procedural guidelines for using KEAs with EL students" (US Department of Education, 2016, p. 47). Students of all ages are assessed many times during the school year, depending on the grade level. Assessments include but are not limited to i-Ready, DIBELS, content Benchmark Test (county-made assessments), ACCESS for ELLs, and MCAP. Several assessments, such as DIBELS and Benchmarks, are given multiple times throughout the year. Students take mandatory district, state, and classroom assessments. One possible explanation for inequitable practices is a need for educators and administrators to better understand the assessments and how to utilize the data they gather.

The purpose of the Prekindergarten ELA assessment data is to inform instruction and provide teachers with data to intentionally plan to meet students' individual needs. However, students are not identified as multilingual learners at the district level, which presents challenges for teachers to intentionally plan to meet second language learning needs. This school year, prekindergarten and kindergarten took the STAR Literacy assessment, while kindergarten students took STAR Math, STAR Literacy, and a Social, Academic, and Behavior Risk Screener (SABERS). Teachers need to know and understand the languages and cultures of their multilingual learners (Espinosa & García, 2012). Espinosa and Garcia state, "In order to accurately assess young DLLs, one must consider the unique aspects of linguistic and cognitive

development associated with growing up with two languages as well as the social and cultural contexts that influence overall development” (Espinosa & García, 2012, p.2).

Misaligned Policy

Local and state policies impact early childhood education at the prekindergarten level, both in terms of instructional and curricular practices. Policy impacts can be both positive and negative, and can lead to inequitable practices.

State Policy

The Code of Maryland Regulations, known as COMAR, is the “official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the state of Maryland. Regulations governing the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) fall under Title 13A” (MSDE, 2024). State policies also impact equitable practices, such as not identifying multilingual learners at the pre-k level. “Without consistency or even the identification of who is a DLL and who is not, states cannot determine clear-cut policies to support these children in a systematic way” (Carnock, 2018, p. 7). Also, federal mandates for English learners are not applicable to pre-k, such as the fact that “students are not legally required to attend and is not universally available as a public good” (Carnock, 2018, p. 7).

COMAR defines the credentials prekindergarten teachers need: a state certificate in early childhood education. Paraprofessionals need a high school diploma or a Child Development Associate Credential, referred to as CDA (MSDE, 2024). Maryland does not require prekindergarten classroom teachers or paraprofessionals to participate in English language development coursework during preservice. Without coursework, a pre-k teacher may have a classroom with all multilingual learners and no formal preparation to address the unique needs of this diverse population.

Local Policy

In addition to the federal and state policies, Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools also has procedures and regulations that can contribute to inequitable practices in early childhood settings. One local policy that impacts young multilingual learners' success is the lack of explicit English language development (ELD) instruction for multilingual learners in prekindergarten in Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future notes that only six local school systems provide English language development or English as a second language services to pre-k students (Maryland State Department of Education, 2021), but PATH is not one of those six. Additionally, Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools has no official position on translanguaging, as defined, or the utilization of the home language.

Leveraging Student Engagement

There are many strategies teachers use to engage students, such as incorporating social-emotional learning for young multilingual learners. Using play-based learning is a strategy for engaging students, especially ELs, and offers many language benefits (which will be discussed in more detail in the literature review). Increasing interactions between students and teachers can also engage students more in lessons. Oracy can connect these engagement opportunities. Teachers need specific strategies to improve oral language for young multilingual learners because “emergent bilinguals and dual language students learn how to read differently than monolingual, English-speaking students” (Guilamo, 2021, p. 33). Young multilingual learners come with language and experience in two or more languages. These learners “require greater emphasis on oral language development, particularly listening comprehension, as they progress through the grades so they can attain sufficient language proficiency, which in turn will permit

reading comprehension (assuming accurate and fluent word recognition skills)” (Goldenberg, 2020, p.136). This research shows that increasing oracy and providing opportunities for oral language can benefit multilingual learners

Teacher Capacity

Nationwide, the qualifications for working with multilingual learners vary. The services that language learners in prekindergarten receive can be affected by government agencies, students' ages, and funding (Nemeth, 2020). In Maryland, there are requirements for teachers working in early childhood classrooms. Teachers need to have state certification in early childhood education. Teachers with bachelor’s degrees in various fields can also achieve certification through approved alternative preparation programs (MSEA, n.d.); however, early childhood certification does not require training to work with multilingual learners. “Teachers lack preparation and training for working with students who are second language learners” (Bell & Bogan, 2013, p.1). Researchers agree that early childhood educators need to be prepared to work with young multilingual learners (Bell & Bogan, 2013; Lee et al., 2007). To build capacity, school systems must examine the professional development offered to early childhood educators, especially those working with our youngest linguistically diverse students.

Professional development for early childhood is defined using the definition proposed by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI), which states: “professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice” (Buysse et al., 2009, p. 239). Professional development for early childhood educators working with multilingual learners should focus on developing appropriate instruction strategies. NPDCI developed a conceptual framework for

professional development to implement, design, and evaluate effective professional development, centering on *the who, the what, and the how* (Buysse et al., 2009). Research shows that educators who understand second language acquisition are better informed in making instructional and pedagogical decisions (Zepeda et al., 2011).

Professional Development Offerings in PATH

From 2013 to 2019, an ELD coach provided targeted support to pre-k educators. The targeted support consisted of two to four sessions per year, with one to two teachers per selected school. The targeted support also included peer coaching, which consisted of two informal visits by the ELD coach (Grace Nolan, personal communication, January 25, 2025). Beginning the 2023-2024 school year, the ELD office began providing optional quarterly PDs to pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals. These quarterly PDs were held via Zoom in the evening. The PDs cover a range of topics, and while participation is not mandatory, the number of participants varies for each session. Over the two years, there were a total of seven evening sessions³. During the school year 2024-2025, a total of 121 pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals were in attendance over four sessions, and 133 pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals were in attendance over the three sessions offered⁴.

In 2017, the Early Childhood for MLs continuing professional development (CPD) course was developed (Grace Nolan, personal communication, January 25, 2025). The course is now titled Early Childhood Literacy for Multilingual Learners. This CPD course is currently offered online each quarter. The course consists of eight mandatory sessions. The course consists of a 1.5-hour synchronous session followed by a 2.25-hour asynchronous session held on

³ During the school year 2023-2024 the quarter 4 session was canceled due to unforeseen circumstances.

⁴ Both teachers and paraprofessionals are compensated for attending the evening sessions.

Saturday mornings, as well as independent work. The CPD incorporates a book study of *Lea Ann Christenson's Strength in Diversity: A Positive Approach to Teaching Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood*. CPD courses are available to PATH employees, and in the past, pre-k paraprofessionals have participated in this course (Anya Petrova, course instructor, personal communication, January 22, 2025).

The prekindergarten C4 Learning curriculum integrates research-based approaches in literacy, science, social-emotional (SEL), and mathematics to support educating the whole child (Sarama et al., 2016). During the 2024-2025 school year, prekindergarten educators were offered an opportunity for professional development titled “Multilingual Learners in C4 Learning.” C4 Learning representatives facilitate this virtual synchronous workshop via Zoom during the evening. This course is not mandatory for teachers to attend. This workshop was provided by the Early Learning Office twice during the 2024-2025 school year. The Early Learning Office anticipates offering the workshop again for the 2025-2026 school year.

The ELD office provides professional development only for ELD paraprofessionals. However, there is no record of the ELD office specifically providing professional development to pre-k paraprofessionals (Sofia Delgado, personal communication, February 4, 2025).

While all these identified causal factors play a role in shaping equitable language and literacy teaching practices for young multilingual learners, this study will focus on how teachers’ capacity affects young multilingual learners’ oral language.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to determine the role of oracy in supporting multilingual learners in early childhood settings, and to explore the impact of hybrid professional learning described in the literature. To address this, the literature review is organized into two

sections. The first section of the literature review includes how to leverage student engagement using oracy. The second section explores teacher capacity by examining how professional development can support educators in implementing equitable language and literacy practices for multilingual learners.

Criteria For Literature Review

For this literature review, I employed the following criteria and bound the search to the last twenty years, with the exception of foundational works, based on feedback from my academic professors. According to Merriman and Tisdell (2016), a “literature review can demonstrate how the present study advances, refines, or reviews what is already known” (p. 91). When reading articles, I often used the reference section to locate further reading and took advantage of the university’s online library to download and request copies of articles and chapters. Using online databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCO also helped in locating articles. My searches focused on early childhood education with multilingual learners, primarily Spanish-speaking students, but also included studies involving students who spoke other languages. When searching for “early childhood learning,” I used different terms to describe students. For example, Hammer defines “Preschooler refers to children from three through five years of age” (Hammer et al., 2014, p. 717). When searching for articles, the terms preschool and prekindergarten helped narrow the results to a specific age range. To ensure that the article focused on multilingual students, the terms multilingual, bilingual, dual language, emergent bilingual, and English learner were used to support the search. Key terms such as “Head Start” narrowed the articles and studies. While the PATH school system does not currently have Head Start programs, studies conducted at Head Start programs included students aged 3-4 who were often multilingual learners.

Leveraging Student Engagement through Oracy

Literacy and numeracy skills are often discussed in schools; however, the term oracy (Wilkinson, 1970) may be less common. “Oracy,” coined by Wilkinson to bring attention to spoken language, “is a word which enables one to think about the importance of these skills of speaking and listening; and these skills are, of course, not only important but fundamental” (Wilkinson, 1970, p. 73). While the overarching concept of oracy is the use of speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively, the literature does not clearly define oracy. Table 3 presents three definitions of the term "oracy."

Table 3

Definition of Oracy

Source	Definition	Content
Wilkinson (1966)	“the set of skills associated with speaking and listening” (p. 10)	Coined the term oracy, focusing on oral communication skills
Millard and Menzies (2016)	“the set of skills associated with speaking and listening” (p. 10)	Emphasizes oracy as a collection of skills in the Welsh curricula
Mercer and Mannion (2018)	“to refer to the development of young people’s skills in using language (first, second, or additional) to communicate across a range of formal and informal settings” (p. 9)	Expands the definition to include language development, communication across contexts, and multilingual use.

While all the definitions of oracy are similar, the interpretation of oracy can differ. I refer to oracy as both the development of an actual spoken language within the classroom setting.

Similar to the challenges of “oracy,” oral language is also not clearly defined in the literature. The organization, World Class Instruction and Design (WIDA), defines oral language

as “skills that allow for effective communication in the classroom” (Chapman & Erlandson, 2019, p. 1). The literature lacked a clear distinction between the two terms, with definitions often similar, as seen in WIDA’s definition of oral language and in Millard and Menzies's (2016) definition of oracy. I define oral language similarly to oracy, how language is used and understood, including vocabulary, grammar and how ideas are communicated. While there is a vast body of research that supports the claim that oracy supports young multilingual learners (Hammer, 2014; Guilamo, 2021), a synthesis of oral language studies by Sanders and O’Brien (2006) found that the research varies. Their synthesis reviewed literature and studies on English language learners in grades pre-k through twelfth grade. Using a database and coding, the researchers found that research varied because some studies measured oral language proficiency, others measured elements of oral language, and others measured language use and choice (Sanders & O’Brien, 2006). Their synthesis also discovered limited research on second language (L2) oral language. “Research on L1 oral language development has focused on the acquisition of specific aspects of the language, such as vocabulary, specific grammatical forms, or pragmatic patterns. Our search of the L2 oral language development literature revealed surprisingly few studies of this type” (Sanders & O’Brien, 2006, p. 15). It is important to note that different definitions of oracy and oral language are often used interchangeably, yet different aspects of language may have been studied. It is also important to note that when I refer to oracy in the study, I’m looking at students speaking and for oral language, how students are using language, such as vocabulary and sentence syntax.

As the multilingual population grows and enrollment for multilingual learners increases, it is crucial to explore how oracy in reading instruction can impact students, including young prekindergarten students. Oracy development is a critical skill for multilingual learners because

of the links between oral language and academic success. As Hammer (2014) found in her study on MLs, oral language and early literacy development are major factors in future academic success and a child's reading ability (Hammer et al., 2014). The Maryland Early Learning Standards include language and literacy standards that “describes how young children understand and use language and how they learn about reading and writing” (*Maryland Early Learning Standards 0-48 months*, 2024, p. 64). Developing oracy in prekindergarten classrooms with multilingual learners will lay the foundation for later literacy development. To support equitable language and literacy instruction, multilingual learners need opportunities for purposeful talk.

Teacher Preparation

The lack of quality professional development (PD) opportunities in the PATH school system for prekindergarten teachers working with young multilingual learners is a root cause for the problem of practice presented in this paper, which states that there are inequitable language and literacy teaching practices for multilingual learners in early childhood settings. Educators need to know how to develop, create, and implement appropriate strategies that engage multilingual learners. Educators who understand second language acquisition are better informed in making instructional and pedagogical decisions related to their young multilingual learners (Zepeda et al., 2011). More professional development should be provided and required for prekindergarten educators to increase their knowledge of second language acquisition

It is important for educators to understand the backgrounds of their MLL students and how their home language or native language plays a role in how they learn, and teachers should have an understanding of this (Aleksić & García, 2022). This section will explore what research shows about opportunities that are provided for preschool educators teaching linguistically

diverse students. With changing technology, how professional development is delivered will also be discussed, specifically the concept of a hybrid learning model.

Professional Development Opportunities

Zepeda et al. (2011) found that there are six areas in which teachers need to be prepared to work with young multilingual learners. The six focus areas include: “(a) understanding language development, (b) understanding the relationship between language and culture, (c) developing skills and abilities to effectively teach DLLs, (d) developing abilities to use assessment in meaningful ways for DLLs, (e) developing a sense of professionalism, and (f) understanding how to work with families” (, p. 10). In another study, Dias et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative pilot study using the content to provide a series of workshops to Head Start teachers. This pilot resulted in five major takeaways, including building empathy for teachers working with emergent bilinguals, engaging families and learning from families, incorporating various research-based strategies that promote language development, for teachers to self-reflect, and lastly, to provide social-emotional support to emergent bilinguals (Dias et al., 2023).

For any learner, it is important to build on background knowledge. Aleksić and García (2022) point out that all students have similar background knowledge, or similar funds of knowledge. Students bring their knowledge of family, culture, and linguistic skills. However, most teachers do not have the training or skills to support multilingual learners in expressing and learning through this background knowledge. “Early childhood teachers see the development of the children’s verbal and written school language as paramount. But in doing so, they often neglect to build on the existing language practices of the very young children, and translanguaging pedagogical practices are misunderstood” (Aleksić & García, 2022, p. 3837).

Findings from Aleksić & García (2022) and Dias et al. (2023) suggest that teachers must be prepared to use students' language, even when they do not speak it. Krashen (1981) explains the different states of second language acquisition, and teachers must understand language development to be prepared to work with students and to scaffold their learning for success.

Hybrid Model Professional Development

Professional development varies in education systems, with mixed opinions about its effectiveness. Research shows there is “not yet identified a clear threshold for the duration of effective PD models, it does indicate that meaningful professional learning that translates to changes in practice cannot be accomplished in short, one-off workshops” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 15). However, researchers agree that PD's characteristics are essential for improving teacher practice (Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). These characteristics include a) content focus, b) active learning, c) coherence, d) duration, and e) collective participation (Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Can these characteristics be incorporated into self-paced and online professional development to create meaningful PD opportunities for teachers?

Using a hybrid model, in which some professional development is asynchronous, and another part is synchronous, either virtual or face-to-face or in-person, allows teachers to allocate their time based on their needs. Using platforms like Canvas can promote self-directed PD. “Online teacher professional development (OTPD) is increasingly utilized to help address concerns through flexible, cost-effective, wide-scale options on a myriad of educational topics” (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p.20).

Puette (2016) conducted an action research project to support shifts in Hawaii as the state moved to a more inclusive model for multilingual learners. Puette (2016) found that many high

school teachers were not adequately trained in supporting multilingual learners and instructional pedagogy supporting multilingual learners. This researcher created a Canvas course for educators, focusing on content specific to English language learners. While there were no findings on the course's effectiveness because it focused more on design factors, the Canvas course was found to be “both effective and accessible, online professional development instructional module” (Puette, 2016, p. 10).

A professional development platform like Canvas, which organizes course materials into modules, can be used to deliver professional learning and provide teachers with access to a range of topics, including strategies for working with young multilingual learners. In Powell & Bodur's (2019) qualitative multi-case study, high school teacher participants found online professional development to be convenient and flexible because they could work at their own pace. Their study examined the relevance, authenticity, usefulness, interaction and collaboration, reflection, and content of the online PD opportunity. Teachers in the study found that the PD provided instructional ideas and validated strategies already in use (Powell & Bodur, 2019). Taken together, these studies demonstrate how a Canvas course can support teachers' needs and how instructional strategies can be shared via an online platform.

Although Puette (2016) and Powell and Bodur (2019) worked with high school educators, they highlighted that teachers appreciate the flexibility of online PD. Powell and Bodur (2019) also bring the teacher's perspective on the opportunity. Research can still explore how to design Canvas courses so they are not “one-off workshops.”

Landry et al. (2009) conducted a multisite study in four states, including online professional development, to promote language and emergent literacy skills in prekindergarten classrooms. Online sessions were called eCIRCLES. While this study included other aspects of

professional development, such as mentoring, they found teachers “improved the overall quality of their teaching and specifically the quality and frequency of their instruction of early writing, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and shared reading” (Landry et al., 2009, p. 460). Landry’s study provides evidence that strategies for early childhood language and literacy skills can be taught through online platforms, and student performance can improve.

A study conducted by Shedd and Duke (2008) examined whether read-aloud instruction would change after receiving professional development. Although this study did not focus specifically on DLLs or prekindergarten, it yielded positive results. They found that teachers asked more open-ended questions, and children engaged in conversation. Similar to Shedd and Duke, I would like to use research on how to leverage young multilingual learners' engagement and present it in a hybrid model course to explore whether language and literacy practices change for teachers working with multilingual learners in their prekindergarten classrooms.

The literature indicates that teachers lack and need training when supporting young multilingual learners. There are strategies such as vocabulary instruction, read-alouds, play-based learning, and oracy that can positively impact student learning. Hybrid professional development, consisting of asynchronous Canvas modules and synchronous sessions, can target early childhood educators to develop and incorporate strategies to engage their young multilingual learners.

Overall, the combined literature suggests a need to explore the impact of hybrid professional development on early childhood educators as they work with young multilingual learners. The studies highlight strategies for working with linguistically diverse prekindergarten students that are developmentally appropriate and have positive effects on students' academic success. Building on prior research, the current study will examine the impact and perceptions of

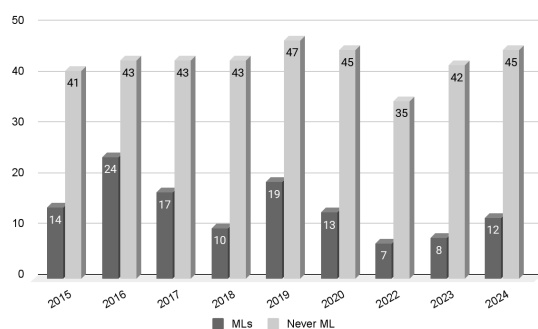
hybrid professional development.

Theory of Change

Theory of change, as per improvement science, addresses the question *What change might I introduce and why* (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). In reference to addressing inequities in language and literacy teaching practices for young multilingual learners, I explore introducing a hybrid Canvas-based professional development course. Through causal system analysis, and using a fishbone diagram (previously discussed in Section 1, I identified five causal factors: 1) family engagement, 2) assessment practices, 3) misaligned policies, 4) student engagement, and 5) teacher capacity. Each causal factor plays a role in improving equitable language and literacy practices when working with multilingual learners. For the purposes of the improvement change idea being tested, this study focuses on teacher capacity.

Per PATH's Equity Dashboard (see Figure 12), there are inconsistent gains and declines in kindergarten readiness among both multilingual and non-multilingual learners, but the data highlights the gap in readiness among multilingual kindergarten learners. However, from 2022 to 2024, we see small but steady increases in readiness with our multilingual learners. With a new kindergarten readiness assessment being implemented for the 2025 school year, the long-term (five-year) big aim of this improvement study is to increase the total percentage of kindergarten multilingual learners demonstrating readiness from 12% to 22% by the school year 2031.

Figure 12
PATH Kindergarten Readiness Percentage

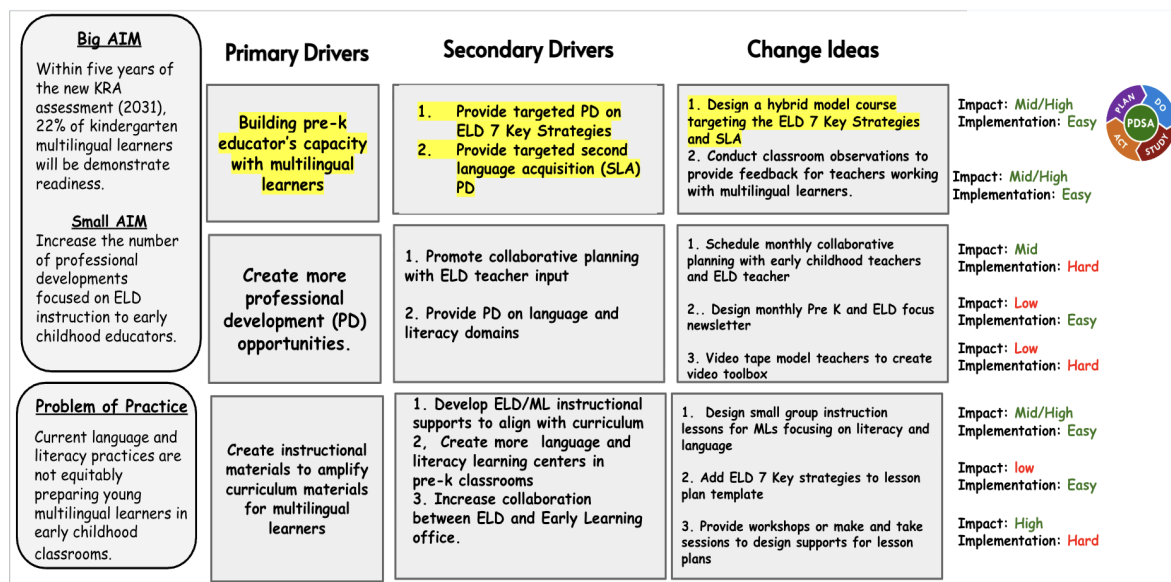


Note. No data provided for 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Source: PATH Equity Dashboard (2026)

To move towards this long-term aim, the PDSA cycles in this study test the impact of hybrid professional development courses designed to address language and literacy practices implemented with multilingual learners. To reach the big aim, my smaller, shorter-term aim is to increase access to professional development focused on ELD instruction and second language acquisition to strengthen instructional practices that support working with multilingual learners for both teachers and paraprofessionals.

Using the identified causal factors, I created a driver diagram to clarify specific areas for improvement (See Figure 13). The driver diagram identified three primary drivers intended to address the problem of practice that current prekindergarten language and literacy teaching practices are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten, they include: 1) build early childhood educators' capacity with multilingual learners, 2) create more professional development opportunities focusing on strategies for working with young multilingual learners, and 3) create instructional materials to amplify curriculum materials for young multilingual learners. These primary drivers provide the framework for identifying and testing the change idea.

Figure 13

Driver Diagram

Lack of professional development is one of the root causes of the problem of practice targeting language and literacy teaching practices. For teachers to successfully meet the needs of their MLs, they need professional development to develop and implement appropriate strategies.

Teachers need specific teaching and learning experiences centered on cultural competencies, which they can gain through a professional learning community and an understanding of second language acquisition. Educators who understand second language acquisition (secondary driver) are better informed in making instructional and pedagogical decisions (Zepeda et al., 2011). For this purpose, a Canvas course for ECE educators could provide knowledge to teachers. While all primary drivers play an essential role in disrupting inequitable language and literacy practices at the pre-k level, professional development is the catalyst for change. The secondary drivers can all be incorporated into a Canvas course. For example, research-based strategies can be added to support the read-aloud procedure, and teachers can then reflect on the resources.

For equitable instruction, differentiation should occur during instruction. Castro et al. (2011) state, “Instructional enhancements are necessary to support DLLs’ language and literacy development, especially when instruction is conducted only in English” (p. 16). Teachers need to know how to add these *enhancements*. Secondary drivers to support both the big and small aims by providing targeted professional development on both second language acquisition and the key ELD strategies. I acknowledge that other drivers contribute to this driver diagram, but these drivers include differentiating literacy lessons for MLs, developing ELD instructional supports, and creating more language and literacy learning centers, which can help reach the goal of MLs scoring higher levels on the language and literacy skills. Using improvement science, I will hone in on the hybrid Canvas course, and these drivers can be included if future PDSA cycles are implemented and studied. Improving language and literacy components can include a variety of strategies or “enhancements” to the current curriculum. Scaffolds can be developed to differentiate lessons. Multilingual learners must have scaffolds to support their unique language and literacy needs (Baker, 2019). Also, more play-based activities connected to reading aloud to reach the goal, knowing that play-based activities promote language development (Banjeer, 2016). The hybrid Canvas course will include different strategies to support language and oracy that teachers can access throughout the instructional day. While a full Canvas course, including all the other secondary drivers, would be ideal for the study, the Canvas course will focus on using strategies (promoted by PATH ELD’s office) to support and increase oracy.

If we want to increase the number of kindergarten multilingual learners demonstrating readiness on the new KRA assessment, then we need to focus on building the capacity and knowledge of teachers working with our youngest multilingual learners. One way to do this is to create a hybrid model course that focuses on increasing students’ oracy through the use of

different strategies. By utilizing modules and pages in Canvas, professional development can incorporate and address the five causal factors. Modules and pages can be designed to focus on key strategies to support oracy. The hybrid model course will mainly target the causal factor of building teachers' capacity for working with young multilingual learners. Through this hybrid module, the following research questions can be explored: How do prekindergarten educators modify lessons based on the hybrid professional development cycle? And, how do prekindergarten educators who work with young multilingual learners describe how hybrid professional development impacts their instructional practice?

In summary, section one presented national, state, and county data to highlight the need to examine practices used in prekindergarten classrooms with young multilingual learners. The data illustrates that multilingual learners in kindergarten are underperforming when compared to their native English-speaking peers on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Section one introduced potential causal factors including: family engagement, assessment practices, misaligned policies, leveraging engagement, and teacher capacity, including professional development through hybrid model workshops. The literature review outlined specific strategies to leverage engagement by increasing oracy. The literature review also explored professional development as a mechanism to build teacher capacity. This section concluded with an introduction to a theory of change based on three primary drivers: build early childhood educators' knowledge of SLA, create more professional development opportunities, and create instructional materials to develop the capacity of pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals working with young multilingual learners. While these primary drivers lead to several secondary drivers, focus on providing targeted professional development led to the change idea of creating a hybrid model Canvas course using county encouraged ELD strategies to increase oracy for multilingual

learners in pre-k. PATH endorses seven strategies to use with multilingual learners, including visuals, sentence frames, learning by doing, collaborative conversations, direct vocabulary instruction, building background knowledge, and using modified graphic organizers. (See Appendix C for details).

Section 2: Methods

The methods section opens with my research questions, followed by my positionality statement. I then describe the study design, including the rationale for selecting the improvement science process. This section outlines the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle, which will include a description of data being collected, a description of participants, the data collection process, and the data analysis procedures. Lastly, the section concludes with a description of the hybrid professional development course that serves as the study's change idea.

Research Questions

Due to shifting demographics in our county and gaps in kindergarten readiness data, we must prepare prekindergarten teachers with the knowledge, resources, and skills to equitably work with young multilingual learners. Using a hybrid module professional development course, this study will help us understand how professional development can support pre-k educators in supporting young multilingual learners. This study uses predominantly qualitative data to explore the following research questions:

- How do prekindergarten educators who work with young multilingual learners describe how hybrid professional development impacts their instructional practice?
- How do prekindergarten educators modify lessons for their multilingual learners based on the hybrid professional development cycle?

Researcher Positionality

My experiences as a female monolingual educator, an instructional coach, and a graduate student form my perspective on how synchronous and asynchronous professional development can impact practices for young multilingual learners in prekindergarten classrooms. Nineteen of the twenty-one years of my educational experience have been in Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools, working mainly with multilingual learners as a classroom teacher in kindergarten, second, and fifth grade; and as an ELD teacher working with kindergarten, first, second, fifth, and high school multilingual learners with beginning level proficiency in English. My experience working with young multilingual learners in prekindergarten is limited to my first teaching job as a Head Start teacher. This experience lasted only five months before I moved into a public school as a classroom teacher. Most of my early childhood and elementary experience was with kindergarten and second-grade students.

In my role as both an educator and coach, I have been afforded the opportunity to attend a variety of professional development opportunities. As a coach, I also provided professional development to educators. I believe that professional development can impact instruction. Many of the activities and strategies that I use with my students come from my own professional development experiences. These experiences include a series of professional development sessions I delivered during the 2023-2025 school years. In my capacity as an ELD coach, I offered these sessions, which were not mandatory; they were held in the evenings via Zoom, and participants were compensated for their participation. At the conclusion of the professional development, I asked my participants to complete an evaluation. From 84 evaluation responses (out of 133 total participants) collected over three prekindergarten and ELD training sessions, teachers and paraprofessionals expressed a firm desire for more professional development

opportunities. One participant shared, “I would greatly appreciate having more related courses in the future” (anonymous pre-k teacher, personal communication, November 13, 2023). Another comment from a paraprofessional who attended a professional development during the 2024-2025 school year stated, “This was my first PD as a paraprofessional, and it was simply fantastic. I learned a lot, and I hope to integrate it into the class” (anonymous pre-k paraprofessional, personal communication, March 18, 2025). These experiences and the feedback collected from these sessions influence my beliefs. I believe that professional development should connect to current content and provide materials and resources for classroom application. As a result, I designed my hybrid course with ready-to-use resources for teachers to support young multilingual learners. I also believe that educators have significant professional responsibilities and personal commitments that can affect when and how they complete professional development.

Research Design: Plan Do Study Act

This study employs an improvement science methodology using Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to explore how a hybrid professional development can impact prekindergarten educators' instruction with multilingual learners, and how teachers describe this hybrid learning opportunity. Improvement science is the guiding framework for this study, which explores a problem of practice within the PATH school system. Based on data, the problem of practice this study explores is that current prekindergarten language and literacy practices are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten. In this study, the change idea is a hybrid Canvas course focused on ELD strategies for prekindergarten educators. I used two PDSA cycles to examine the course's impact on instructional practices.

Using the plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle, I examined ideas for change and possible solutions to the problem of practice. See Figure 14 for the initial timeline of the study. Details about recruitment, data collection, and data analysis will be discussed at each stage of the PDSA cycle.

Figure 14
Timeline of PDSA Cycle 1

Plan	Do				Study
Summer 2024	August/ September 2025	September/ October 2025	October/ November 2025	November/ December 2025	December 2025 January 2026
• Create and finalize Canvas asynchronous modules • Create recruitment materials ◦ Information document or website • Begin recruitment process	• Recruit potential schools • Determine participants and sign consent forms • Schedule/ Conduct Empathy Interviews & pre observations • Enroll participants into Canvas Course	• Enroll participants into Canvas course • Conduct Empathy Interviews and pre observation • Transcribe interviews and observation notes	• Synchronous Session ◦ Mini Focus Group • Participants continue to navigate asynchronous modules	• Post observations • Synchronous Session (annotating lessons) • Focus Group Reflection	• Review Transcription from interviews, observations and focus groups • Review asynchronous reflections • Identify themes and review. • Determine PDSA Cycle 2

As described previously, the C4 Learning early childhood curriculum is research and play-based, supporting learning across the literacy, math, science, and social-emotional domains and highlighting the importance of play and developmentally appropriate practices. C4 Learning incorporates activities for the whole group, small groups, and learning centers. There are six units that connect the four domains and encourage project-based learning at the end of each unit. There are four practices the curriculum endorses for working with MLLs: 1) Language-Rich Environments, 2) Active Participation, 3) Vocabulary Expansion, and 4) Predictable Routines (2016). To maintain alignment with the C4L curricula, the hybrid model professional development will target strategies to increase engagement and oracy skills that teachers can use throughout the different portions of their curriculum. Participants will continue to use the C4 Learning curriculum, however, the professional development will enhance lessons by incorporating more strategies to support young multilingual learners' language development.

Plan Phase

The planning process began with a fishbone and driver diagram, which helped determine three primary drivers: 1) to build early childhood educators' knowledge of SLA, 2) to create more professional development opportunities, and 3) to create instructional materials to build the capacity of pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals working with MLLs (see Appendix D for the driver diagram). Developing a driver diagram allows for thinking about secondary drivers and possible change ideas to address the problem of practice. While the end goal is to have a hybrid model course for prekindergarten educators, improvement science stipulates the importance of examining a specific change idea. My change idea was to design a hybrid model professional development course for prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals to increase their use of instructional strategies such as visuals, direct vocabulary, and other PATH-recommended strategies. Through participation and reflection, teachers and paraprofessionals will gain knowledge and practical strategies to support young multilingual learners and ensure they are kindergarten-ready. This course targets strategies endorsed by PATH's ELD office to align with curricula and the early learning office's messaging, and to connect to the three main primary drivers, while testing only one change idea using ELD strategies.

To plan for the PDSA cycle, I use the "New York City Department of Education Introduction to the PDSA Cycle." This document, as shown in Appendix E, is a tool the New York City Department of Education shared on its website to support school systems engaged in the improvement science process. This document was used to help draft a plan, consider different questions, and determine data points to collect. During my coursework, an instructor encouraged us to examine resources on the New York City Department of Education's Introduction to PDSA Cycle website. I found the planning document helpful when outlining the Plan phase.

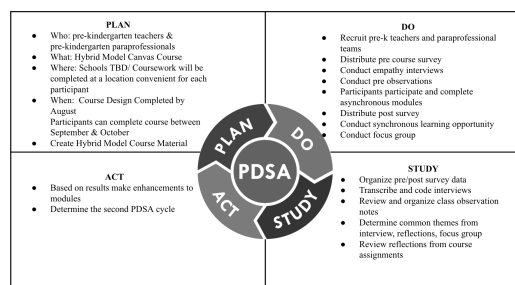
The planning document maps the planning phase of the PDSA cycle, focusing on the who, what, where, and when of the study, as well as potential predictions and the data to be collected. From the research, we know that pre-k educators are not prepared to work with multilingual learners (Bell & Bogan, 2013) and need the knowledge of “specific research-based methods for matching understandings of ELL theories and strategies to the learning styles of their students” (Bell & Bogan, 2013, p. 31). With the goal of preparing early childhood educators through a hybrid model course to be better prepared to meet the needs of their MLLs, possible outcomes include:

- An increase in engagement and oracy with their young multilingual learners
- More implementation of the 7 Key ELD Strategies throughout the instructional day, including during read-alouds and center time
- The perception of working with MLs will change positively
- More intentionality about the inclusion of MLs in their planning and instruction.

These possible outcomes guided the planning process and design of the PDSA cycle developed within the drivers. This study tests these predictions using a hybrid Canvas course as the targeted change idea. The subsequent “Do Phase” will describe how the plan was put into practice. See Figure 15 for the aspects of each part of the PDSA cycle, which will be discussed in detail.

Figure 15

PDSA Cycle



Do Phase

During this phase, participants worked through a hybrid model professional development course on Canvas. During the Do Phase, the data is collected. In this section, I describe the data sources included in the study, the participating teachers, and the data collection process.

Data Sources

To understand how prekindergarten educators describe the impact of a hybrid Canvas course on their instructional practices, this study utilizes multiple data sources to observe instructional shifts and teacher perspectives. In alignment with my research questions, data were collected through empathy interviews, surveys, course reflections, observations, and focus group discussions. Please see Table 7 in the data collection section for a comprehensive list of data sources. These sources provide insight into how educators modify lessons and describe their experiences with the hybrid Canvas course.

Empathy Interviews

Empathy interviews “seek to understand some concept or experience from the perspective of the interviewee” (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 59). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews are “conversations with a purpose,” and the purpose of interviews in qualitative research is “to obtain a special kind of information” (p. 108). In improvement science, using empathy interviews can “aid your ability to be user-centered and to understand the problem from the user’s perspective” (Hinnant-Crawford 2020, p. 59). Using empathy interviews shifts the study to participants' perspectives rather than just my own. My experience of conducting empathy interviews with teachers, parents, and students for previous coursework in my Ed.D program was rewarding because they helped me understand perspectives from prekindergarten that I did not previously have, and interviewing prekindergarten multilingual

learners and teachers gave me authentic experiences working with and solidified my desire to incorporate empathy interviews into this study. The purpose of the empathy interviews is to get to know the participants, learn about their perspectives, hear their stories, and begin analyzing the data. The interviews are part of the data triangulation process (Denzin, 1970) and will support the creation of a rich description. More information on empathy interviews will be presented in the data collection section.

Surveys and Artifacts

Using a Likert scale, I administered a pre-survey to participants before the start of the hybrid course and repeated it at the conclusion of PDSA cycle 1. The pre- and post-surveys provided additional insight into participants' experiences with both working with multilingual learners and professional development. While surveys are often associated with quantitative analysis, pre- and post-surveys are used to explore patterns of perceived growth among participants. Five statements on the survey are the same, such as: "When lesson planning, I intentionally plan for multilingual learners." This is done to determine growth or patterns.

Artifacts from the Canvas course are another data source used in the study. During the hybrid Canvas course, participants engaged in three modules. After each module, participants reflected on the content within their practice. These reflections show how participants internalized the materials, which can support and reinforce patterns, and aid in determining themes. Other artifacts collected are photographs taken during observations or shared with me by the participants. Surveys and artifacts, such as reflections along with empathy interviews, will strengthen the triangulation process.

Observations

Pre- and post-observations were conducted with each prekindergarten team to align with the research questions and focus on lesson modifications to support multilingual learners. I conducted pre-observations in November 2025 and post-observations in February 2026. The duration and content of each visit varied. At Evergreen Elementary School, during the pre-observation, I observed read-aloud instruction, students transitioning to center time, and small-group instruction led by the paraprofessional. At Cedar Hill Elementary School, during the pre-observation, I did not observe whole-group instruction. I observed students transitioning to centers and a small group led by the classroom teacher before lunch. After lunch, the students transitioned back to centers. Observations allowed me to see teachers in action in their classroom setting. While data sources such as reflections and focus group discussions allow for teachers' voices and perceptions to be expressed, observations provide real-time evidence of teachers' modifications and implementation of strategies to support multilingual learners and can strengthen participants' narratives. Pre- and post-observations can also reveal changes participants make in their instructional practices. The observations also provide an opportunity to collect artifacts, if available.

Focus Groups

At the conclusion of PDSA Cycle 1, I conducted two focus group discussions. Two groups were necessary due to last-minute cancellations on the originally scheduled date. The participants who canceled agreed to meet two days later. Each focus group consisted of two participants: one teacher and one paraprofessional, who were not coworkers. Focus groups provide dialogue among participants and are defined as "an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 114). The focus group

discussion provides data in the form of a narrative and strengthens data collected from observations and reflections.

Qualitative research is the interpretation and discovery of “how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 25). Including multiple data sources provides opportunities to interpret *meaning* through analysis and triangulation. This can help aid in understanding the research questions being addressed. Using multiple data sources also supports the study’s validity by not basing findings on only one source; having different sources creates a richer description. Multiple data sources support triangulation and help identify patterns. The rich descriptions from multiple sources can help to make meaning of the impact of hybrid professional development on prekindergarten educators working with multilingual learners. These data points provide a strong background for exploring practices used in prekindergarten classrooms when working with our youngest multilingual learners. The data collection process will be described at the conclusion of the “Do Phase.”

Participants

I recruited four participants, both pre-k teachers and pre-k paraprofessionals, to participate in the study because both groups work directly with multilingual learners. See Appendix F for an illustration of the recruitment process. To select participants for the study, I employed a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling to recruit a pre-k team consisting of one teacher and one paraprofessional at two school sites. See Table 4 for school site profiles.

Table 4*School Profile*

	Evergreen ES	Cedar Hill ES
Total Enrollment (Pre-K - 5)	644	803
ML Enrollment (K-5)	158	383
Pre-K Enrollment	39	38
Pre-K Classrooms	2	2

Note. Data retrieved from PATH, September 30, 2025, Enrollment Report

The selection criterion was that participants had to be currently working in a PATH prekindergarten classroom, have 1-5 years of experience working with prekindergarten students, and currently have multilingual learners in their class. Please see Table 5 for participant information.

Table 5*Participant Profile*

	School	Role	Pseudonym	MLs	Class Size	Years of Experience
Participant 1	Evergreen ES	Teacher	Ms. Elloway	6	19	3
Participant 2	Evergreen ES	Paraeducator	Ms. Brinley	6	19	2
Participant 3	Cedar Hill ES	Teacher	Ms. Meadows	14	19	5
Participant 4	Cedar Hill ES	Paraeducator	Ms. Winsbury	14	19	3

I created a flyer (see Appendix G), containing a brief survey with a link and QR code to gather basic information from prospective participants, such as their position (teacher vs. paraprofessional), the school they work with, and the number of multilingual learners in their class (See Appendix H for all questions). This flyer was shared in the weekly newsletters of the Early Childhood Office and the English Language Development Office. Flyers were also shared

with colleagues who coach and work at schools to post and share throughout their building. Flyers were distributed via email to my existing network, which includes principals, teachers, and central office employees.

Per the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), prekindergarten classrooms have a 1-to-10 teacher-to-student ratio, and classroom sizes often do not exceed 20 students. For participant selection, the goal was to target classrooms with at least 6 multilingual learners, which is representative of the ELD population in the county as a whole. Approximately 25.6% of students in PATH are MLLs, so 6 students would be 30% of a class at capacity.

When selecting school sites for this study, I excluded early childhood centers and Montessori schools due to their unique composition. Per Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, participants signed a consent form to participate in this study, and I obtained permission from the principals at both school sites to conduct research at their schools.

Participants received a \$40 gift card and a certificate documenting eight clock hours for participating in the hybrid model course. These hours can serve as evidence in their Individualized Professional Development Plan (PDP), potentially leading to continuing professional development credits⁵. Table 6 displays the contacts made with participants. Participants were emailed for various purposes, such as scheduling interviews and observations, responding to follow-up questions, and reminding them to complete reflections.

⁵ This is not guaranteed.

Table 6 Participant Contact Touch Points

Participant	Empathy Interview approx. 30 mins	Pre Observation	Post Observation	Contacts Via Emails
Ms. Elloway		8:45-10:10 ✓	9:20-10:05 ✓	28
Ms. Brinly	✓	8:45-10:10 ✓	9:20-10:05 ✓	18
Ms. Meadows	✓	10:50-12:46 ✓	10:50-11:45 ✓	24
Ms. Winsbury	✓	10:50-12:46 ✓	10:50-11:45 ✓	22

Data Collection Process

Data sources include interviews, focus groups, observations, surveys, and artifacts. Artifacts consist of participants' responses to prompts in the asynchronous portion of the hybrid course via the Canvas platform, as well as field notes and annotations. With multiple data sources collected throughout the study, please see Figure 16 for the data collection timeline and Table 7 for a comprehensive list of data sources and analysis methods.

Figure 16
Data Collection Timeline

	September	October	November	December	January	February
Recruitment Survey						
Pre Course Survey						
Empathy Interviews						
Canvas Reflections						
Post Course Survey						
Post Observations						
Focus Group						
PDSA Cycle 2 Reflection						

Table 7*Data Source*

Data Source	Purpose and Collection	Analysis Methods
Recruitment Survey	Collect informational data using Qualtrics Survey • years of experience • position • number of MLs in class	Analysis not needed, just a collection of basic data and ordinal numbers to use to describe participants
Pre/Post Course Survey	Collect quantitative data using Qualtrics	Likert Scale- Identify mode, and frequency distribution
Empathy Interview	Collect stories/narratives • virtual interviews (recorded with permission) • Semi-structured	Transcribe interviews for thematic analysis using Deedose Open Code to identify themes Identify key narratives/stories
Pre/Post-Observation	Observe strategies being used Note any shifts in practice Observation Note Sheet Checklist- observe use/implementation of 7 Key ELD Strategies	Thematic analysis (code for recurring themes) Triangulation- compare observation data with artifacts (reflection assignments), focus group data and interview data Utilize Deedose
Focus Group	Collect stories/narratives • Conducted after the course • Virtual–(recorded with permission) • Semi-structured • One session per participant	Transcribe to open code to identify themes Deedose
Artifacts	Asynchronous reflection assignments Evidence from observations • Lesson plans • Classroom environment evidence	Thematic analysis (code for recurring themes)

Participants completed surveys during the asynchronous portion of the hybrid model course. These surveys were given at the start and conclusion of the asynchronous course. The surveys consisted of eight questions about professional development with multilingual learners, lesson planning, and the use of strategies, using a Likert scale (please see Appendix I). The post-survey included one additional open-ended question for further comments. The questions provided insight into participants' feelings about teaching linguistically diverse learners and any shifts in those feelings. The Likert scale consisted of five responses: Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Neither Agree nor Disagree. The survey data collection process included posting anonymous Qualtrics Survey links directly into the Canvas modules.

Empathy interviews were critical in leading to this study and are equally important for the narrative and descriptive data. This initial interview helped gauge teachers' and paraprofessionals' perceptions of working with multilingual learners and provided an opportunity to incorporate participants' voices into the study. Each of the eight questions was phrased as an open-ended question because "Open-ended questions elicit responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participant; unanticipated by the researcher; rich and explanatory in nature" (Stuckey, 2018, p. 56). See Appendix J for empathy interview questions.

Participants were given the choice to be interviewed in person or online via Zoom, or to answer the interview questions via email under special circumstances. With permission, Zoom interviews were recorded. As Stuckey stated, "It is more important to maintain focus on the participant to build rapport and dialog rather than on the notes; the recorder will assist in capturing the data" (p. 56). Three of the four participants participated in the empathy interviews. The fourth participant opted to complete the empathy interview via email, but despite multiple

attempts to communicate with her, my efforts were unsuccessful. The empathy interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing participants to share their thoughts on working with multilingual learners and on different strategies. Hinnant-Craford (2020) recommends beginning empathy interviews with an introduction that states the purpose of the interview and spending time building rapport. I started the virtual interviews based on these recommendations. Interview transcripts were coded and triangulated using Deedose to identify thematic patterns.

In addition to a pre-course empathy interview, I conducted a focus group at the conclusion of the course, prior to PDSA Cycle 2. I conducted the focus group via Zoom and, with participants' permission, recorded the session. See Appendix K for the focus group questions.

As participants completed the course, I conducted post-observations using the same observation tool as the pre-observation to take notes, but due to inclement weather and mandatory PATH assessments, the post-observation occurred during PDSA Cycle 2. This observation provides further feedback on how the participant applied course information to implement the strategies. The observational notes provide an opportunity to observe instruction and collect descriptive notes to understand how the hybrid module course impacted instructional practices.

Throughout the data collection, I utilized member checking. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define member checks as "taking tentative interpretations/findings back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if they are plausible" (p.259). During interviews and the focus group, I restated or summarized responses to confirm my interpretation. I also included follow-up questions when applicable. Upon completing the observations, I took time to reflect and, when needed, followed up with questions via email to clarify or confirm my interpretations.

Study Phase

During the “Study Phase” of the PDSA cycle, the data collected were analyzed for themes. This provides an opportunity to compare data and reflect on my original predictions.

Data Analysis

For the analysis in this study, I used both constant comparison and thematic analysis, drawing on various data sources (empathy interviews, surveys, observations, and artifacts). Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79) that occurs in six phases. The six phases of thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clark (2006), are: 1) to familiarize yourself with data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) define and name themes, and then 6) produce the report.

To explore and learn how a hybrid module professional development can impact teachers working with young multilingual learners, I analyzed participants' empathy interviews as a first step. I transcribed the empathy interviews and uploaded them to Deedose. Using Deedose, I began to look for patterns and recurring themes. Survey data measured participants' perceptions and attitudes, which can support and strengthen the themes I identified. Using a Likert scale shows how frequently participants give a response. Observations using field notes were also part of the data triangulation. I recorded notes using LeCompte and Preissle's (2003) observation guidelines (See Appendix L and Appendix M for the observation template). During observations, I recorded notes by hand using the observation template and later transcribed them into an electronic template. I then uploaded the transcription to Deedose for analysis. Triangulation “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin, 2012, p. 84), and the phenomenon, in this case, is how teachers' perspectives may have

shifted upon completion of a hybrid Canvas course and if the course impacts their instructional practices when working with young multilingual learners.

An inductive analysis approach guided the process as I analyzed the data I collected from empathy interviews, pre-observation notes, focus groups, and reflections. Rather than applying predetermined themes, themes could emerge organically. Next, using open coding, via Dedoose, themes began to surface. In Dedoose, I organized codes by research question to ensure alignment with the study's focus. As I reviewed the data, I added inductive codes for the individual strategies teachers used (for example, visuals, modified graphic organizers, L1 support) and the challenges participants discussed (lack of time, comprehension concerns, and planning constraints). I also coded instances in which participants reflected on their learning or described new insights as "learned," "confidence," and "reflection." As I continued analyzing the data and codes, I moved beyond identifying repeated concepts and began examining how the codes connected to a broader theme. During open coding, I generated inductive codes from the data sources. As patterns began to emerge, I engaged in axial coding to examine relationships among those codes. I examined each research question separately to identify themes, ensuring they directly addressed my study's purpose. I then named my themes. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), naming themes can come from three sources: "(1) yourself, the researcher, (2) the participants' exact words, or (3) sources outside the study, most likely from the literature on your topic" (p. 211). The naming of my themes came from myself and the participants' quotes. Lastly, themes were determined and reviewed by my advisor and committee members to ensure validity.

Figure 17

Analysis Process

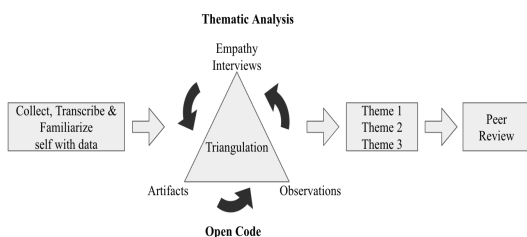


Figure 17 shows the process for how data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The participants' stories and narratives provide not only rich descriptive data but also humanize the study with their words.

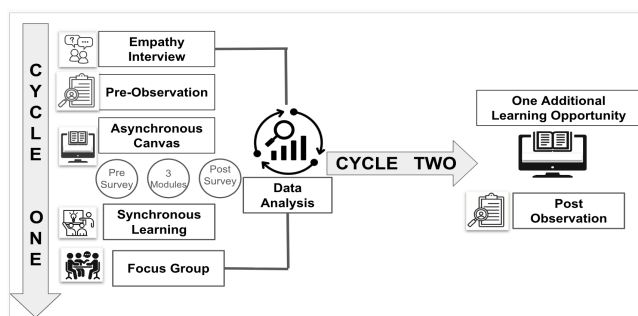
As previously described, I used coding to identify emerging themes. Appendix N provides a visual representation of my coding and theme development process.

Act Phase

During the “Act Phase,” I determined the adjustments to address the change idea. For example, based on the focus group discussion, an additional module was added to the course for PDSA Cycle 2. See Figure 18 for a complete overview of the study.

Figure 18

Study Overview



PDSA Cycle 2

The feedback and data analysis from the first PDSA cycle determined the next steps. During PDSA Cycle 2, the participants completed an additional module in the asynchronous course. The second PDSA cycle focused on the specific implementation of a course resource. Participants reported not having time to implement any of the resources provided in the hybrid

course. One participant even shared, “If you said, first, implement, then come back and provide your reflection. Yeah, I could see how the implementation would definitely be helpful to the reflection, because, I mean, it then becomes more interactive, like, this is what actually happened in real time” (Ms. Brinley, focus group, January 2026). The additional module includes time to implement a resource. Resources included visuals, vocabulary slides, modified graphic organizers (all connected to upcoming curriculum themes), and lesson plan templates. Upon completing the implementation of a course resource or specific activity, participants were asked to reflect. Reflection included four questions: 1) Briefly describe the activity/resource you implemented, 2) When did you implement the resource?, 3) Describe any changes you noticed with your multilingual learners when implementing the resource. And 4) Did you notice any changes in engagement or oracy?

To conclude the study, participants were given a close-out survey. This survey included one final opportunity to share how the hybrid course influenced lesson planning and to rank the professional development opportunities needed to support pre-k educators. Hinnant-Crawford (2020) explains that at the conclusion of the second PDSA cycle, five actions may occur: “adopt, adapt, expand, abandon or test again under other conditions” (p. 170). At the end of the Act phase, the objective for the next improvement cycle should be developed. Based on the findings, which will be discussed in the next section, the next steps in the improvement efforts will be to propose creating a hybrid course with approximately 30 participants. This implementation will allow the course to be delivered to a larger group of teachers and provide additional insight into how it supports prekindergarten teachers working with multilingual learners (see recommendations for more details).

Course Description

The hybrid professional development model was implemented through asynchronous Canvas modules and a synchronous virtual session. Utilizing Canvas will allow educators to access content for future reference after the training. To complete a PDSA cycle, only a portion of the full course was created and studied. The course consisted of three asynchronous modules and one synchronous Zoom session. Each asynchronous module had a reflective prompt at the conclusion. In Dobrovoly's (2006) study of adult learners in a corporate setting, she found that they need opportunities to self-assess. Adding reflective prompts will provide educators with opportunities to self-assess through reflection. See Figure 19 for a list of the modules and objectives, and see Appendix O for a detailed outline of the hybrid module course. The fourth module was added after PDSA Cycle 1.

Figure 19

Course Overview

Course Title: Little Voices, Big Language: ELD for Pre-K Educators and MLs

Module 1: Overview of ELD (Approximately 30 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the PATH ELD program.
- Gain an understanding of WIDA Can Dos for Early Learners and how it connects to DLLs in their class

Module 2: Deep Dive into Second Language Acquisition (Approximately 30 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Understand key theories and models of second language acquisition
- Understand the stages of second language acquisition

Module 3: Strategies to Support Young Multilingual Learners (Approximately 60-75 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Identify and define the seven key ELD strategies

Reflect and develop an action plan to incorporate key strategies.

Synchronous Session Professional Development (1 hour)

Objective: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Review and annotate curriculum lesson plans to intentionally add ELD supports

Synchronous Session: Focus Group (1 hour)

Objective: By the end of this session, participants will:

- Engage in a discussion to share their experiences with the hybrid course
- Reflect on teaching practices related to the hybrid course

PDSA Cycle 2 Implementation

Objective: By the end of this session participants will:

- Apply a strategy/resource with their students

Reflect on the experience implementing the strategy and how it impacts multilingual learners.

The Canvas homepage consists of a brief overview of the course. As previously discussed in the data collection and analysis section, a pre-course survey was posted on Canvas before the asynchronous module's content. To ensure participant confidentiality and to align with IRB documentation, surveys and reflection prompts were anonymous and were created using Qualtrics. Module 1 was an overview of the English language development program. The module included information about both WIDA and PATH policies. Module 2 takes a deep dive into second language development. Exploring key theories and the stages of language development. Module 3 focused on seven strategies that PATH ELD offices encourage. The strategies include: visuals, sentence frames, learn-by-doing, collaborative conversations, direct vocabulary instruction, modified graphic organizers, and building background knowledge. This module will incorporate these strategies into the literature review to support oracy. The asynchronous modules were designed with both written text and audio files, such as recorded presentations for participants to view.

Section 2 began with a brief explanation of my experience and my willingness to continue learning and growing in early childhood, particularly with young multilingual learners. With this

willingness to learn, a PDSA cycle has been designed to examine and explore the research questions:

- How do prekindergarten educators who work with young multilingual learners describe how hybrid professional development impacts their instructional practice?
- How do prekindergarten educators modify lessons for their multilingual learners based on the hybrid professional development cycle?

While the first PDSA cycle included data collection through interviews, observations, focus groups, and artifacts, the second PDSA cycle will encourage participants to implement and reflect on the changes.

Section two outlines the improvement science framework guiding this study. I started with the research questions and my positionality statement to acknowledge my professional experiences and my beliefs about professional development for working with multilingual learners. The section then describes the improvement science design, using the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles to test a change idea for a hybrid professional development course. Each section of the PDSA cycle is described, including the data sources, data collection process, and data analysis. Section 2 provides the study design and implementation to explore how hybrid professional development impacts prekindergarten educators' instructional practice with multilingual learners.

Section 3: Findings

The findings section will present the results and findings of the PDSA cycles and examine the impact of the hybrid Canvas professional development course on prekindergarten educators' instruction with multilingual learners. First, I present the themes from my findings,

then address limitations. I conclude with implications and recommendations for future professional development for teachers working with young multilingual learners.

The qualitative data collected from empathy interviews, observations, survey responses, and reflections paint a narrative of teachers and paraprofessional voices. Please refer to Table 4 for information on each school site and to Table 5 for participants' descriptions.

Using Braun and Clark's (2006) "six phases" of thematic analysis, I began analyzing the data for themes. First, I needed to *familiarize myself with the data*. For me, this happened as I transcribed and reread my transcripts and participants' reflections. Then, using Dedoose, I began to *generate initial codes*. I started tagging different quotes in the transcripts and other data sources. Next, I *searched for themes*. I shifted from recurring concepts to broader themes. With my advisor, we *reviewed themes* to *define and name* each one.

First, I transcribed the interviews, and I reviewed field notes and reflections from the Canvas course. As I reviewed these data points, I started my initial open coding, including concepts such as hybrid feedback, curriculum and visuals. I noticed the challenges the participants shared, as well as the strategies they implemented for their multilingual learners. Using Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis software, I recorded the data to identify connections and thematic patterns for each research question. While common themes emerged, I continued to explore broader themes. I will analyze each research question through these themes.

Research Question 1

How do prekindergarten educators who work with young multilingual learners describe how hybrid professional development impacts their instructional practice?

Evolving Professional Growth

The data revealed one major theme: evolving professional growth. Within this theme, two subthemes emerged: 1) an increased awareness of second language concepts, and 2) an increased confidence when working with young multilingual learners.

Increased Awareness of Language Acquisition

The hybrid course provided an overview of WIDA and ELD in PATH, covered second language acquisition, and addressed the strategies endorsed by the PATH ELD department to build pre-k educators' capacity to support multilingual learners and advance Primary Driver 1. Educators provided insight by describing how the course impacted their practice.

Throughout the focus group, teachers reflected on new knowledge. One second language theory component that educators consistently reflected on was the concept of the “affective filter.” According to Stephen Krashen (1982), “Affective Filter hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters.” Although the term was new to some participants, they acknowledged that the affective filter can impact their students. During the focus group, Ms. Meadows shared a story about her next step, based on what she learned in the asynchronous course and on a moment of realization about her own experience with a heightened affective filter while learning trigonometry.

I'm not really sure how I'm going to do it, but I am going to be more mindful of the impact of the affective filter and being very intentional about, um, corrections. I was sharing with her [Ms. Winsbury], at the point in time where she might not have finished the modules. I was sharing with her, kind of what I gained from the modules, and how I felt about learning about the affective filter. So that's something [affective

filter] that resonated really strongly with me, because I can recall feeling similar when I was a student, even as an adult student. I was like, please don't call me because I don't know this stuff. When I took a trigonometry, I was like, please don't ask me how to do it, because. I don't know these 12,000 steps. (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026)

When discussing corrections, Ms. Meadow also stated, “But it's, like, how you say it [corrections]. It [affective filter] forces you to rethink. Like, sometimes I pause before I say something, because I don't want to say, ‘that's not right.’ Like, I've gotta think of a way to say, actually [instead of saying the child is wrong]” (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026). These reflections show how Ms. Meadows considered second language acquisition concepts in relation to her own learning experiences. Her personal connection shows that she understands how the affective filter can make someone feel, based on her experience with trigonometry. She also notes that she is more aware of how she delivers feedback to students, connecting this to how corrections can impact a student’s affective filter.

The increased awareness of the affective filter influenced instructional decision-making, as participants adjusted expectations for students and incorporated strategies to lower the affective filter and encourage greater engagement. In response to one of the asynchronous, anonymous reflection questions, one participant responded to the prompt, *What is one concept you learned and how did it shift your previous thinking* by sharing:

I learned about the concept of the affective filter as it relates to engagement and collaboration, which is connected to key development strategies such as realia and collaborative conversations. The takeaway is that I now understand the barrier and challenge that the affective filter can create when students are asked to respond or

engage. I also have a better understanding of how the realia and collaborative conversation strategies help to lower the affective filter. (anonymous, course reflection, December 27, 2025)

This reflection supports the change idea of providing targeted professional development on key ELD strategies and embedding strategies, such as visuals, realia, and collaborative conversations, into the course, as the participant demonstrated a connection between second language acquisition and practical strategies used to increase engagement of her young multilingual learners. In the focus group, Ms. Meadows sums up the affective filter, “You know, it's a free space, don't be afraid, nothing you say is wrong” (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026). Her reflection illustrates an increased awareness of how emotions can impact participation, yet she understands the importance of creating an environment that encourages her multilingual students to participate and take risks.

Due to greater awareness of theories such as the Affective Filter Hypothesis, knowledge of students and their development also surfaced, leading to shifts in perspectives of multilingual learners. During one of the pre-observation visits, a paraprofessional shared, “David doesn’t speak any English. He doesn’t understand” (Ms. Brinley, personal communication, November 3, 2025). This idea that he does not speak English or understand later shifts. At the end of PDSA cycle one, during the focus group, Ms. Brinley shared a time when she worked with David individually during center time to practice rhyming words.

During, um, small groups today, they get to pick their own center, and David was alone at my station, and so it was good that it was just him and I playing the game because I could see if he knew what he was doing with his rhyming words. And the fact that he even knew the pictures was in English. Some of them he couldn't say, but some he

could, and he knew way more than I thought. So that was him showing me, he's developing his English language. (Ms. Brinley, January 12, 2026)

Ms. Brinley's statement shows a shift in her mindset regarding her interpretation of her students' engagement and language development. Her reflection shows that she recognized David's language knowledge during their one-on-one instruction. By reframing David's quietness as part of his development process, Ms. Brinley moved away from a deficit misconception that silence means not understanding or having 'no English.' These reflections indicate an evolving understanding when interpreting a student's behavior and language development. She also shared:

Yeah, and he [David] got to do his puzzles, and we did the puzzles together, and he was happy about it, so it made me more aware that he does like to spend time doing puzzles when learning. He is learning, and so I can see that growth, and this makes me more aware of being aware. (January 12, 2026)

This mindset shift illustrates how she recognized learning that may have previously gone unnoticed or assumed there was no language, increasing her capacity to support young multilingual learners effectively. We discussed being more aware of our students' interests and how it can promote more engagement, and that even working one-on-one with him may have lowered his affective filter, allowing him to take more risks with her during the lesson.

During the post-observation at Evergreen Elementary, Ms. Elloway created a chart to track the number of Olympic medals the United States received. During the transition after the chart was introduced, a student walked over to the chart, counted to ten in Spanish, and then counted the remaining three medals. Ms. Brinley validated her counting and said, "Thirteen, there are thirteen medals." The student smiled, said "thirteen," and walked away. Ms. Brinley

commented to me that she knows so much more than she thought. This example again shows Ms. Brinley's change in perspective, recognizing that counting in Spanish can show what a student knows.

Collectively, this data illustrates how participants described the impact of the hybrid courses on their instructional practices. Increased awareness of second language acquisition influenced not only how they understood their young multilingual learners but also how they approached instruction. These findings indicate that participants had greater conceptual understanding, which shaped their interpretation of student engagement and instructional choices. This finding also aligns with the six areas that Zepeda et al. (2011) identified as essential for preparing teachers to work with young multilingual learners. One of the six areas is understanding language development. This growing awareness created opportunities for educators to interpret student behavior and reflect on instructional decision-making aligned with students' developmental and linguistic needs. As participants reconsidered how and why students engage, this conceptual shift prompted reflection on instructional needs and highlighted participants' confidence, leading to the second theme of instructional confidence.

Increased Instructional Confidence

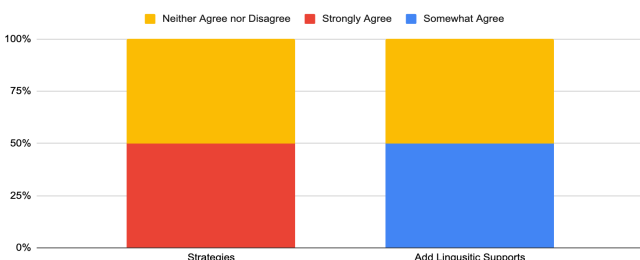
Merriam-Webster defines confidence as “a feeling of trust, belief, or certainty in oneself, one's abilities, or in others” (2026). Confidence as an educator working with young multilingual learners is having self-efficacy and being willing to try new ideas and strategies. Through the reflective narrative, participants demonstrate and describe instructional confidence. Their confidence is evident not only in identifying which strategies to use but also in explaining why those strategies were effective with their multilingual students. The data from the pre- and post-course survey remained the same, in response to the statements, *I have strategies to support*

multilingual learners, and I add linguistic supports to curriculum materials (see Figure 20).

However, the narratives participants share paint a different picture of the confidence they have gained.

Figure 20

Survey: Pre-K Educators' Perception of Strategies Usage to Support MLs



Participants share stories of success and reflection as they implement strategies to build greater confidence in their decision-making and instruction. Ms. Meadows's success story illustrates instructional confidence through her example in teaching the word "environment."

When we learned about what an environment is, we did gestures so that we could understand that, like we were, we talked about the environment and being in harmony, and it was like, harmony means together [moving her arms to make a large circular shape]. And the environment is all around us [moving her arms again]. So, it was helpful in getting kids to understand what an environment was, what it was referring to. And that in different places, the environment is different. There's outdoor environment, there's indoor environment, there's fall environment, there's winter environment. Um, so that strategy, along with visuals, to further the understanding. Um, was very helpful, and especially with the ELL students because I mean, if you say environments, they could say all around me [moved arms to make a large circular shape], and they associate the words and the movement, and they do remember it better, so it's a small thing, but it makes a big

impact, because the kids did remember, like, what an environment was. (focus group, January 12, 2026)

Combining gestures, visuals, and repetition supported students' understanding of the vocabulary word, noting that the strategies were both helpful and effective. Her ability to explain the purpose and impact of the strategies suggests confidence in implementing strategies for her multilingual students. The participant also noted students' retention of the term, reinforcing confidence in the strategy's effectiveness and in instructional decision-making.

In the instructional intentionality section, I noted that one participant stated she wanted to share a lesson plan template with her team. This example not only demonstrates intentional planning for multilingual learners but also reflects increased instructional confidence. Through participation in the hybrid course and the focus group discussion, this participant found value in the resources she perceived as beneficial to the team. This example suggests confidence not only in the resource but also in her ability to support others in planning for multilingual learners.

Another way participants demonstrated confidence was by acknowledging and validating their existing expertise. Ms. Elloway reflected, “I didn’t learn a new concept, per se, but I became more aware of strategies I’ve learned and used in the past in a new way, working with younger students” (course reflection, November 21, 2025). This reflection shows her confidence, drawing on her prior knowledge and adapting it to her young students. When paired with her description of using modeling as a strategy, “Modeling for students and showing them what to do, while speaking English, has been a very successful strategy that we use almost daily” (course reflection, November 21, 2025), these narratives illustrate instructional confidence as the participant reflects and adapts strategies. These examples validate and strengthen her instructional practices with prekindergarten multilingual learners.

While Ms. Brinley initially described feeling new when working with multilingual learners, stating, “I need more training going forward to make me more aware of what the student is going through” (empathy interview, October 13, 2025), this suggests a lack of confidence and uncertainty. However, during the focus group when discussing resources provided in the course, she shared, “Because if you're doing story time, I don't do story time, but I might do small groups with David. So I could implement the one [resource] working with him one-on-one, or in a small group” (focus group, January 12, 2026) demonstrates understanding what students need and how some resources would be better used in small groups or one-on-one. The shift previously shared in how she viewed David and his language development suggests she has the confidence to know what instructional needs would be best for him. Instructional confidence was evident not through showing certainty but through making informed instructional decisions about how to use and adapt a resource to meet David’s needs.

During the focus group discussion, Ms. Elloway shared that she was not confident using home language support because she is not bilingual. She shared an example in which her accent was incorrect when she said “mírame,” and her student was not looking at her.

So, I guess this is one of the challenges, is I'm not super confident in my Spanish a lot of the time, and there's the conjugation of the words of the, verbs is something that I don't do a lot. So there's one of my little girls, and I was like, look at me, look at me, and she wouldn't look at me, so I said, mírame, mírame. And I guess my accent was in the wrong place or something, but I was looking at my bilingual students and they were like, I don't know what you're saying, I don't know what you're talking about, I don't know what look at me is. And then finally, one of the boys goes ‘mira **may**’. That's what it is. (Ms. Elloway, focus group, January 14, 2026)

This story prompted Ms. Winsbury to share her experience as a bilingual student who was not only in the ELD program, but is also raising bilingual children. Ms. Winsbury shared how, when using translations, things such as the accent may not be what is incorrect. She describes how, when teaching the color yellow and showing a lemon and limes, in some cultures, the lime is actually yellow.

We showed the picture of a lemon to the kids, and [teacher name] kept asking, so which one is the lemon? Point to the lemon, and they all point to the green one. And [teacher name] was like, no, that's not the lemon. The lemon it's the yellow one. And I was like, you know what? Wait a second, because like, for me, in Mexico, the lemon for us is the green one. And the lime for us is the yellow one. (Ms. Winsbury, focus group, January 14, 2026)

By sharing this story, she gives Ms. Elloway more confidence by acknowledging that it is not only how we pronounce things but also our own perceptions that may cause confusion for our students. She concludes her story with,

It's cultural, it's whatever culture they're coming from, it also kind of affects the meaning of the word that we want the kids to know. Even if you translate it in Spanish, even if you say it in Spanish. They probably meant something else. And you know, it's a little confusing, but I will say, instead of translating the words for the kids, have them point, and just have them repeat. (focus group, January 14, 2026)

This conversation allows Ms. Winsbury to offer an alternative explanation of the confusion when using their home language, in response to the mispronunciation of “mírame.” Ms. Winsbury explains the role of culture in meaning-making and connects it to strategies such as pointing and repetition to support comprehension. Initially, Ms. Elloway was unsure of her Spanish

pronunciation; she remains confident in incorporating home language support, despite not being fluent in Spanish. In response to Ms. Winsbury's story, she responds with "That makes total sense." Her instructional confidence is shown through her reflection on a challenge she faced and in her development of a new understanding through peer validation. Again, this narrative supports Zepeda's (2011) six areas for working with young multilingual learners, understanding the relationship between language and culture.

As the participants developed a deeper awareness of their multilingual learners' development, they demonstrated increased confidence in their instructional decision-making. As participants engaged in the hybrid course, they developed a deeper understanding of how SLA influences student engagement and learning. This awareness created more confidence in making decisions that best support young multilingual learners. For some participants, this growing awareness and understanding contributed to more intentional planning and greater confidence.

Connections to Multilingual Learners

As teachers grow professionally and better understand second language acquisition, their interpretations of student behavior and the way they deliver feedback to students shifted. As participants create safe environments where students can take more risks with a lower affective filter, this practice creates opportunities for young multilingual learners to engage in lessons and take language risks. As a result, multilingual learners participate more, and we see students demonstrating an understanding of the concepts being taught. This development can affect not only participation but also vocabulary development and comprehension. As students begin to feel safe, they participate more and speak more. For example, recall what we saw with David opening up more when working individually with the paraprofessional. We also heard Ms. Meadows share that her students were highly engaged while learning about different

environments. Furthermore, when teachers value home language as an asset, students sense that their culture and language are valued, which leads to inclusivity in the classroom.

Research Question 2

How do prekindergarten educators modify lessons for their multilingual learners based on the hybrid professional development cycle?

Instructional and Collaborative Intentionality

At the conclusion of the hybrid course, findings indicate that prekindergarten educators intentionally modify their lessons and use the seven key strategies promoted by PATH School System more frequently than prior to the intervention (hybrid course). As participants developed greater awareness of their students and the concepts related to second language acquisition, this awareness led to a shift in instructional practice, which I call “Instructional and Collaborative Intentionality.” During the initial planning phase of my improvement science PDSA cycles, I predicted that the hybrid course would change teachers’ perceptions of working with MLs and increase their intentionality in planning for young multilingual students. The following findings examine these predicted outcomes.

Instructional

While the pre- and post-course survey data on intentional planning did not change, the empathy interview data supported my prediction, as participants described the need to be more intentional. During empathy interviews at the start of the study, when asked about the lesson planning process, Ms. Winsbury, a paraprofessional, shared, “We do C4L. We just read it. We just follow the C4L book” (empathy interview, October 13, 2025). Other participants shared similar sentiments of using the C4 Learning curriculum to guide their planning process, including reviewing the objectives and upcoming stories for their read-alouds. While the

participants initially described their lesson planning process as directly following the curriculum, their reflections began to show more deliberate, intentional instructional decision-making. One participant shared during the focus group discussion how she would use a resource (a modified lesson planning document with prompts to reflect on incorporating strategies for multilingual students) from the hybrid course to share with her colleagues to be more intentional about planning:

I'm glad that you did bring out the C4L planning document, um, for both weekly and daily planning, because when you brought that out, I just thought, oh my gosh, tomorrow I have grade-level meeting. I'm gonna have this there so that we can plan with more intentionality (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026).

During the synchronous session, Ms. Winsbury reflected on a resource shared:

I can picture myself doing it in small groups, like you said, with the Speckled Frog activity, like I'm thinking about what and how can I use it. And how can I implement it in the different levels for our kids (Ms. Winsbury, focus group, January 14, 2026)?

As the participant described applying strategies from the synchronous session to small-group instruction, she reflected on how to use the “Speckled Frog,” thus demonstrating her capacity to apply course concepts in planning decisions.

Ms. Meadows also noted during the focus group, that course resources encouraged intentional planning, such as trying one new strategy per week, “It [hybrid Canvas course] will give me some tools and make me think about being intentional, even if it's like, well, just plan to try one [key ELD strategy] this week and put it somewhere” (focus group, January 12, 2026). This statement demonstrates reflection and a willingness to experiment and apply the learned strategies to support their multilingual learners.

Ms. Meadows also shared how she and Ms. Winsbury began to plan for an upcoming story intentionally:

We had to prep ourselves for the *Not-a-Box* story that we're reading tomorrow. We had to put a sentence frame. Like, that's the small group activity, is there's a sentence frame they're supposed to use that, fill in the blank, based on whatever their level of ability is. And they're supposed to draw something. And explain it's not a box, it's a whatever their imagination says that it is. (focus group, January 12, 2026)

These narratives illustrate that the participants not only planned strategically, but also plan to implement a strategy with greater awareness of multilingual learners' needs. This intentionality shows growth in participants' capacity and understanding of multilingual learners. Participants demonstrated recognition of the importance of instructional supports, such as sentence frames and visuals, again showing a willingness to incorporate strategies, indicating increased capacity to take ideas from the course and apply them to classroom practices.

It is important to note that Ms. Elloway also reflected, "I have always considered how I was going to teach multilingual learners, the course didn't really change the way I do that" (course reflection, February 17, 2026). While this is not the reaction I anticipated, it offers insight into professional development. Ms. Elloway was previously certified in SIOP and has taught other grade levels besides pre-k (where ELD students receive services and certified ELD teachers work with students in those grade levels). Her reflection suggests that professional development may need to be differentiated based on an educator's existing knowledge and experience.

Collaborative

Ms. Meadows and Ms. Winsbury's planning for the story *Not-a-Box* shows the value of prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals collaborating. Along with instructional intentionality, the data also show a need for collaborative intentionality. At Evergreen Elementary School, the prekindergarten teacher and paraprofessional teams have scheduled planning time together for one day; however, at Cedar Hill Elementary School, there is no scheduled time for the teacher and paraprofessional to plan together. Ms. Meadows, one of the teachers at Cedar Hill shared:

So, that [planning together] has been an interesting scenario, because while we feel that it is important for them [paraprofessionals] to be a part of it, it is not feasible because of the number of adults to children ratio that is supposed to be kept. So, because of that, there is no way to incorporate them. (focus group, January 12, 2026)

In response, Ms. Brinley, the paraprofessional at Evergreen, responded by sharing her planning schedule:

I only have planning [with the classroom teacher] on Tuesday. Um, the principal worked it out that the art teachers combined for one of the specials. So that I don't have to be in the [art] room on Tuesday. And, um, I can sit with my teacher, and we can plan for our class. (focus group, January 12, 2026)

Ms. Elloway, the prekindergarten teacher working with Ms. Brinley, shared that having the option to plan with her paraprofessional was not always the case. She explained that the prekindergarten students always had the first related art and wellness periods as planning time; however, if either paraprofessional were out on leave, planning time would be disrupted because one of the paras had to be with the students to adhere to the student-to-adult ratio. She shared

that the teachers suggested having related arts schedules later in the day. With this change, the two prekindergarten teachers at Evergreen Elementary have one day of planning together. The shift in schedules also allowed for one day a week for the teachers and their paraprofessionals to plan together. “But they also did it so that on Tuesdays, both our art teachers work with our class, so that [Ms. Brinley] and I can plan together, which had never happened before” (focus group, January 14, 2026). This dialogue from the focus group led to a deeper discussion on planning as a team. A sense of advocacy for dedicated collaborative planning time emerged, demonstrating that intentionality is needed not just for instruction and individual lesson planning, but for the team. Ms. Meadows shared how she and Ms. Winsbury end up having discussions about lessons during lunch or at the end of the day,

As hard as it is, I think um, so if I had to think about one-on-one, it ends up being, in my situation, that [Ms. Winsbury] and I end up trying to fit it in at the end of the day. But I think it would be helpful if during the day, we could have that time at least once a week as well. (focus group, January 12, 2026)

Ms. Meadows also shared, “It’s certainly something that I may want to take back to my team and to my principal to see. If maybe there is some way to sort of make that work. Because that intentional time is so key, versus, like, hey, whatever time I have left” (focus group, January 12, 2026). The narrative about planning shows that teachers not only want to plan instructional materials that will support their multilingual students, but they also want to plan with their paraprofessionals, “Yeah, for what is expected at the pre-k level, we truly need to be planning with our paraeducators” (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026).

The theme of instructional and collaborative intentionality aligns with the primary driver of building prekindergarten educators’ capacity to support multilingual learners, as well as the

secondary driver of providing targeted professional development on second language acquisition and the ELD Seven Key strategies. The narratives demonstrate increased instructional capacity, as participants moved from a curriculum-only stance in planning to more intentional planning informed by an understanding of multilingual learners' needs. These findings support the driver diagram guiding this study and improvement efforts by showing that hybrid professional development can strengthen instructional and collaborative intentionality and that teachers want to plan together.

Increase Use of Key ELD Strategies

As participants became more intentional in planning and in working with multilingual learners, their instruction showed an increase in strategies aligned with the hybrid course content. During a post-observation visit to Cedar Hill Elementary, I observed Ms. Meadows reading a story aloud during the whole-group lesson. As she read, I noted several of the strategies introduced during the course, including visuals to support vocabulary, sentence frames, and collaborative conversations. The story, *How Will We Get To The Beach*, includes a main character who wants to bring five things to the beach (turtle, umbrella, book, ball, and Baby). Ms. Meadows held up a paper with images of these objects and referred to them as she read. She also verbally shared a simple sentence frame, “We see ___” when reading to identify which object would not fit in the different modes of transportation. The teacher modeled total physical response when she came to the word *wobble* in the text and wobbled in her chair as students wobbled on the carpet, using both learn-by-doing and vocabulary instruction. Lastly, Ms. Meadows incorporated collaborative conversations by having students predict how the character would get to the beach. “Talk to your neighbor, how will they get to the beach. Find an elbow partner. [Students sit facing a partner, while the teacher helps a few students pair up. Ms.

Winsbury walks over to two students] How will Roxanne get to the beach?” (post-observation, February 12, 2026). As the students talked, the teacher walked around listening to different pairs. The paraeducator worked with two students, helping them keep their hands to themselves and assisting with taking turns as they talked.

Using different strategies, such as visuals, sentence frames, and collaborative conversations, suggests that Ms. Meadows was not only willing to try individual strategies but also has a comprehensive understanding of how to scaffold various language supports for her students during read-aloud instruction. During the pre-observation, the teacher primarily displayed visuals for procedural purposes (how to wash hands, center signs), but during the post-observation, she used materials directly connected to the lesson and supported language development, including visuals to support the story. I also noticed an anchor chart with visuals from a previous story posted, as well as visuals in centers with keywords to use during center time (See Appendix P). Comparing pre- and post-observations shows that the purpose of using visuals has evolved from supporting routines to supporting language development. Similar to the findings of Matera et al. (2016), who found that professional development supports the implementation of research-based practices, this read-aloud observation demonstrates that hybrid professional development can promote the use of language strategies when working with young multilingual learners.

Participants also reported increased use of ELD strategies in their reflections on the asynchronous modules. Ms. Elloway shared,

I did a lot of the pictures and like making sure there were pictures to go with the words, especially when we were doing vocabulary. And also explaining some things in

English and Spanish language support. I use that one almost every single day. (focus group, January 14, 2026)

Ms. Elloway again combines visuals to support vocabulary, providing additional support for language development, while also including L1 support as an additional scaffold.

Another example that demonstrates the themes of increased use of strategies and of instructional and collaborative intentionality is the "How to Make Hot Chocolate" visual. During my post-observation, I noticed the visual displayed in the dramatic play center. In response to this visual, Ms. Meadows shared that students were previously learning about "How To" texts.

[She and Ms. Winsbury] decided to use the holiday party as a learning opportunity by creating a shared writing opportunity in which the children could help us write a "how to" text for our cocoa making activity. The visuals were meant to help the children decipher the steps in the absence of their ability to read the words...Visually, we were looking to underscore what occurs specifically at each step and to show sequencing with numbering.

(Ms. Meadows, personal communication, February 23, 2026)

The visual hanging in the dramatic play center provides an opportunity to extend the use of language. Ms. Meadows reflected and shared, "It really underscores how some of the same supports that serve our multilingual students are also helpful for the greater good of all the kids." The intentional creation and placement of the "How to Make Hot Chocolate" demonstrates how teachers can extend the use of visual supports beyond a single lesson. Having the visual in the dramatic play center allows students to independently apply their understanding of the hot chocolate-making process to their own dramatic play. This visual also shows that thoughtful scaffolds for multilingual learners can support all students' language development by providing visuals and verbal cues for use at their centers.

As part of the second PDSA cycle, I asked participants to implement a resource from the course. Ms. Meadows shared her success in using a modified graphic organizer (see Appendix Q) with her students. Ms. Meadows reflected on what she has learned in the course and its impact on students.

I noticed that students were excited to show what they "know" and what they want to "learn." It seemed their affective filter was lowered as they felt free to share with no pressure of a right or wrong answer. They were also more engaged in what they eventually learned as we interactively added things to our "learned" category of the KWL chart (Ms. Meadows, personal communication, email, February 27, 2026)

This reflection demonstrated not only success in implementing the modified graphic organizers strategy but also an understanding of the SLA theories discussed in the course. By referencing the affective filter, Ms. Meadows connected student engagement to risk-taking and language-rich participation. Using the modified graphic organizer, she also scaffolded student talk and validated students' contributions by adding them to the chart. Her reflection at the end of the PDSA 2 cycle suggests she recognizes the relationships between SLA, strategies, and engagement with her multilingual learners.

Taken together, the data shows that the target hybrid professional development led participants to apply strategies such as visuals, direct vocabulary instruction, sentence frames, learning-by-doing, and modified graphic organizers. These examples highlight the importance of intentionality when planning and incorporating strategies for young multilingual learners.

Connections to Young Multilingual Learners

When prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals have intentional time to plan together, they can amplify their lessons to better support multilingual learners. Planning together

led to the intentional use of different strategies throughout the instructional day. When teachers plan together, they are consistent in providing scaffolds and strategies to aid in providing access to materials. Through this use of ELD strategies, students are more engaged, actively participate in whole-group settings, and are excited about learning.

The findings also suggest that, with intentionality and the use of more ELD strategies, multilingual learners have access to their grade-level curriculum. Students benefit when modified graphic organizers scaffold materials and lessons, and total physical response is used as a tool to develop vocabulary. Also, using collaborative conversations, such as talking with your elbow partner, or turn-and-talks, increases student-to-student discourse. Lastly, incorporating sentence frames allows students to practice oral language using correct grammatical structures and helps with their confidence and vocabulary development.

Bonus Themes: Lack of Professional Development Opportunity and Benefits of Hybrid PD

While the study primarily explored how hybrid professional development impacted educators' instructional practices, two additional themes emerged during the analysis process: 1) lack of professional development opportunities and 2) benefits of a hybrid professional development. These themes are connected to the problem of practice and ensuring equitable instruction for prekindergarten multilingual learners.

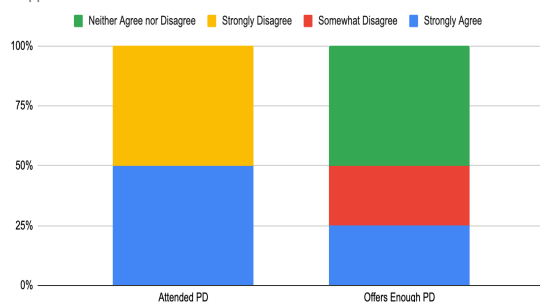
Lack of Professional Development Opportunities

Within the PATH school district, professional development centered on instructing multilingual learners is currently limited for prekindergarten educators. While I anticipated a need for more professional development on the instruction of multilingual learners, the need for paraprofessionals to have access to ELD professional development emerged as a recurring theme in the data. That gap in professional development for paraprofessionals suggests a potential

inequity in capacity building that may influence prekindergarten instructional practices. The primary driver for this study is building pre-k educators' capacity to work with multilingual learners, with another driver focusing on creating more professional development opportunities that target strategies for working with multilingual learners. The study's presurvey revealed a gap in professional development focused on MLs for prekindergarten paraprofessionals. Figure 21 shows the response to the pre-survey questions connected to professional development.

Figure 21

Pre Survey: Pre-K Educators' Perception of Professional Development for Supporting MLs



Both teacher participants strongly agreed with the statement, *I have attended professional development on instructing multilingual learners*, while both paraprofessionals strongly disagreed with the statement. Prekindergarten teacher, Ms. Elloway, was required to obtain Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) certification at a previous school, which provided previous knowledge about working with multilingual learners. She stated,

At a previous school, [School Name], we all had to be SIOP certified, and it has something to do with language, and for me, it was essentially, like, the special ed courses I had taken in college, so I fall back on a lot of that stuff. (Ms. Elloway, focus group, January 14, 2026)

Prekindergarten teacher Ms. Meadows participated in training on using visuals to support the environment. During the empathy interview, she shared, “Professional Development has

generally been centered around visual supports for the classroom environment to support the forms of communication that multilingual learners can use in lieu of the spoken English language” (December 27, 2025). Visuals were evident during the pre-observation, including alphabet charts, center signs, classroom procedures, student work, and anchor charts, as well as during her small-group work. However, neither paraprofessional received any type of training or professional development. This finding relates to data that originally informed the study, where a paraprofessional responded to post-professional development evaluations stating it was their first PD, “This was my first PD as a paraprofessional. I learned a lot, and I hope to integrate it into the class” (anonymous, March 18, 2025). Also, in the empathy interview, Ms. Brinley stated, “Other than what the early childhood center sends out and gives you, you know, pointers or handouts, I haven’t been trained yet” (empathy interview, October 13, 2025). Ms. Winsbury responded to the same question concerning professional development, “I don’t think so, not that I remember. I mean, I don’t think so with the ELD students in pre-k. No” (empathy interview, October 14, 2025). This data highlights the gap in professional development for paraprofessionals, suggesting that without targeted training, paraprofessional support for multilingual learners may be inequitable, potentially limiting instructional effectiveness and impacting student learning outcomes. Even during the focus group discussion, the lack of previous PD experience surfaced when discussing the challenges of a hybrid course,

Like I said, I'm new to it, so the terms and the acronyms sometimes go over my head trying to understand. Like, the reading comprehension, just for me, was a little more than I was used to. And so I don't have a lot to fall back on. (Ms. Brinley, focus group, January 12, 2026)

Although this theme falls outside the primary research questions, it remains important because it reveals inequities that may affect the quality of language and literacy supports and connects to the problem of practice: *current prekindergarten language and literacy practices that are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten*. Paraprofessionals work with pre-k students one-on-one, in small groups, and in whole group settings. Paraprofessionals also attend the creative art classes and support students throughout the day. It is essential to provide them with the tools and training needed while they work with linguistically diverse students during the instructional day. During the pre-observations, it was confirmed that paraprofessionals play an active role in instruction, as both paraprofessionals were working with students. Ms. Winsbury moved from center to center to engage and support students at the different center activities and redirect students (“Don’t take it. Ask, can I use it?”) while Ms. Brinley facilitated a small group activity at the observation center with three students who were drawing and describing different pumpkins and gorges. This demonstrates their essential role in classroom instruction despite limited professional development on working with young multilinguals. In connection with NPDCI’s conceptual framework for professional development, prekindergarten paraprofessionals are missing from the "who" and "when" when the "what" focuses on multilingual learners. When further investigating professional development opportunities for prekindergarten paraprofessionals, a PATH early childhood instructional specialist shared with me, “Yes, paraprofessionals may attend after-school PD, including Math training, C4L curriculum training with Kaplan, and Cognitive ToyBox training. They are also encouraged to complete the Science of Reading training” (Joy Patterson, personal communication, February 10, 2026). What is lacking here is professional development on working with linguistically diverse students.

Benefits of Hybrid Professional Development

This theme captures participants' feedback on the value and responsiveness of the hybrid professional development course. Consistent with Puette (2016), who studied high school educators working with multilingual learners who received professional development through a Canvas course, the participants in my study also describe convenience, flexibility, and access to resources as benefits of the hybrid Canvas course. This finding suggests that flexible, convenient professional development promotes greater willingness and supports teachers' learning beyond the school day. Participants' viewpoints offer insight into how hybrid professional learning can be beneficial and support educators working with young multilingual learners. The data can provide valuable insights for the design of future professional development in the PATH school system.

All four participants shared sentiments about the convenience of participating in hybrid learning. This was evident in the focus group discussions. For example, Ms. Meadows described how, despite a busy schedule, she was able to engage in the asynchronous materials and then return to them for a deeper discussion during synchronous learning.

First, I want to say it was convenient, because I just find, um, that hybrid or coursework in general, with, uh, the busy schedule that occurs during a school year. Um, it makes it more convenient to be able to access the material and then kind of circle back and have discussions about it. So that was good. (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026)

Similarly, Ms. Winsbury commented directly on the synchronous Zoom session as a mother of four, reinforcing the hybrid course's convenience.

I prefer hybrid. I prefer it this way. I'm a mom of 4 children, and it's back, my oldest comes out of her school at 4.15, I'm making it, like, around 5-ish home. So, yeah, I like it.

I like it so far, even though sometimes I'm kind of a little behind with work, but uh, yeah,
I prefer this way. (Ms. Winsbury, focus group, January 14, 2026)

The emphasis on convenience aligns with Powell & Bodur's (2019) work with high school teachers and suggests that a hybrid professional learning opportunity is viewed as a favorable model for participants. While both participants reported that the structure allowed them to engage with the material, it was also suggested that there is a conflict between time and completing work.

Flexibility of the hybrid course was not the only convenience discussed. Participants also emphasized the importance of how materials were organized and aligned to the curriculum. “I loved the access to the resources. And having things in one place to refer back to is a key component of any course, um, let alone a hybrid course. So, that also was very, uh, convenient and helpful” (Ms. Meadows, focus group, January 12, 2026). Along with the convenience of having access to resources and materials, the type of resources provided convenience, as Ms. Elloway noted:

I do like how you used our curriculum, too, though. Um, there's a lot of PDs that I've gone to that will use parts of the curriculum. But in my opinion, not enough. So it did really help with, like, even though it was extra time, it was extra time being put to good use, that I would have spent lesson planning anyway. (Ms. Elloway, focus group, January 14, 2026)

Including resources that support the curriculum in both synchronous and asynchronous materials connected to Desimone (2009) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), essential characteristics for improving teacher practice by providing materials that are content-focused.

The participants also provided insightful feedback on how to improve the hybrid model. These suggestions can make future professional developments more successful. When designing the asynchronous Canvas modules, I provided a suggested time for the entire module. Time is a challenge for teachers, as Ms. Winsbury shared; she is busy with four children, and Ms. Elloway stated:

I enjoy it, but it's often hard for me, once I get home, to continue to do work. I kind of shut it off when I go home. I'm not used to doing more work. I haven't done classes like this in a while. So, for me, it was really, as you know, it was hard for me to keep up and do things after the workday. (Ms. Winsbury, focus groups, January 14, 2026)

While participants favor the flexibility of a hybrid course, they struggle to balance after-school responsibilities with the desire to disconnect from work after the school day. With time constraints and the need to complete asynchronous work, participants suggested chunking the time to make it easier to view videos and complete the materials. Ms. Winsbury shared,

It would be cool if we have, like a less time for the modules to watch, because then maybe when we are eating lunch, we can, you know, if it is 10 minutes long, we can just munch as we listen, and we get ahead of the modules and have a little at a time of work, because it's very hard to get time after work, or even during a workday. (Ms. Winsbury, focus group, January 14, 2026)

This feedback suggests that participants prefer shorter, chunked modules to allow them to engage during the workday. Shortening or chunking modules does not reflect a lack of interest in the material but rather a need to better design the course structure and materials to align with participants' workday and workload. It is important to note that the PATH school system moved

to more evening professional development sessions to support educators' transition back to the classroom following the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The rationale behind the shift to evening professional learning was based on the national educator shortage as well as the lack of substitute coverage. Daytime professional learning was gradually permitted based on the district's needs/priorities around Math and RELA (Science of Reading) initiatives. Daytime professional learning is still only permitted on a needed basis and per Chief-level approval. The timing of this shift to evening PL [professional learning] coincided with the return of educators to the classroom following the pandemic. (PATH Program Coordinator, personal communication, November 21, 2025)

While the shift to evening professional learning addresses systemic concerns such as staffing and substitute shortages, participants' feedback in this study highlights a need to revisit how and when professional development is provided within the PATH school system. Evening professional development may no longer support educators' capacity to meaningfully engage in professional development after the school day.

This feedback suggests that hybrid professional learning resources are seen as beneficial tools. Participants appreciate resources that are easily accessible, usable, and connected to their curriculums. In other themes, participants reflected on their use of the resources. When resources align with curriculums participants can apply them directly to their instruction.

Conclusion

This study began with a problem of practice in the PATH school system, as current prekindergarten language and literacy practices are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten. While this study's small sample size provides detailed descriptions of

the experiences and thoughts of a small number of both teachers and paraprofessionals regarding their work with young multilingual learners, it does not allow for generalizable information on the impact of instruction following hybrid professional development. This information, however, provides insight into how to design a professional development course that meets the needs of our early childhood educators. In this narrative inquiry, four prekindergarten educators share their experiences participating in a hybrid professional development course focused on supporting young multilingual learners. Participants suggest that after completing the hybrid professional learning, they developed an understanding of second language acquisition concepts such as the silent period and the affective filter. The findings also suggest that hybrid professional development focused on multilingual learners can shift educators' perceptions of them. Greater awareness fostered instructional confidence, creating opportunities for participants to reflect on interactions with students and to plan and intentionally instruct their multilingual learners.

This study is relevant and timely, as early childhood classrooms serve increasing numbers of multilingual learners. The PATH school system does not provide direct ELD services to multilingual learners in prekindergarten, but it aims to improve supports and instruction for them, and our prekindergarten multilingual learners should be included. By examining a hybrid professional development model to support prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals, the study's findings can provide insight to inform future professional development designs within the school system.

Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be noted when interpreting the findings. First, the small sample size of 4 participants across 2 schools within a large school system limits the

generalizability of the findings. Both Evergreen and Cedar Hill Elementary are located in the northern part of the PATH school district. With PATH's diverse communities, identified themes may not represent patterns among other prekindergarten educators located in different regions of PATH. Also, participation in the study was voluntary, which may have led to higher motivation among some participants. I did not gather participants' intentions or goals for participating in the study, which could have clarified their motivation. The study also included only prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals and did not include perspectives from kindergarten teachers, administrators or central office personnel from the Early Learning Office, ELD Office, or Office of Professional Learning and Leadership. Kindergarten teacher perspectives could provide additional data on how young multilingual learners enter kindergarten and provide input on kindergarten readiness. My participant selection also limits insight into how hybrid professional development is perceived by other stakeholders, such as central office staff, who are at the forefront of creating, organizing, and facilitating professional development for PATH educators.

Another limitation in the study is my data collection process. While I used multiple data sources in the collection process, including interviews, surveys, and a focus group, participants' responses varied in completeness and depth. Some participants provided more detailed reflections, while others responded with limited or incomplete responses to reflections or survey questions. I also collected anonymous responses to the reflections in the asynchronous course and to the pre/post surveys, but the focus group and interview participants were identified. Since I was inconsistent about whether the data sources were anonymous or identifiable, the depth of honesty and sincerity may have varied across the data sources.

Although I set specific deadlines for reflections and surveys, participants did not adhere to them. A few reflections and surveys were not completed, despite multiple reminders and

attempts to collect the data, resulting in an incomplete picture. Some participants also shared more during the focus group discussion, making their voices more noticeable in the data. Responses may have been influenced by the group dynamics and peer validation. Also, it was shared that it was difficult to re-engage once the workday was over; scheduling interviews, synchronous sessions, and focus group discussions all after the workday could have impacted responses.

The original intention and focal point of my study was oracy, but due to time constraints and the organization of my course materials, I only addressed the concept of oracy during the synchronous session. During the focus group discussions, participants reflected on the content of the asynchronous course (SLA and strategies) but not on the synchronous course, and noted that they did not have time to implement the resources, which led to the creation of the second PDSA cycle. Furthermore, through PATH's IRB policy, I could not collect student data, which would be crucial to understanding this concept in this study.

Implications

The findings of this study highlight how hybrid professional development focused on instruction for young multilingual learners can influence teachers' awareness of second language acquisition, mindset shifts, instructional decision-making, and instructional confidence in early childhood classrooms. These findings have implications for hybrid professional development that supports both prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals working with their young multilingual learners.

These findings imply that professional development centering on supporting young multilingual learners should be available to both prekindergarten teachers and, especially, paraprofessionals. Educators who understand second language acquisition are better informed in

making instructional and pedagogical decisions (Zepeda et al., 2011; Dias et al., 2023). The findings also suggest that greater awareness, peer dialogue, and validation foster confidence when working with young multilingual learners.

An important related implication, based on participants' reflections, is that hybrid courses and professional development opportunities are more meaningful when connected to the curriculum. Participants described appreciation for resources and a desire to implement them (which led to PDSA cycle 2). Teachers find value in having resources that support the curriculum easily accessible. Providing resources with strategies allowed participants to reflect on how they may impact their students. When young multilingual learners are taught using strategies appropriate to their language learning and age, they can develop the skills necessary to succeed in school (Gillanders et al., 2014).

Another implication is that teachers and paraprofessionals need time to co-plan. The findings showed an inconsistency across the school system in planning time. At Cedar Hill Elementary School, prekindergarten teams have no intentional planning time together, whereas at Evergreen Elementary School, the teacher and paraprofessional plan together once a week. When prekindergarten teams can plan together, they show greater intentionality in incorporating strategies for young multilingual learners. Taken together, these implications offer opportunities to strengthen instruction for young multilingual learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, in connection with the problem of practice that shaped this study, *current prekindergarten language and literacy practices that are not equitably preparing young multilingual learners for kindergarten*, there are several recommendations to strengthen professional development for prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals working

with young multilingual learners. First, paraprofessionals work with students in a variety of ways but often have limited access to professional development focused on working with multilingual learners, and therefore need additional training. Paraprofessionals are encouraged to participate in a variety of professional development on curriculums and content areas such as math and reading, especially the Science of Reading. PATH leaders should intentionally include prekindergarten paraprofessionals in professional development focused on multilingual learner instruction. Providing equitable learning opportunities for prekindergarten paraprofessionals can promote the use of strategies to support young multilingual learners. Since our classrooms are linguistically diverse, all paraprofessionals should be equipped with strategies for working with these students.

Along with providing professional development for instructing multilingual learners, collaborative planning for teachers and paraprofessionals should be offered. Participants reported limited time to plan, or that planning is often rushed at the end of the day. When teachers and paraprofessionals collaborate, they can be more consistent in implementing strategies. It is recommended to review schedules to provide options for schools to add pre-k teacher and paraprofessional team planning at least once a week, while remaining in compliance with the student-teacher ratio.

Improvement science is a continuous cycle. As we continue to explore language and literacy inequities, participants shared that the hybrid model is convenient and that asynchronous learning opportunities provide flexibility, while also benefiting from the dialogue and reflection during synchronous sessions. The PATH school system should also consider the design of hybrid and asynchronous professional development. The feedback indicated that teachers prefer quick, short, and chunked content with suggested times, so they can move flexibly through

asynchronous materials to better align with their busy schedules. The findings showed that participants valued professional development directly connected to their curriculum, with resources that support it. Another recommendation is to revisit daytime professional development opportunities; participants shared that evening professional development was less effective, as they had ended their workday and then needed to engage in PD amid competing demands. Consider scheduling synchronous sessions during systemic PD days or during collaborative planning sessions.

Given current budget constraints, a recommendation for the PATH school system that would have minimal impact on the budget is to provide bite-sized, targeted professional development and resources for working with multilingual learners via websites and tools already used by PATH central offices. For example, both the ELD and Early Learning offices have websites. One suggestion is that the ELD office create a webpage specific to prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals. On this webpage, information and resources could be posted, such as short videos that model strategies, SLA presentations, and tips for amplifying curriculum lessons using the key ELD strategies. This page could be linked directly to the Early Learning Offices website. This would provide prekindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals with asynchronous materials to engage in. Offering quarterly office hours would give prekindergarten educators a chance to reflect and ask questions about resources with an ELD expert, replacing a synchronous session. Another budget-friendly alternative would be for the ELD office to collaborate with the Early Learning Offices to provide tips and resources for the Early Learning Office's weekly newsletter. Again, office hours or an opportunity to set up an appointment for prekindergarten teachers and paraeducators would be available to ask questions about resources posted in the newsletter. While adding resources to a newsletter and creating a webpage with

resources is not a hybrid model, the newsletter and webpage can provide asynchronous learning on working with young multilingual learners.

Collectively, these recommendations address the problem of practice by strengthening access to professional development, supporting collaborative planning, and promoting equitable preparation for teachers and paraprofessionals working with young multilingual learners in prekindergarten.

Final Reflection

Improvement science focuses on developing and testing a change idea, and using PDSA cycles to test that ‘change idea’ to address a problem of practice, which would ultimately lead to meaningful change. I set out to explore how teachers modify lessons and describe hybrid professional learning to make instruction more equitable for our youngest multilingual learners. I wanted all my data to show grand changes in instruction and student performance. I wanted to identify a clear change for the PATH school system to implement right away. My data told the story of awareness, shifts in perspectives, intentionality and confidence.

I started this paper with a quote, “*Change is only another word for growth, another synonym for learning*” (Handy, 1995). I did observe a *change* in the form of *learning*. I saw a change when one participant shifted from a deficit mindset toward a student after learning about second language acquisition. *Change* occurred as participants advocated for team planning time after learning it could be done. *Change* happened when the participants tried new strategies and saw students eager to participate. *Change* happened as participants reflected on the course. Change is *growth*, and I hope that by sharing what I *learned* in the stories and reflections from this study, others may also experience *change*...through *learning*. And with *change* comes *improvement*!

Appendices

Appendix A

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Workgroup on English Learner Recommendation 6

RECOMMENDATION 6: IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LEARNERS

Maryland has no policy or procedure in place for identifying and serving English learners enrolled in public PreK programs. To ensure early childhood education and childcare programs are responsive to the experiences and needs of English learners, **Maryland should adopt:**

- i. A standardized, comprehensive method for identifying, collecting, and sharing information about young English learners that is required across all LEAs and childcare providers.
- ii. A statewide plan for supporting young English learners in PreK and early childhood settings that provides guidance, service models, and strategies for meeting their instructional needs and family engagement.

Note: Maryland State Department of Education. (2022). English Learner Workgroup Final Report

Appendix B

Early Childhood Curricula and Models

Figure 1: Early Childhood Curricula and Models

	Founder and location	Concepts/Key Elements/Features
Montessori	Maria Montessori San Lorenzo, Italy (1907)	● Trained teachers ● Multiage classroom ● Use of Montessori materials ● Children directed ● Uninterrupted work periods/free choice
Waldorf	Emil Molt, Berta Molt Rudolf Steiner Stuttgart-Uhlandshöhe, Germany (1919)	● Focus on child development ● Individual/Each child is unique ● Whole Child ● Integration of art and nature ● Active Learning
Forest	Ella Flauau Denmark (1952)	● Located outdoors ● 6 Principles ○ Long-term ○ Leadership ○ Holistic learning ○ Risk ○ Community ○ Nature
Reggio Emilia	Loris Malaguzzi Reggio Emilia, Italy (1963)	● Emergent Curriculum ● Educators as collaborators and co-learners ● Environment ● Collaboration (teacher, families, community, and child) ● Documentation
HighScope	David Weikart Michigan, United States (1970).	● Perry Preschool Study ● Evidence-based practices/ ● Active learning/learning by doing ● Learning environment ● Routines ● Adult-child interactions ● Assessment (observation)

Appendix C
PATH 7 Key ELD Strategies

SEVEN ELD LINGUISTIC SUPPORTS

1

VISUAL

Pictorial and graphic presentations of information



2

SENTENCE FRAMES

Syntax structures that support students' speaking and writing skills



3

LEARN BY DOING

Real-life, hands-on, interactive activities and experiences



4

DIRECT VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Explicitly teach content and academic vocabulary



5

COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

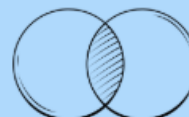
Purposeful and sustained conversations about content topics



6

MODIFIED GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Graphic organizer with ELD supports



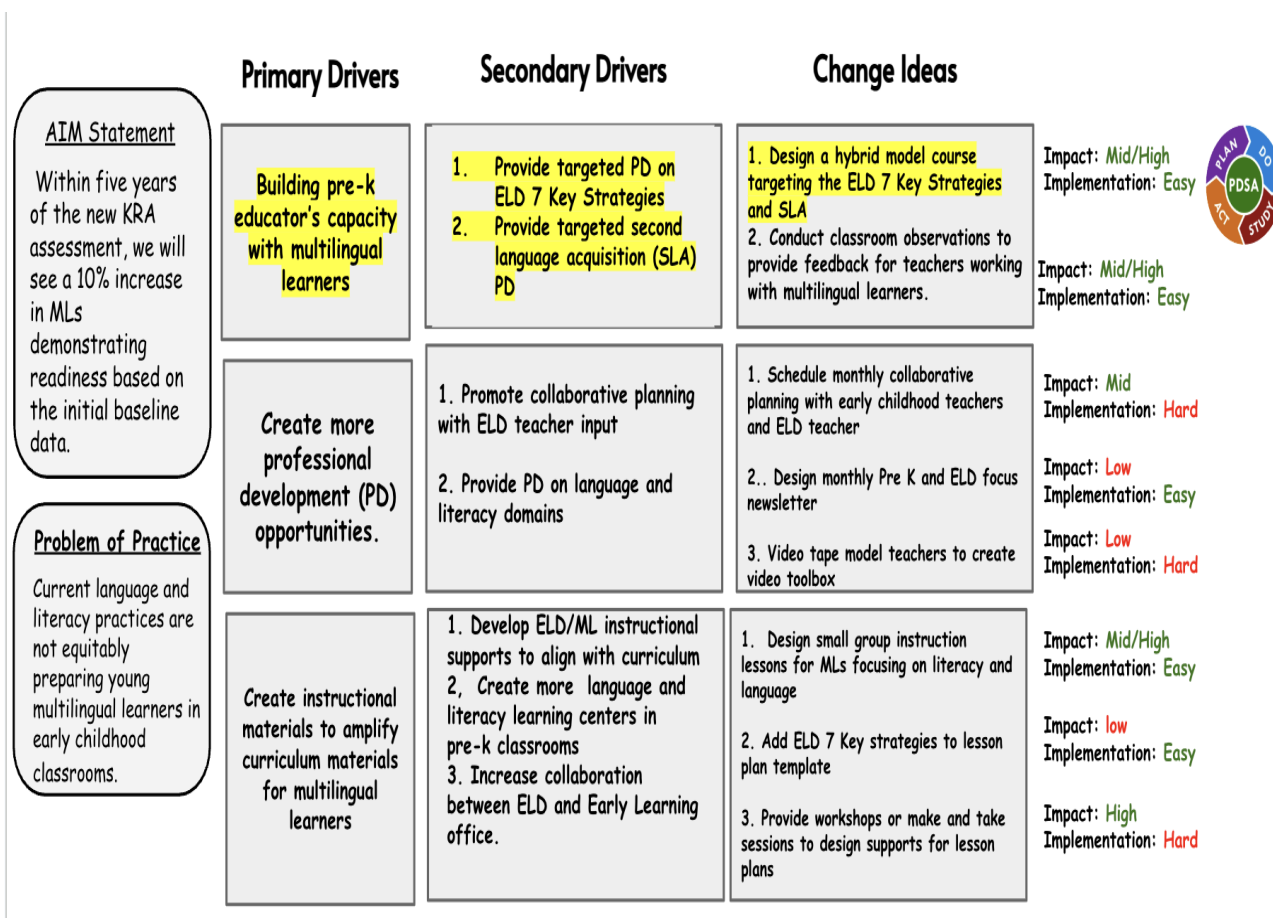
7

BUILDING/ACTIVATING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Activating and building upon students' prior knowledge on a particular topic to prepare for new learning



Appendix D Driver Diagram (Zanghi, 2024)



Appendix E

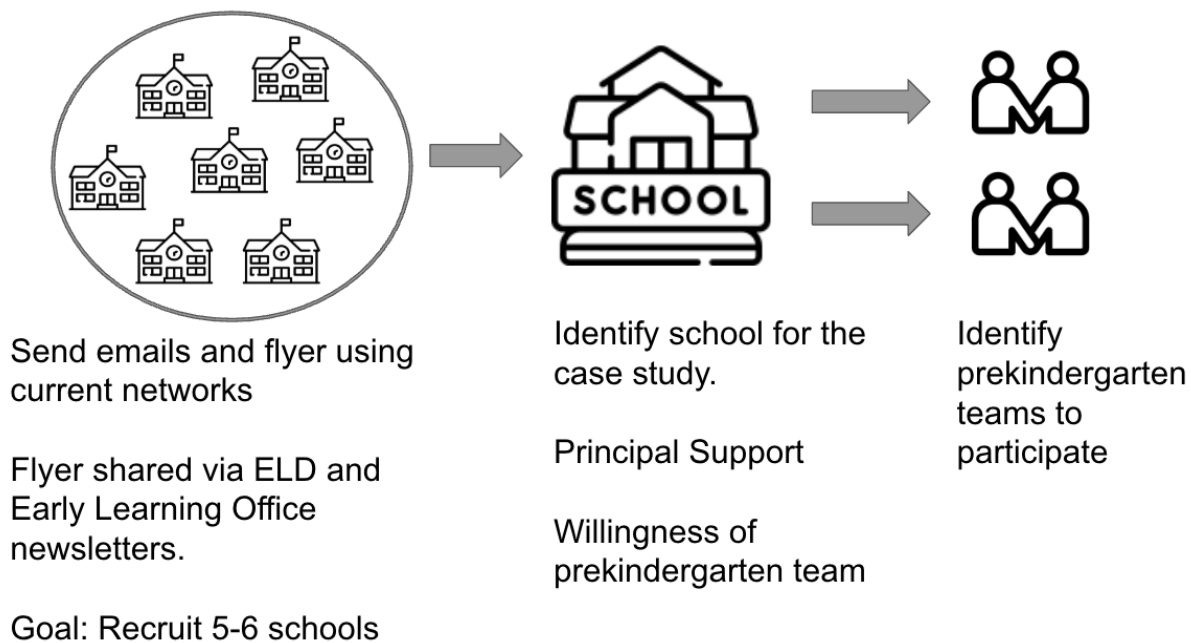
PDSA Cycle Planning Document

1) PLAN Details: Describe the who/what/where/when for the test. Include your data-collection plan.			
Who: pre-kindergarten teachers & pre-kindergarten paraprofessionals What: Hybrid Model Canvas Course Where: Schools TBD/ Coursework will be completed at a location convenient for participants When: Course Design Completed by September/ Participants can complete course between Oct- Dec			
Questions: Questions you have about what will happen. What do you want to learn?	Predictions: Make a prediction for each question. Not optional.	Data: Data you'll collect to test predictions.	
How do teachers/paras feel about working with young multilingual learners?	I predict teachers are unprepared to work with their multilingual students.	Empathy interviews, pre course surveys (Previous PD evaluations)	
How do prek teachers/paras perceptions about working with young MLs change after completing a hybrid model course?	I hope that educators will feel more prepared and have a bank of strategies to pull from.	Empathy interviews, post course surveys, focus group discussion, course reflections	
How do prek teachers/paras instruction change for young MLs change after completing a hybrid model course?	I predict that teachers begin to intentionally plan to support MLs. I also hope classroom environments will show evidence to support MLs.	Empathy interviews, post course surveys, classroom observations, focus group	
Can targeted hybrid model courses impact instruction?	I hope to see teachers trying different strategies or evidence on lesson plans	Focus, post course surveys, reflections, classroom observations	

Source: Midler, S., & Lorr, B. (n.d.). *A Digital Guide to Improvement Science*. Continuous Learning. <https://nycdoeishandbook.org/>

Appendix F
Recruitment Process

Recruitment through Purposeful and Convenience Sampling



(Zanghi, 2025)

Appendix G

Recruitment Flyer

The flyer is titled "PRE-K TEAMS NEEDED!" in large, bold, black and red letters. It features decorative bunting and starburst graphics at the top. Logos for the University of Maryland and Prince Georges ELD are visible. The flyer is divided into sections: "WHO CAN PARTICIPATE" with a bulleted list of eligibility criteria, "WHAT IS THE STUDY" with a paragraph about the research, "WHY PARTICIPATE" with a bulleted list of benefits, and a "QUESTIONS" section with an email address. A QR code and a link to a survey are also included.

PRE-K TEAMS NEEDED!

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

- Full-time pre-k teachers and pre-k para teachers/teams
- Employed at a PGCPs school
- 18 years of age or older
- Have at least 4 MLs (as identified by the Home Language Survey) in your class class.

WHAT IS THE STUDY

Pre-kindergarten multilingual learners do not receive English Language Development services. This study aims to explore how hybrid professional development can impact instructional decisions when working with MLs. Eligibility will be confirmed through a short survey. Visit the webpage to learn more about the study:

CLICK HERE!

[Click or scan here to complete an interest form.](#)

WHY PARTICIPATE

- Learn strategies to use with young multilingual learners
- \$40 Gift Card for participating in the study
- Certificate of Completion (Credit hours listed)
- Engage in 8-hour synchronous and asynchronous PD over a course of 4-5 months!
- Engage in reflective practices

QUESTIONS

pzanghi@umd.edu

Appendix H Recruitment Survey Questions

Recruitment Survey Questions

Thank you for your interest in the study, Little Voices, Big Language: Exploring How Pre-K Educators Adapt Instruction for Multilingual Learners through Hybrid Professional Development. Please take a minute to complete the interest survey.

All applicants will be notified of the selection results via email, whether selected or not. If not selected, all data will be deleted and not used for any research purpose.

1. Name
2. Email Address
3. Phone number
4. What is your preferred method of contact?
5. What is your current school?
6. What is your current role?
7. How many multilingual learners are enrolled in your class?
 A multilingual learner is a child learning more than one language at a time/or a student who has a language other than English listed on the home language survey
8. How many years have you been working with prekindergarten students?
9. Are you willing to participate in a hybrid model professional development course? This will include asynchronous modules, synchronous sessions, observations, and a focus group discussion.
10. Part of this research includes a pre- and a post-observation. Are you willing to be observed?

Note: Questions will be added to a Qualtrics Survey

Appendix I

Survey Questions

Likert Scale: Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and
Neither Agree nor Disagree

Pre	Post
● I have attended professional development on instructing multilingual learners. ● The county offers enough training for teachers to support linguistically diverse students. ● My multilingual learners participate in class. ● When lesson planning, I intentionally plan for multilingual learners. ● I have strategies to support young multilingual language learners. ● I add linguistic supports to curriculum materials. ● I understand language development phases.	● When lesson planning, I intentionally plan for multilingual learners. ● I have strategies to support multilingual learners. ● My multilingual learners participate in class. ● I add linguistic supports to curriculum materials. ● I gained new knowledge from the hybrid course. ● Other teachers and paraprofessionals would benefit from a hybrid course. ● I can explain language development phases. ● Any additional comments**

Appendix J

Empathy Interview Questions

Pre-Empathy Interview

- Tell me about your experience working in prekindergarten classrooms.
- Describe how you lesson plan.
- Share a story about a challenge you have faced when working with young multilingual learners.
- What do you notice about how your multilingual learners react to read-alouds?
- What do you find to be the biggest challenge when implementing the curriculum for your students, especially your multilingual learners?
- Can you share a story about a strategy you use that impacted your multilingual learners?
- What do you think pre-k teachers and paraprofessionals need more of to support multilingual learners?

Appendix K

Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe your overall experience in this hybrid course?
2. What aspects of the hybrid format worked well for you? What was challenging?
3. Which activities (online or in-person) helped you learn the most, and why?
4. What part of your instructional day did you use the strategies most?
5. Can you describe a time when you incorporated one of the strategies with multilingual learners and the results?
6. What successes and challenges did you encounter when using the 7 key ELD strategies with multilingual learners?
7. Describe how your participation in the hybrid professional development cycle has influenced the way you modify your lessons.
8. What is one specific change you plan to make in your instruction as a result of the course?
9. What aspects of the course could be approved upon?
10. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix L

Guidelines for Directing Observations

Compte & Preissle, 2003, p. 199

1. *Who* is in the group or scene? How many people are there, and what are their kinds, identities, and relevant characteristics? How is membership in the group or scene acquired?
2. *What* is happening here? What are the people in the group or scene doing and saying to one another?
 - a. What behaviors are repetitive, and which occur irregularly? In what events, activities, or routines are participants engaged? What resources are used in these activities, and how are they allocated? How are activities organized, labeled, explained, and justified? What differing social contexts can be identified?
 - b. How do the people in the group behave toward one another? What is the nature of this participation and interaction? How are the people connected or related to one another? What statuses and roles are evident in this interaction? Who makes what decisions for whom? How do the people organize themselves for interactions?
 - c. What is the content of participant's conversations? What subjects are common, and which are rare? What stories, anecdotes, and homilies do they exchange? What verbal and nonverbal languages do they use for communication? What beliefs do the content of their conversations demonstrate? What formats do the conversations follow? What processes do they reflect? Who talks and who listens?
3. *Where* is the group or scene located? What physical settings and environments form their contexts? What natural resources are evident, and what technologies are created or used? How does the group allocate and use space and physical objects? What is consumed, and what is produced? What sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures are found in the contexts that the group uses?
4. *When* does the group meet and interact? How often are these meetings, and how lengthy are they? How does the group conceptualize, use, and distribute time? How do participants view the past, present, and future?

Appendix M

Observation Note Sheet

Notes: The template was designed based on Guidelines for Directing Observations, LeCompte & Preissle (2003)

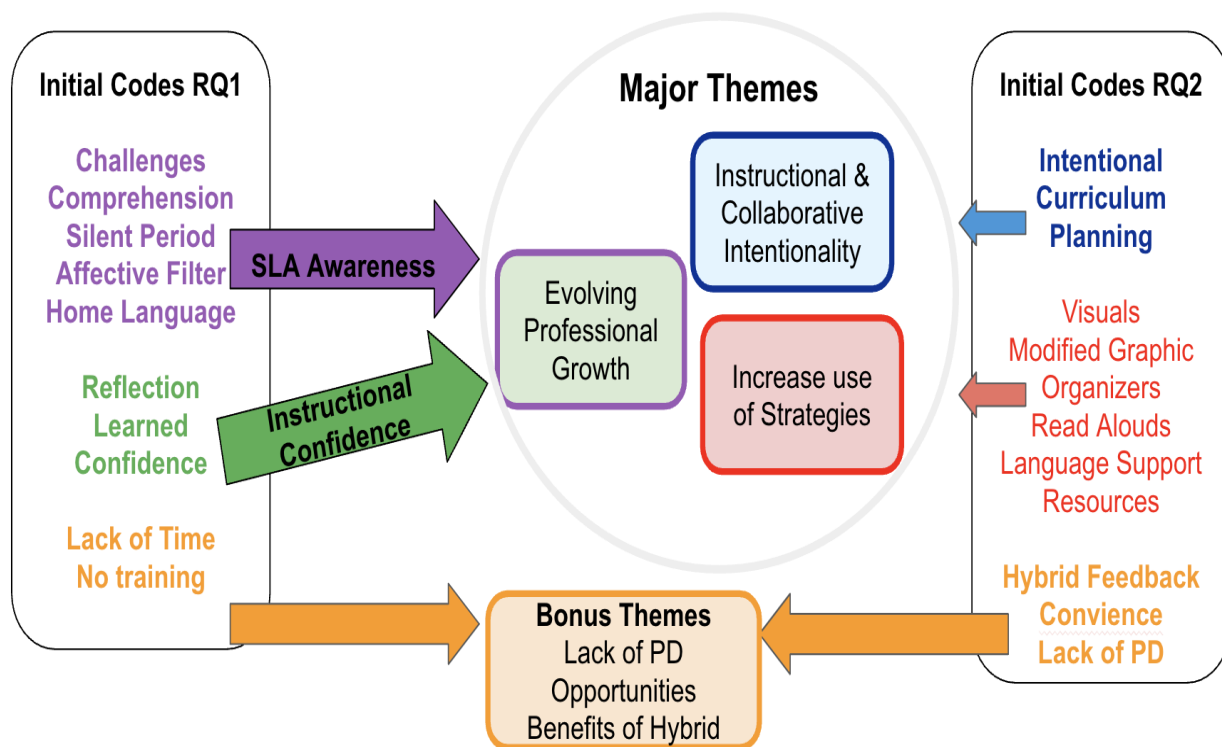
Site:	Observation #	Date:	
Research Question(s)			
 When When does the group meet and interact? How often do they meet?	Observations Notes Start Time: End Time:	Questions Wonderings	Additional Notes
 Who Who is in the group?	How many students? _____ Class Description		
 Where Where is the group located? What physical setting form their context? What technology is being used? What sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures found in the context that the group uses?			

Page 1: LeCompte & Preissle (2003) Guidelines for Directing Observation

Site:	Observation #	Date:
 WHAT? What What is happening? What are the students doing or saying? What behaviors are repetitive? What resources are used? What is the content?		
 Reflections		

Page 2: LeCompte & Preissle (2003) Guidelines for Directing Observation

Appendix N Coding Process



Appendix O

Course Overview

Course Title: Little Voices, Big Language: ELD for Pre-K Educators and MLs

Module 1: Overview of ELD (Approximately 30 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the PATH ELD program.
- Gain an understanding of WIDA Can Dos for Early Learners and how it connects to DLLs in their class

Topic 1: PATH ELD

(7 Keys included)

Topic 2: WIDA Early Years

Reflection:

What is one new concept you learned, and how did it shift your previous thinking?

Module 2: Deep Dive into Second Language Acquisition (Approximately 30 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Understand key theories and models of second language acquisition
- Understand the stages of second language acquisition

Topic: Understanding Theorist

- Universal Theory, Behaviorist Theory, Nativist Theory, Cognitivist Theory, and Social Interactionist Theory

Topic: Stages of second language acquisition

- Pre-production, early production, speech emergent, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency

Reflection:

Share about a time you worked with a student in one of the stages of SLA? What challenges and/or successes did you have working with this student?

Module 3: Strategies to Support Young Multilingual Learners (Approximately 60-75 minutes)

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Identify and define the seven key ELD strategies
- Reflect and develop an action plan to incorporate key strategies.

Topic: Visuals and Modified Graphic Organizer

Topic: Sentence Frames

Topic: Building Background Knowledge and Direct Vocabulary Instruction

Topic: Collaborative Conversations

*Learn by doing will be discussed within each strategy

Reflection: Share about a time you were successful using one (or more) of these strategies? What challenges do you have with young multilingual learners that the ELD strategies could better support language development?]

Synchronous Session Professional Development (1 hour)

Objective: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Annotate curriculum lesson plans to intentionally add ELD supports

Topic: Amplifying Lesson Plans with additional ELD supports

Assignment: Choose one lesson from an upcoming unit. Annotate the lesson plan to add the ELD supports.

Reflection: How did annotating the lesson plan change the way you thought about instruction for multilingual learners?

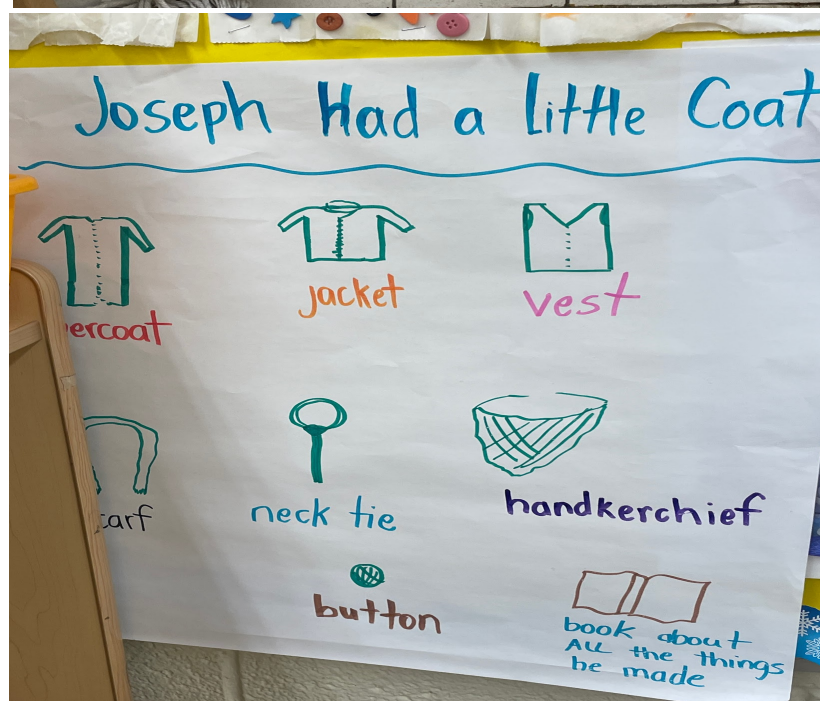
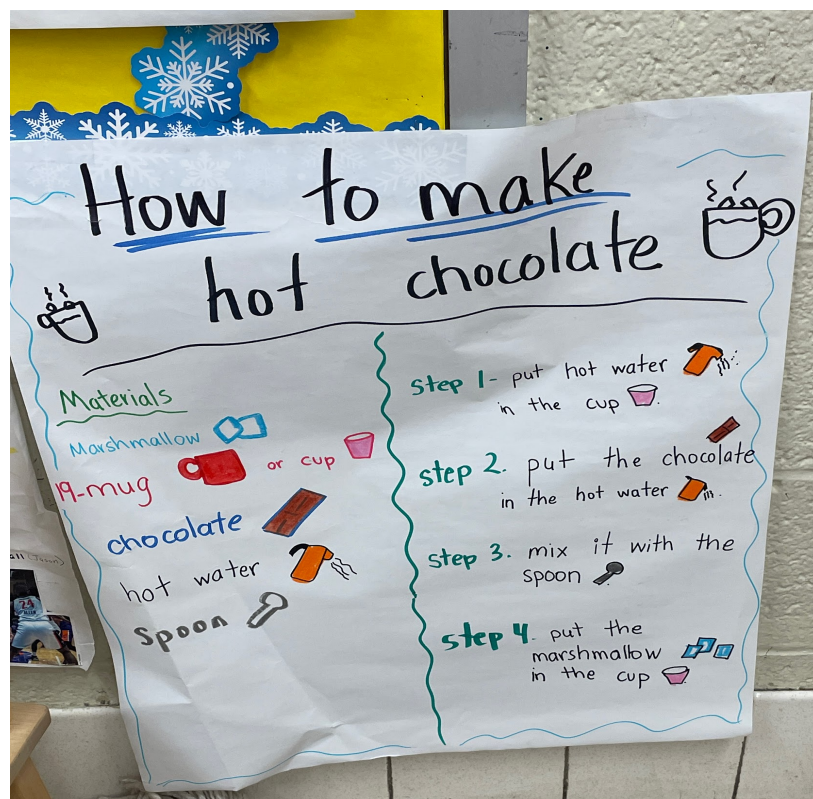
Synchronous Session: Focus Group (1 hour)

Objective: By the end of this session, participants will:

- Engage in a discussion to share their experiences with the hybrid course
- Reflect on teaching practices related to the hybrid course
 - Can you describe a time when you incorporated one of the strategies with multilingual learners and the results?
 - What is one specific change you plan to make in your instruction as a result of the course?
 - Did you notice any changes with your multilingual learners when using strategies?
 - What part of your instructional day did you use strategies the most?
 - What aspects of the course could be approved upon?

Appendix P

Classroom Visuals- Post-Observation



Appendix Q
Classroom Visuals- PDSA 2

What is a museum

Know

a crocodile
dinosaur
a mouse
bird
fish
shark
car

Want to know

Want to know about elephants

- a mouse

- a mouse

We want to learn about dinosaur

- a duck

What is an exhibit?

I Learned

A museum display or show us an Exhibit.

Eddie is an elephant.

Learned mouse - elephant are characters.

Who visit the museum?
Elephant
squirrel
Duck
Mouse

Exhibits we see
Trex
birds
bugs
mammoth

Charlie is the alligator.

Tallulah is the duck in the story.

Things we do.
- draw / paint
- play with puppet
- sing

Exhibit is a collection display in a museum.

Cynl is a squirrel

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Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools Division of Academic (n.d) *PATH EDUSkills*

Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools Office of Professional Learning & Leadership

(2024) *2024-2025 Professional Course Catalog*

Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (2024) *PATH Administrative Procedure*

5111.1

Admission to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade Retrieved:

[https://www.PATH.org/offices/ograc/administrative-procedures/students--](https://www.PATH.org/offices/ograc/administrative-procedures/students--5000/ap-5111.1---admission-to-pre-kindergarten-kindergarten-and-first-grade)

[5000/ap-5111.1---admission-to-pre-kindergarten-kindergarten-and-first-grade](https://www.PATH.org/offices/ograc/administrative-procedures/students--5000/ap-5111.1---admission-to-pre-kindergarten-kindergarten-and-first-grade)

Pinecrest Area Township Heights Public Schools (2024) *PATH Administrative Procedure*

5111.3

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