ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation:	HOW PRE-K TEACHERS SUPPORT THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF FOUR EXEMPLARY TEACHERS
	Christina M. Budde, Doctor of Philosophy, 2020
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This multi-case study uses an ecological theory of language learning (van Lier, 2004) as a lens to examine the teaching practices of four highly-effective teachers of young Dual language learners (DLLs). Young DLLs are children who are learning two languages, simultaneously developing their primary language and acquiring a new language. Analysis of over 150 hours of classroom observations, teacher interviews, and classroom artifacts illustrate how teachers skillfully drew upon a repertoire of instructional practices during both planned and spontaneous teaching moments to intentionally target the language and literacy development of young DLLs.

High-quality instruction linked to positive language and literacy outcomes for pre-k children likely provides a foundation for effective teaching practice for young DLLs. However, high-quality instruction must be enhanced to meet the linguistic and

academic needs of children acquiring English as an additional language. Findings

include the detailed and descriptive analysis of the enhanced set of practices and

corresponding micro-practices teachers used with-in and across their pre-k contexts to

support their young DLLs' language and literacy development. Additional analysis

of teachers' reflection of their practice, offers insight into how teachers perceived

their work with young DLLs and elucidates particular experiences that teachers

believed helped to shape their current teaching practice.

       Implications and suggestions for teacher education, classroom practice, and

research on developmentally appropriate practice (NAEYC, 2019) are discussed.

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DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A MULTI-
CASE STUDY OF FOUR EXEMPLARY TEACHERS

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to G.B, and J.B- never stop reaching for your dreams!

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Approximately 23% of young learners, ages birth through eight years in the United States, are estimated to be dual language learners (also referred to as English language learners, English learners, and emergent bilinguals; Barnett et al., 2016). Thus, understanding the specific learning needs of young children acquiring English as an additional language has become a critical issue for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Drawing upon the work of Gutierrez, Castro, and Zepeda (2010), I define young dual language learners (DLLs) as children, aged birth to five years who are in the process of developing their first language, as they simultaneously or sequentially learn a second (i.e., English). I focus in particular on the needs of young DLLs to better understand what effective instruction might entail. This research is critical because young DLLs in the United States are one of the fastest-growing student populations, yet they remain largely understudied (August & Shanahan, 2008; Gutiérrez, Zepeda, & Castro, 2010). Limited empirical research at the pre-k level leads policymakers and educators to draw conclusions for young DLL education by extrapolating implications from studies of older DLLs or monolingual English-speaking pre-k children. Indeed, "little attention [is given] to the particular developmental demands associated with acquiring two languages and becoming literate in the early years" (Gutiérrez et al., 2010, p. 335). Additionally, the majority of early childhood teachers are English-dominant speakers who may not speak another language and who have received limited professional development in ways to support their young DLLs' academic

and socio-emotional development (Sawyer et al., 2017). Merely five programs[1] (in four states) require early childhood teachers to have any special qualifications preparing them for the challenges of educating young DLLs (Barnett et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, policymakers are receiving increased pressure to fund more early childhood programs to support a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Since 2001, the number of children attending pre-k programs that receive state funding has doubled 700,000 to 1.5 million (Barnett et al., 2017). When looking at national data, state funding allocated to early education has increased by more than 560 million dollars in 2015-2016 from the previous year (Barnett et al., 2017). Decades of research confirm the benefits that high-quality early childhood programming can have for young children's academic and social-emotional development, (e.g., Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Gutiérrez et al., 2010; Reardon & Galindo, 2009; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Yet, funding preschool programs without fully understanding the specific learning needs of *all* children enrolled in these programs can be economically and academically consequential. Considering what is known about the long-term positive benefits of high-quality early education on a child's later academic success, there is a need to understand better how to support the learning and development of young children attending programs receiving federal and state funding. To adequately prepare teachers to meet the needs of an increasingly linguistically diverse population in preschool programs around the nation, more research is needed to better understand optimal instruction for young DLLs.

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[1] Some states allocate funding to multiple Early childhood programs. For example, California has two programs that provide services to young children, Transitional Kindergarten which began in 2012 as a result of the state's Kindergarten Readiness act of 2010 and California State Preschool Program (CSPP) resulting from the California State Preschool Program Act which consolidated several early childhood initiatives into one funding stream.

Statement of the Problem

The present study focuses on teachers of DLLs in pre-k for two reasons. First, the job of pre-k educator is unique within early childhood education (i.e., birth through age eight). Pre-k is an important transitional and preparatory year before kindergarten that often serves as a bridge between home literacy practices and school practices. For many children, pre-k is the first experience participating in a formal learning environment. Pre-k teachers are responsible for teaching early literacy and language skills to children while tasked with designing interactive, engaging, hands-on lessons that hold the attention of four and five-year-old children (Neuman & Roskos, 2005). Pre-k teachers also help young children develop social-emotional skills such as relationship building, communicating, regulating strong emotions, sharing, and taking turns, which are essential skills for sharing learning spaces with peers (NAEYC, 2009). Second, the growth of compulsory pre-k and free or universal public pre-k around the country calls for increased attention to the expansion of these programs by understanding how to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population attending such programs (Valentino, 2018). The job of pre-k teacher becomes quite challenging when tasked with educating children who speak different languages and socialize in culturally unique ways.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Years of research confirm the benefits that high-quality early childhood programming has on young children's academic and social-emotional development, (e.g., Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Gutiérrez et al., 2010; Reardon & Galindo, 2009; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Similarly, a large body of research has examined the practices that support the content and language development of older DLLs in elementary school and beyond. Scholars have

offered several frameworks or approaches to describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers who are effective at teaching older, school-aged DLLs (e.g., Bunch, 2013; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2011, 2013; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Peercy et al., 2019). Each framework differs slightly in perspective, but all emphasize the impact a teacher's understanding of students' language development and cultural identity has on the effectiveness of instruction. What teachers should know varies across frameworks depending on the researcher's linguistic perspective (i.e., opinions of SLA theory and how learners acquire language). However, each draws upon a similar theoretical orientation of language learning as a social activity and focuses on what teachers should *know* and *be able to do* when teaching DLLs. A concern with the frameworks mentioned above is their focus on DLL education in grades K-12. Research evidence for pre-k DLLs is missing instructional approaches and practices that teachers use to target the specific learning needs of young students acquiring more than one language (Buysse et al., 2014).

On a practical level, the present study contributes to the field of early childhood and DLL teacher education by investigating what exemplary pre-k teachers *know* and *do* when teaching young DLLs. In addition, this research offers support for teacher educators' understanding of the unique challenges and difficulties that pre-k teachers encounter when teaching young DLLs so that they can design teacher preparation coursework to better prepare future teachers for the reality of teaching young DLLs in pre-k.

The present study builds upon the research on school-aged DLLs by using an ecological framework to examine teaching and learning in pre-k. The ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2010) explores relationships of many kinds in and across settings and systems as a way to examine relations and processes between learning and the environment (van Lier,

2010). Thus, in the classroom, a child's literacy and language development are shaped through the relationships that exist between various organisms in that environment; the child, the teacher(s), the other students, *and* the physical context and semiotic tools available in the classroom. The current study uses an ecological framework to complement existing research in pre-k that emphasizes the role the physical environment can play on the language and literacy development of young children (Guo, Justice, Kaderavek, & McGinty, 2012). Additionally, by using an ecological framework, the current study supports the examination of programmatic factors that affect teacher practices (e.g., teachers' prior learning/teaching experiences, parental and community engagements, standards used for student evaluation, required curriculum, languages spoken by students, professional development provided).

The goals of the present study are twofold: to better understand the teaching practices of exemplary pre-k teachers of young DLLs, and to examine how contextual factors contribute to the practices teachers use to support language and literacy development of young DLLs as perceived by teachers, both within and across program types. Accordingly, this study will address the following two research questions and subquestion:

Research Questions

1. How do pre-k teachers, identified as exemplary, support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs?

2. What unique practices manifest in different pre-k settings in the study?

3. How do teachers in the study talk about and reflect on working with young DLLs?

    3a. What challenges did teachers share about working with young DLLs?

Definition of Key Terms

It is important to clarify a few terms to understand how I use terminology in this study.

Affordances: An affordance supports or inhibits an opportunity for a learner to interact with the environment. An affordance can be physical (e.g., the relationship that exists between a reader and a textbook), social (i.e., the relationship that exists between teacher and learner), or symbolic (i.e., the relationship between a learner and the "unspoken" rules that govern a classroom) (van Lier, 2004).

Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP): Evidence-based practices suitable for teaching children from a variety of backgrounds at a given stage/age-aligned with research on development, learning, and teaching (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Early childhood education (ECE): early education and care provided to children ages birth- 8 years old (NAEYC, 2009).

English-dominant speaker: A person who may or may not have learned more than one language, but is more proficient speaking in English than in any other language. For example, a young adult whose home language is English, but he/she studied Spanish in formal (i.e., school) context. Although the individual can speak at varying levels of proficiency in the two languages (i.e., English and Spanish), he/she is more proficient in English and chooses to speak in English the majority of the time.

Equity: The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2019) defines equity as "The state that would be achieved if individuals fared the same way in society regardless of race, gender, class, language, disability, or any other social or cultural characteristic. In practice, equity means all children and families receive necessary supports in a

timely fashion so they can develop their full intellectual, social, and physical potential" (p. 17). However, I want to acknowledge that equity is much more complex than this definition. There is scholarship in the field that believes suggesting that individuals should "fare the same way" is based on homogeneous and monolingual assumptions that gloss over cultural diversity. Monk's (1990) notion of "vertical equity" helps us understand how equity can apply to different populations within a community. He writes, "implicit in the equal treatment of equals standard is a willingness to accept the unequal treatment of unequals" (p.37). In an educational context, equity is a highly complex and contested notion that indicates if students have the resources they need to be successful. However, the specific needs and distribution of resources will be different for specific segments of the population, such as DLLs versus monolingual English speakers. Murphy (1988) asserts that simply providing students with access to resources or 'supports' like teachers and curriculum as "insufficient" (p. 146). Murphy reminds us that the *quality* of those resources accounts for more than access alone.

Exemplary teacher: An in-service teacher who formed the purposeful group in the present study. These exemplary teachers were identified by their supervisors as teachers who were effectively supporting the language and literacy development of their young DLLs. An exemplary teacher serves as an example of what highly-effective teachers of young DLLs *do* and *know*. The teachers in this study serve as exemplars and therefore are not meant to be representative of the entire pre-k teacher population.

Home Language: A language that is spoken in the child's home. Also known as the primary or first language (L1).

Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-k): early learning classroom that serves children ages four-five the year before they enter compulsory schooling (i.e., kindergarten). Curriculum typically

focuses on school readiness skills, including early literacy and mathematics, as well as socio-emotional development.

Program Type: refers to the specific type of pre-k program where education and care are provided for children. Programs in this study include public, head start, and private pre-k settings. Further detail can be found in Chapter 3: Methodology.

Young Dual Language Learner (DLL): children (typically aged 0-5 years) who are still in the process of acquiring their first language, as they simultaneously or sequentially learn a second (e.g., English) (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Gutiérrez et al., 2010). There are many terms used to describe children who are young DLLs. Other terms used by scholars include English Language Learner (ELL), English Learner (EL), and Emergent Bilingual (EB). Labeling a diverse group of children consisting of unique individuals is problematic for a variety of reasons, including identifying a child according to a single characteristic. However, for this study, I chose to use the term young DLL not because it is perfect but to highlight the unique value it displays by announcing the child's acquisition of more than one language at an early age.

Conversely, the word emergent can be defined as coming about unexpectedly. Bilingualism is not an unexpected outcome when a child is learning more than one language. Likewise, the terms ELL and EL focus on a child's capacities or lack of English. In early childhood classrooms where English is the target language, all children are developing English language skills (Tabors, 2008).

Organization of Following Chapters

In chapter 2, I explain the conceptual framework that guided me as I reviewed literature that focuses on practices that promote the language and literacy development of young children with a specific emphasis on young DLLs. I also examine how previous research has discussed second language acquisition for young children. In Chapter 3, I describe how I designed a multi-case study of four pre-k teachers in three different preschool settings. In Chapter 4, I illustrate the contexts of each program—the teacher, the students, and the classroom environment- thus beginning my findings from this study. In Chapter 5, I report my findings. Finally, in Chapter 6, I review central concepts and illuminate implications for research and practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review, I discuss the theoretical and empirical research that serves to guide my proposed study. I use the ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2004, 2010) to frame my review of the literature and to address the following questions: What do we know about how teachers support the language and literacy development of DLLs, and more specifically how do early childhood teachers support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs? To address these questions, I organize this chapter as follows: In the first section, I discuss ecological theory (van Lier, 2004) to conceptualize second language learning and teaching and discuss key tenets that are relevant to DLL early childhood education (ECE) classroom practices. I also review studies that have used ecological theory to examine teaching practices in second language classrooms. In the second section, I focus on language development in young children, specifically focusing on the differences between first and second language acquisition in young children. In the third section, I identify significant contributions of the field for instructional practices and contexts supporting the language and literacy development of young DLLs and gaps in our knowledge. In the fourth section, I discuss research in ECE that has recommended effective literacy teaching practices for young children, focusing on developmentally appropriate practice. In the fifth section, I review literature that supports teaching practices for DLLs in pre-k, and I suggest ways that research could be strengthened using an ecological theoretical lens. The final section provides a summary of the reviewed literature and implications for the present study.

Theoretical Framework

The current study draws from an ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2004). Ecology, in the broad sense of the word, is the study of the relationships that exist between organisms in an environment or ecosystem. Ecological linguistics examines how learning language allows people to relate to other people and objects in their environment. Educational linguistics examines language use, function, and learning in education (Spolsky & Hult, 2008). By combining ecological and educational linguistics, van Lier (2004) found he could examine the relationship between language use and development within the school environment. Kramsch and Steffensen (2008) explain,

> A keyword in ecology, whether in the life sciences or in linguistics, is holism. A holistic approach to linguistics implies that language is not studied as an isolated, self-contained system, but rather in its natural surroundings, i.e., in relation to the personal, situational, cultural, and societal factors that collectively shape the production and evolution of language, ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically (p. 18).

With this conception of language ecology, it follows that language development occurs because of the interactions a learner has with his/her environment.

This dissertation operates from an ecological lens of language learning (van Lier, 2004) to better understand my research questions since the environment is such an essential factor in early childhood education, which I will describe in more detail when I review the literature on DLLs in early childhood education. In ecology, elements within the environment are viewed as interrelated. Ecology of language, then, sees language learning as **dynamic**, **interactive**, **contextual**, and **holistic** instead of a linear process of skill-building (Järvenin, 2009). By examining the interrelatedness of elements in the classroom, I can study the synergy of the

teaching and learning work that goes on in a given environment, such as the relationships that exist within the actions and activities of teachers and learners.

Previous research in ECE with DLLs has studied pieces of an environment to analyze them in detail. For example, in a study similar to the present study, Kelly (2015) used a sociocultural framework to examine how four preschool teachers used language-support practices to support the English language development of Hispanic[2] DLLs. She specifically examined the teachers' use of scaffolding as a way to promote interactions between the child and teacher and across peers. Although she aimed to study "the language environment in which DLLs were developing their English" and how teachers supported learning, the study of the environment was narrow by focusing only on scaffolded interactions within the environment (Kelly, 2015, p. 3). van Lier (2010) argues that, however useful this may be, such research can obscure the nature of the teaching-learning relationships that occur within the classroom environment. The ecological perspective is "concerned with quality of the educational environment and the learning opportunities it affords" (van Lier, 2004, p. 224).

van Lier (2004) describes language ecology as a way of thinking and not a model of pedagogy. He writes,

> It is a way of thinking about teaching and learning in all its complexity, a way of looking
> at language as a tool of many uses, and as a key component of all human meaning-
> making activity. It envisions classrooms as busy workshops with lots of activity and
> learners who have things they want to accomplish, and who, with the help of teachers,

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[2] Kelly (2015) uses the term Hispanic to describe the children in her study, but she does not provide a definition of how children's ethnicity was determined.

fellow learners, and other sources of assistance, find the tools they need to achieve their goals (p. 224).

With that in mind, an ecological approach of language can be used to examine the learning process, the actions of teachers and learners, and the complex nature of interactions and language use as an interdependent network within an environment (van Lier, 2010).

van Lier (2010) posits that by using an ecological perspective of language, researchers can better understand the interconnectedness of theory of language and meaning with the practice of teaching and learning by studying how the significant characteristics of ecology affect the organisms in an ecosystem. Those ecological characteristics include relationships, context, quality, and agency viewed from a critical perspective; described in more detail below (van Lier, 2010). The interconnectedness between each of these characteristics is a delicate balance within the ecosystem where language learning occurs. "Pull one string, metaphorically speaking, and all the others will move in response" (van Lier, 2010, p. 4).

Characteristics of the Ecological Approach that Focus on Dual Language Development in Early Childhood Education

An ecological perspective offers a lens to understand the balance of characteristics found in an ecosystem as they pertain to second language acquisition in the context of early childhood. To articulate how this balance contributes to this study, I offer an illustration of the ecological characteristics identified by van Lier for all language learners that have a particular focus on second language acquisition in early childhood learning environments; "relationships, context, quality, and agency" (van Lier, 2010, p. 3). Below I describe each of the four characteristics as they relate the particular context of this study (i.e., young DLLs in early childhood education).

1. *Relationships.*

An important concept central to the ecological perspective of language learning is that of *affordance*, the *relationship* between an organism (i.e., the learner) and the environment (i.e., the classroom) (van Lier, 2004). An affordance, as developed by Gibson (1979, as cited in van Lier 2000), is an opportunity for a learner to interact with the environment. An affordance can be physical (e.g., the relationship that exists between a student and the physical description of the classroom), social (e.g., the relationship that exists between teacher and learner), or symbolic (e.g., the relationship between a learner and the "unspoken" rules that govern a classroom). When a learner notices an affordance available in his/her environment, that is an initial step towards meaning-making (van Lier, 2008). However, the individual must make use of the affordance through interaction and engagement. Otherwise, the affordance is simply a piece of the environment. Using available affordances facilitates meaning-making; that is how an individual makes sense of his/her environment.

Hahn and Rodriguez-Kaarto (2015) used ecological theory combined with a cognitive theory to design a systemic approach to language learning for intermediate-level, adult learners acquiring Finnish as an additional language. An ecological approach to second language learning relies on making meaning from the interactions with other organisms in the environment. The researchers' found that by using an ecological perspective to complement their existing cognitive view of language learning, they could create modules where students could interact with native and non-native Finnish speakers. Previously, modules lacked interaction between language learners and native speakers. Allowing relationships to develop in a life-like setting (i.e., shopping at a clothing store) while working in an online environment afforded the learners

opportunity to make meaning in Finnish from the interactions with the people and things (e.g.,

physical objects like tools, artifacts, and signs and the social, historical, cultural practices like the

unspoken rules of behavior) in an environment. The inter-relational design of the computer-

based language-learning program filled an existing gap in the learning experience of adult

Finnish language learners. Although this study examined how adult learners who can mediate

attention to learning, interact with their environment, and use the affordances in the environment

to support second language learning, there is an important connection to my proposed study.

Typically, humans, regardless of age, form relationships with the organisms (i.e., people and

non-living things) within their environment (van Lier, 2000). Through these relationships and

affordances, language learning occurs. For young children, these relationships are particularly

valuable to education.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recognizes that

when children have the opportunity to build trusting, positive relationships with adults outside of

the family, such as their teachers, they develop social and emotional competencies that promote

learning and achievement (NAEYC, 2009). Furthermore, NAEYC asserts that "by providing

positive models and the security and confidence to try new experiences and attempt new skills,

such relationships [teacher-child] support children's learning and the acquisition of numerous

capabilities" (NAEYC, 2009, p. 13). To build relationships as recommended by NAEYC, the

context where relationship-building occurs is just as important.

2. *Context.*
An affordance occurs between a learner and something in his/her environment. That

something can be physical, social, or symbolic. The early childhood classroom environment

provides a *semiotic budget* (van Lier, 2007), where the learner engages in meaning-making

activities, often collaboratively with others. In this case, semiotic refers to meaning-making, and budget signifies the resources available to support learning. Learning is the result of the accessibility of the classroom environment. This environment includes the physical resources in the room used to support learning (e.g., classroom labels, literacy centers, number lines, vocabulary word-picture word walls, etc.) in addition to the teacher-student and peer interactions (i.e., relationships) that occur through structured (e.g., teacher assigned partner tasks), informal (e.g., parallel work that inspires conversation) and spontaneous (e.g., transition times) language events.   In the early childhood context, the environment, if adequately created by the teacher, can invite and enable the learner to become an active participant in his/her learning. I will discuss the significance of how a classroom is organized to support language and literacy development in section five of this literature review.

3. *Agency.*

van Lier defines agency as a movement or changes an organism makes to grow and flourish (van Lier, 2010). When considering agency in learning, a learner's *motivation*, *investment*, and *autonomy* are essential factors to think through (van Lier, 2010). Sociocultural researchers use the term investment in combination with motivation because investment shows how motivation is not an individual characteristic of a learner but rather is co-constructed in the learning context. Investment is mutually created between teachers, learners, and the affordances or constraints in the environment (Darvin & Norton, 2016). Norton's construct of investment posits that a language learner has many complex identities that take different forms across space and time and are influenced by systems of power (Darvin & Norton, 2016; Peirce, 1995).

Therefore, the language practices and systemic rules that determine such rules and regulations of language of instruction, and representations of equality in the classroom.

Tabors' (2008) preschool-based study of DLLs aged 2.5-5 years found four factors that influenced young children's overall success in second language development: a child's motivation to learn and use English; exposure to English outside of the classroom; the age the child began learning English; and the child's unique, individual personality (i.e., willingness to take risks and try using a new language). According to van Lier (2010), a passive student will not learn because learning is inseparable from agency. An activity-centered context allowed children the choice to use the tools within their environment to support their language learning. To clarify, this means the learner is actively engaged in his/her learning. Active engagement includes interacting with teachers, peers, and resources/tools (i.e., toys, anchor charts, classroom libraries, etc.) in the classroom.

van Lier proposed a pedagogy to support agency, which he called *language as action.* van Lier and Walqui (2012) defined *language as action* where learners

> Engage in meaningful activities (projects, presentations, investigations) that engage their interest and that encourage language growth through perception, interaction, planning, research, discussion, and co-construction of academic products of various kinds. During such action-based work, language development occurs when it is carefully scaffolded by the teacher, as well as by the students working together.

As such, teacher action and student action are interdependent. Teachers using a *language as action* approach allow ample opportunity for learners to build and shape their own learning and understanding while working collaboratively or independently (van Lier, 2007). The

teacher's job is to carefully plan how she will scaffold learning to provide opportunities for meaningful interactions to occur while putting the focus on her students and not herself. In this language as action approach, language is authentically the message and the medium. The teacher acts as a facilitator or a guide, carefully leading her learners to academic success by creating a rich and complex literacy environment. The child's engagement in this thoughtfully designed environment makes use of the affordances available in the classroom, so that language learning happens.

    4. Quality.

The final characteristic of quality can be viewed as the sum of each of the parts. In other words, although van Lier separates quality from agency, context, and relationships, one characteristic is actually dependent upon the others. Thus, the inclusion of each characteristic is essential when thinking about the quality of the learning environment as a whole.

High quality is a common phrase used to describe the desired early childhood program. However, defining high quality can be open to a variety of interpretations. Typically, a high quality early learning environment includes the structure of the environment (e.g., class size, parental involvement, ongoing teacher education, and evaluation) and the processes used to support student learning (e.g., teacher-student relationships, developmentally appropriate curricula, opportunities for movement and play) (Burchinal, 2018; Castro et al., 2011). However, when considering quality from an ecological perspective, the teacher makes resources available to the child as a way to facilitate the child's actions towards the affordances that can further his/her learning goals. An ecological view asserts that the quality of student-teacher relationships supports the aligning of the child's capabilities or potential with the environmental supports that make learning possible (van Lier, 2007).

In early childhood classrooms, teachers frequently guide students towards meeting learning outcomes using a hands-on approach to learning. For example, during a science lesson, children might examine a basket full of vegetables using their five senses. In this activity, teachers introduce and use vocabulary needed to be successful with the project while modeling sentence structure and grammar usage. The lesson is intentional, where the avoidance of lecture and drill is developmentally appropriate. An ecological perspective views the language learner as "a whole person, not a grammar production unit" (van Lier, 2004, p. 223). Language develops and flourishes through the high-quality interactions and context the child has with his/her environment.

Summary. Employing an ecological perspective of language learning conceptualizes a "learning ecology" as interconnecting rather than separating an individual from their learning environment. Thus, in the classroom, a child's literacy and language development are shaped through the relationships that exist between various organisms in that environment; the child, the teacher(s), the other students, and the physical context and semiotic tools available in the classroom. The ecological perspective supports the focus on relationships in and across environments as a way to examine relations and processes between learning and the environment. Ultimately, in the classroom, teachers play an important role in a young child's development, often serving to facilitate relationships and create quality-learning experiences while developing student agency.

There is little empirical research on DLLs in ECE that use an ecological view of language learning. A recent publication used an ecological perspective of language learning to examine how bilingual preschoolers' agency influences participating in interactions with teachers and parents (Schwartz, 2018). However, to date, there are no other empirical studies that use the

ecological perspective of language learning to explore how young DLLs in pre-k interact within English-dominant classrooms to learn language, or to understand how contextual factors found in different programs constrain or afford language and literacy learning. My study expands the field using an ecological perspective of language learning amongst a population of young DLLs.

Language Development in Young Children

Children learn language(s) beginning at birth through observation, and later participation in communicative speech acts in their environment, depending on the language(s) present (Tabors, 2008). For the last decade, research has explored the complexities of dual language development; the role of first language development on second language achievement, and the cultural and social factors that influence language development (August & Shanahan, 2008; Espinosa, 2010; Genesee et al., 2005). From this research, we know that young children can learn more than one language, and the process does not confuse children or encumber their English development (Hammer et al., 2014).

Oral Language Development in the First Language

As children progress through the first three years of life, language development, regardless of language, follows many predictable patterns. Around five to eight months of age, children can produce recognizable sounds beginning with the production of monosyllabic sounds like ma, da, or ba followed at around one-year-old by words that contain open syllables like mama and dada (Tabors, 2008). Between twelve and eighteen months, most babies have said their first word or words. These words are typically words that are needed to accomplish a specific task. In English, these words include "up," "bye-bye," or "cookie" (Tabors, 2008). After

acquiring several words, children begin to apply a grammatical understanding to combine words like "Mommy, up" or "Cookie, please."

A child spends much of the first few years of language development fine-tuning the ability to recognize and use language in a variety of social environments for a variety of purposes. By age four, often without formal instruction, most children can ask questions, give commands, tell stories (real and imagined), and use correct word order and grammatical markers most of the time (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Indeed, early oral language is developed through sustained interactions (including listening and talking) with others.

Oral Language Development In Bilingual Preschool Children

The path of second language development in preschool children is similar among all children learning a second language after the age of three, regardless of the first language (Tabors, 2008). According to Tabors (2008), when children first begin school, they will either continue to use their home language or stop talking for some time, if that language is not supported in the school environment. During this time, the child will observe interactions between people in the school environment. At their own pace, children will begin to produce or express language by using key phrases and telegraphic speech. Soon, an informal fluency in the new language develops, which continues to grow over time into a sophisticated and fluent second language. The rate at which children move through each stage varies greatly depending on the individual. Furthermore, conversational language proficiency is fundamentally different from academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981), and it can take many more years for a young DLL to become fluent in the latter than in the former Cummins, 2017).

The path of oral language development, especially vocabulary, is not precisely the same for DLLs as for monolingual speakers (Castro, 2014; Hammer et al., 2014). Since bilingual children are learning vocabularies in two different languages either simultaneously or sequentially, understandably they are unlikely to achieve similar vocabulary development in one language at a similar rate as a monolingual speaking peer (McCabe et al., 2013). However, if both languages are considered, young DLLs may have a range of vocabulary similar to a monolingual speaking peer's vocabulary knowledge in one language.

Many researchers have studied the process of how bilinguals switch between languages when speaking, known as code-switching (Faltis, 1989; Macswan et al., 2017). Code-switching is a common strategy used by DLLs to draw upon their complete linguistic repertoire (e.g., vocabulary knowledge) when faced with an unknown word or thought in one language. Although few studies examine codeswitching in early childhood, Hammer et al.'s (2014) review concluded that those few studies showed that bilingual children (i.e., DLLs) follow similar patterns when codeswitching, just like bilingual adults. However, to communicate successfully, young DLLs must have a sophisticated understanding of how to combine their two languages in one utterance during speech production.

What is Known about DLLs' Language and Literacy Development

Previous research has argued that early literacy for young DLLs develops differently than for their monolingual speaking peers in three skills required for literacy acquisition; competence with oral language, understanding concepts of print, and metalinguistic awareness of phonological forms (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).   Research continues to explore the extent to which skill development differs for different learners based on factors

such as language(s) spoken, the age of the child when acquiring a second language, and curriculum approaches used during instruction (Barac et al., 2014; Bialystok, 2007). Research on the roles of language development of young DLLs is at the forefront of education policy in part to the formation of the National Center for Early Care and Early Education Research- Dual Language Learners (CECER_DLL). The center produced several key empirical and conceptual pieces that synthesized evidence-based implications for young DLL education. For example, Castro, Garcia, and Markos (2013) developed a conceptual framework that presents how children grow and mature as DLLs. The framework moves away from assumptions and expectations about young DLL development that are founded in mainstream/monolingual practices and posits that a child's development cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which language learning occurs. Research shows that young DLLs benefit when schools build upon and support their home language and literacy practices (Espinosa, 2010). Au and Mason (1981) found that when classroom literacy events reflected the interactions of Hawaiian native children's home practices (e.g., not waiting to be called on by the teacher, overlapping speech, students' deciding when to speak), the students demonstrated higher achievement-related behaviors during reading lessons including increased engagement, on-topic responses, and logical inferencing. These unique learning experiences or *funds of knowledge* that occur in the home, community, and previous school settings (whether in the US or abroad) contribute to the student's identity and sense of worth and can increase student motivation for learning.

DLLs, a Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Population of Learners

DLLs are diverse in many ways, including their family's countries of origin, language(s) spoken, immigration experiences, and demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status

and parents' highest level of education.   Those factors contribute to how a child learns a second language (i.e., English). For example, research has noted second language acquisition "to be related to the features of the languages, typological distance between languages, instructional context in which children learn and use the two language" (Barac et al., 2014, p.706), the child's proficiency in each language (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015) as well as a child's access to opportunities to hear both languages and interact with speakers of both languages in a variety of contexts (Castro, García, & Markos, 2013; Hammer et al., 2014). For instance, the relationship between writing systems (i.e., the child's first language and English) has an impact on the child's second language literacy acquisition. This relation is found for both an emerging ability with phonological awareness and on a child's developing concepts of print (Bialystok, 2007), a watershed event in a child's reading and writing development (Justice & Sofka, 2010).

Transfer between and across languages.

Findings suggest that many early language and literacy skills learned in a child's first language contribute positively to second (i.e., English) language and literacy development (Espinosa, 2010). For example, research posits that metalinguistic (Barac et al., 2014) and phonological skills (Ballantyne et al., 2008) transfer from one language to another. Such findings suggest that many early language and literacy skills learned in a child's first language contribute positively to second (i.e., English) language and literacy development (Espinosa, 2010).

Some myths and misconceptions incited concern that teaching a child in more than one language can be confusing or limit the development of the second language. However, research demonstrated an excellent potential for cross-linguistic transfer of many skills.   For instance,

phonics and vocabulary learned in the first language can support a DLL's emergent literacy in English (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015; Ballantyne et al., 2008). Additionally, young Spanish-dominant English learners benefit from direct instruction about the alphabet and letter sounds of each letter in both languages (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015). This instruction includes using primary language to scaffold the learning of new words (August et al., 2005). In one study, Mendez et al. (2015) found similar results as four earlier studies that DLL preschoolers acquired significantly more English vocabulary when they were taught vocabulary in both English and the home language than the children who were taught using English only (Mendez et al., 2015).

Summary. Early language development begins in the home with children observing and later communicating in the languages spoken in their environment (Tabors, 2008). During the preschool years, children experience rapid language development. Children move from speaking in simple sentences to participating in conversations with multiple back-and-forth exchanges to communicate ideas, share experiences and stories, and express emotions (Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006). Individual differences and familial factors, including the home language spoken, exposure to each language, and parent's educational background, can affect how quickly a child learns a second language (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015; Barac et al., 2014). Findings need to be carefully considered when attempting to generalize teaching practices across populations of DLLs since this population is not a homogenous group of learners.

High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Decades of research show that when three- and four- year old children attend one or two years of high-quality center-based education, the child's early language and literacy skills improve by kindergarten entry (Barnett et al., 2017; Barnett, 2011; Gormley et al., 2005). When

early childhood programs offer high-quality instruction, children are more likely to have long-term academic success across subject areas (Reardon & Galindo, 2009; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The language learned in early childhood serves as a foundation for understanding specific subject concepts like math and science in later years as well as for later reading comprehension development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). A national study found an increase in graduation rates and college attendance of children from the same family who attended Head Start compared to their siblings who did not participate in Head Start (Deming, 2009).

Although there is some disagreement on what features constitute high-quality education (Barnett, 2011), research has found several characteristics of high-quality early childhood education connected to positive language and literacy outcomes. According to the National Academies of Sciences (2017) report these characteristics include such factors as positive teacher-child relationships (NAEYC, 2009), intentional teaching of foundational skills (Burchinal, 2018), fostering school-home partnerships and family engagement (NAEYC, 2009), and the use of ongoing assessment to inform instruction and measure progress (Hyson, Copple, & Jones, 2006).

The National Association of Young Children (NAEYC) awards accreditation to early childhood education programs that provide evidence of meeting the associations' ten standards of quality (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). In addition to the characteristics of high-quality ECE mentioned above, to receive NAEYC accreditation, programs must demonstrate that teachers are qualified and responsive to student needs, that there is a reciprocal relationship established with the community to support student achievement and program goals, and that the physical space is safe, secure, and promotes the health and well-being of each child. NAEYC provides the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) framework to support programs in meeting those

rigorous standards and guide practitioners in supporting young children's growth and development. NAEYC (2009) suggests teachers consider three areas of knowledge when making instructional decisions: understand how children typically learn and develop to provide experience that will support children's learning and development progress; learn about each child's individual interests, abilities, and growth; and become acquainted with the children's families to learn about the values, expectations, and experiences to provide meaningful, culturally relevant education for each child.

The core considerations are represented in the framework across four age-appropriate sections. For the present study, I focus on the preschool years, ages three to five years since pre-k falls within this age-span. Due to NAEYC's widely accepted influence on early childhood education in the United States, the DAP framework is often at the core of high-quality early childhood education.

In the preschool years, the DAP framework stands on three domains for supporting this "vitally important period of learning and development" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 111). Those domains include physical development, social and emotional development, and cognitive development. With significant implications across all three areas are language and literacy development. Language and communication develop rapidly during the preschool years and dramatically influence a child's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Language and literacy development also plays a critical role in learning across all curriculum areas. The language development needed for later reading comprehension development is imminent for success across all subject areas, including science, math, and social studies.

Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood Education

Prioritizing social-emotional learning in pre-k is in line with current US guidelines for DAP in ECE (Beaty, 2014; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). According to the DAP framework, pre-k is a time for students to develop positive attitudes and behaviors about learning. These attitudes are related to the social and emotional development of young children. Social-emotional development includes such things as developing relationships with teachers and peers; making friends; and developing prosocial behaviors, a sense of self, emotional competence, and resilience while self-regulating aggressive and other challenging behaviors (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Promoting social-emotional development in pre-k has been linked to positive cognitive and academic competence in the later years (Denham, 2006).

Intentional Language and Literacy Instruction

The DAP framework encourages practitioners to view young children as active learners who construct language and literacy knowledge through the interactions and relationships available in their environment (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Similarly, it promotes language and literacy practices that create a caring community of learners, facilitates learning through movement, and plans for hands-on opportunities for learning, including learning centers and cooperative learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Hegde, Hewett, & Terrell, 2016). Research has recommended DAP to support early language and literacy development for *all* preschool children, including DLLs (August & Shanahan, 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Previous research has identified the following language and literacy skills as essential in the preschool years: oral language, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter and name writing, and print awareness (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

Oral Language (and Vocabulary) Development. Research has shown young children benefit from instruction that emphasizes oral language development, which includes vocabulary, grammar, semantics, and pragmatics of language use (Espinosa, 2010). Thus, research suggests that teachers use various strategies to promote oral language use and vocabulary knowledge throughout the day such as engaging children in sustained conversations, presenting new vocabulary words in contextually engaging ways, asking open-ended questions, and through dramatic play (e.g., Castro et al., 2011; Justice & Sofka, 2010; Silverman & Hartranft, 2015).

Alphabet Knowledge. Alphabet knowledge consists of the names, sounds, and symbols of the letters of the alphabet and is essential for learning to read and write. Children benefit from explicit instruction of alphabet knowledge delivered in cycles with time to review and practice previously taught and newly introduced letters (Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2012). Children who do not have a solid foundation of alphabetic knowledge are more likely to struggle with literacy learning (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

Phonological Awareness. Phonological awareness is the understanding of the spoken words without the presence of the written symbol. Phonological awareness is a metalinguistic skill where children use their knowledge of the sound system to manipulate sound units (e.g., phonemes, onset-rime) that make up words. Research posits that preschooler's vocabulary and phonological skills (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015; Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; Davison, Hammer, & Lawrence, 2011; Hammer et al., 2014) and productive and receptive syntactic skills (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008) are highly predictive of emerging literacy skills in the early elementary grades most likely because early literacy requires access to the phonemic structure of words as well as lexical knowledge (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008).

Name Writing and Early Writing Development. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) report found that name-writing skills produced significant correlations with later reading abilities such as decoding, reading comprehension, and spelling. Research recommends children learn to write through interactions with peers and adults through both formal writing instruction and activities focused on building children's alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness, and oral language in their early childhood years (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Likewise, research advocates that learning to write is supported through formal whole group instruction, small group interactions such as journal writing, dictation, shared or scaffolded writing, and by making writing materials available during centers and free play (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Guo et al., 2012)

Print Awareness. Before children can read, they must understand how print works. Justice (2008) found that when adults call attention to print by pointing to and tracking print and making comments about print and its purpose, children looked at print twice as often than when adults did not reference print. Since the frequency of how often children looked at print in books is associated with how much they know about print (Evans, Williamson, & Pursoo, 2008), the findings offer important implications for including print awareness into early literacy instruction.

Overall, findings suggest that instruction that provides children with experiences that build oral language, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, early writing, and print awareness skills are essential for language and literacy development in young children.

Fostering Home-School Partnerships.

A plethora of research emphasizes the school-family partnerships as essential for improving learning outcomes for all children (Billings, 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2009; Walker,

Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). NAEYC (2019) recommends that teachers establish a partnership with their students' families. NAEYC (2019) encourages teachers to meet with families early in the school year to learn about their hopes and expectations for their child's pre-k year and beyond. Additionally, NAEYC (2019) asserts that teachers should encourage parent involvement by offering options for participation to accommodate challenges many families face, such as hours of availability and child care or transportation issues.

Douglass (2011) examined school-family partnerships by identifying organizational-level factors that support or hinder family engagement. Douglass examined four preschool programs, two of which had high levels of family engagement and two with low levels of engagement. Using semi-structured interviews with 60 staff members, 20 hours of observation per program, and a document review, Douglass found that in the programs with high levels of family engagement, administrators modeled "democratic relations based on shared power and shared expertise," (Douglass, 2007, p. 7). On the other hand, she found the two programs with low levels of engagement exhibited a "conventional bureaucratic" (Douglass, 2007, p. 1) profile with little shared power. This study suggests that a preschool organization focused on relationship-building and shared power structures may build more effective, reciprocal relationships with families.

Implementing Ongoing Assessment.

Research has shown that pre-k children present a unique challenge to providing valid assessment results (Hyson et al., 2006). Young children develop so rapidly and episodically that data collected from an assessment administered weeks prior could no longer represent a valid measurement of competence or proficiency (Hyson et al., 2006). Additionally, a young child's

physical, linguistic, and cognitive capacity may hinder the ability to demonstrate or accurately represent their knowledge and skills. Furthermore, while pre-k children may be similar in chronological age, there are many factors that influence an individual's development. Such factors include length of time exposed to formal schooling and cultural values that emphasize different areas of growth of development (e.g., good behavior over alphabetic knowledge), thus affecting the reliability of an assessment to be generalized across different pre-k contexts and individual children. Therefore, research asserts that no single assessment can accurately capture what a child knows and can do (Hyson et al., 2006). Thus, the use of ongoing assessment can provide teachers with support in planning appropriate instruction, informing use of further diagnostic assessments for behavioral, emotional, speech, or cognitive impairments, as well as a tool to measure growth or progress over time.

Developmentally (in)appropriate practice. An impetus for including a discussion on developmentally appropriate practice in this literature review is the mandate for standardized testing, specifically at the third-grade level, which in turn has increased pressure on the earlier grades (P-2) to prepare students for such high-stakes testing. Alignment of standards is desirable in terms of consistency and flow of content and skills taught from one classroom context or grade level to the next, but at times competencies or tasks that are appropriate only for older children are siphoned down to younger students. The pressure to align standards that support proficiencies needed in later grades can lead teachers to incorporate practices that are not developmentally appropriate for young learners. Piaget, a profound contributor to early childhood education literature, believed that children progressed through stages of cognitive development. He asserted that only when children's thinking has matured enough to handle more complicated or abstract tasks and the child has moved through the previous stages were

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they ready for an increased cognitive load (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 93). Although Piaget's theory of cognitive development is contentious today for its fixed, static views of development, the notion that a seven-year-old in first grade is developmentally ready for many cognitive tasks that a four-year-old in pre-k cannot handle, still holds. For example, in the first grade, many children have gained increased fine motor control and early writing skills that allow them to perform small writing tasks using lined paper. In pre-k, where fine motor control and early writing are developing, children's writing may include scribbles or pictures as a way of communicating. Therefore, it would be developmentally inappropriate to expect a pre-K student to produce a sentence of written text (similar to the traditional writing expected in first grade). To support developmentally appropriate practice, The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; 2009) issued the following statement:

> Rather than relying on such downward mapping, developers of early learning standards should base them on what we know from research and practice about children from a variety of backgrounds at a given stage/age and about the processes, sequences, variations, and long-term consequences of early learning and development (p. 4).

The burden of standards is problematic for young children and can lead to questionable teaching practices such as excessive lecturing in a whole group format, use of skill-based worksheets, and tightly structured, fast-paced schedules that teachers must follow. This adherence to a strict curriculum is a catalyst for concern that early childhood classrooms are restricting valuable learning experiences such as time spent on social and emotional development, problem-solving, rich play, opportunities to collaborate with peers, outdoor/physical activity, and the arts (NAEYC, 2009). Furthermore, in this type of high-pressure classroom, children may not develop or feel a joy of learning that is often associated with early learning experiences, and research

investigating language learning using an ecological theoretical lens has been beneficial. van Lier (2008) argues, "Language learning begins with learning to perceive while engaging in language-related activity… activity...guides the perception of affordances, and the affordances themselves guide…further activity." (p. 61). Students involved in passive learning lack agency to seek out or engage with the affordances available in the environment, and learning can become a joyless task.

Critique of DAP concerning DLLs. To understand the practices that are effective for teaching young DLLs in pre-k, it is vital to understand the specific goals of pre-K. A developmentally appropriate pre-k program emphasizes social interaction, emotional growth, communication/oral language skills, and physical development (Sung & Akhtar, 2017). However, DAP (NAEYC, 2009) has been criticized for not doing enough to address the particular needs of young DLLs (Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, 2011). Specifically, the DAP framework lacks guidance for effective teaching practices of young DLLs (File, Mueller, & Wisneski, 2012).

Furthermore, the term "appropriate" incites a negative connotation that draws upon the hegemonic populations' definition of appropriate or "best" practice. Children belong to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and families, and what is considered "appropriate" for one child may not be viewed as "appropriate" by the family of another child. Therefore, what is developmentally appropriate might be considered as individualized support that enables a child to progress across developmental learning stages while considering the child's cultural and linguistic background as well as her/his social-emotional well-being. Presently, NAEYC is revising its 2009 position statement to provide a more equitable and individualized perspective

of DAP that recognizes the assets children bring with them to school and develops those assets to promote growth.

Summary. Research shows that many features of high-quality early childhood literacy instruction when taught using developmentally appropriate practice such as supporting oral language, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, early writing, and print awareness skills benefit most children's language and literacy development; thus, there is overlap between what is considered effective practice for non-DLLs and DLLs. (Downer et al., 2012; Espinosa, 2010; National Academies of Sciences, 2017). When early childhood educators utilize a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies (e.g., hands-on learning, learning centers, interactive read alouds, songs, and rhymes), they can effectively meet the needs of their students (NAEYC, 2009). However, this begs the question, given what we know about how DLLs acquire an additional language in comparison to their non-DLL peers, are these DAP strategies appropriate for children learning English as an additional language?

Language and Literacy Teaching Practices for Young DLLs

The high-quality instruction linked to positive language and literacy outcomes that pre-k teachers provide to their students is likely a foundation for effective practices for DLLs (National Academies of Sciences, 2017). However, previous research confirms that high-quality instruction must be enhanced to meet the linguistic and academic needs of young DLLs (Castro et al., 2011; Espinosa, 2010). The evidence-based research for designing high-quality early childhood education for young DLLs is emerging. Even so, there are commonalities among some of the high-quality practices that are essential for young DLLs found across the emerging literature base. Those practices include the intentional 1) organization of the classroom

environment 2) instructional and assessment practices 3) teacher knowledge and skills 4) language of instruction and 5) family engagement (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Tabors, 2008).

Castro et al.'s (2011) comprehensive review of the literature on high-quality ECE for young DLLs focused on three broad areas: curriculum and instructional practices, early educator knowledge and skills, and family engagement. From this review, the authors identified fourteen "quality ECE practices important for young DLLs" (p. 270). The fourteen practices can be clustered into the following five themes: 1) incorporating students' culture and language into the classroom environment and curriculum, 2) supporting second language development and first language maintenance, 3) fostering relationships and supporting interactions with teachers and peers, 4) engaging families through culturally appropriate outreach, and 5) using appropriate, multi-dimensional assessment conducted in both of the child's languages.

Similarly, Tabors (2008) guide for practitioners of young DLLs provides practical advice for teachers to support the language and literacy development of their students learning English as an additional language. Her two-year ethnographic study of an English-language, university-affiliated private preschool classroom serving DLL and non-DLL learners offered one of the first studies examining the practices teachers use to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs. The classroom included a teacher, an assistant teacher, and students that spoke five different home languages. Using observational data and teacher interviews, Tabors created a set of practices that were especially beneficial to supporting the early learning development of the linguistically diverse group of young DLLs in the study.   These practices included 1) *classroom organization* such as having predictable routines, small group activities, and facilitating social support systems with peers; 2) *communication supports* such as building on

what children already know, buttressing communication (i.e., doubling the message through words, gestures, and visuals), using repetition, and talking about the here and now; 3) *curricular practices* such as opportunities for both teacher-directed and child-directed activities that encourage play while fostering rich language use; 4) *strategies for family engagement* such as gathering cultural and linguistic background information on each child and regularly inviting parents into the classroom; and 5) *assessment practices* that authentically and holistically assess cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development in both of the child's languages.

In 2014, Castro updated her recommendations presented in her co-authored 2011 piece to include strategies that enhanced instruction for DLLs while encouraging bilingualism. She argues that research provides strong evidence that the use of the child's first language in instruction leads to greater social, cognitive, and academic achievement levels than English-only instruction (Castro, 2014). She identified the following instructional strategies as ways for teachers to support bilingual development 1) ongoing assessment of language development in both languages 2) small group activities designed to supplement or complement learning outcomes taught in whole group settings 3) explicit vocabulary instruction 4) teaching academic English for students to successfully participate in the academic discourse of the classroom with English-speaking peers 5) focus on socio-emotional development. Castro (2014) explained that children using a new language need extra social-emotional support communicating, fostering, and nurturing relationships with English-speaking peers and participating in a new or unfamiliar setting.

For the remainder of this section, I have organized my review of the literature using the new NAEYC Position statement adopted in April 2019. The updated framework for early childhood educators continues to recommend the three core considerations for implementing

developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education: knowledge of how children learn and develop, knowledge of the child as an individual, knowledge of what is culturally appropriate (NAEYC, 2009). However, it complements the original framework by focusing on equity in early childhood education. NAEYC (2019) provides four recommendations for early childhood educators to consider when implementing DAP for *all* students. Those recommendations are 1) engage learners in a caring, equitable community, 2) foster reciprocal relationships with families, 3) observe, document, and assess children's learning and development; and 4) advocate for equitable practices in early childhood education. I chose to use the four recommendations for early childhood educators as overarching themes around which to structure my literature review since they are recognized as areas essential to the growth and development of pre-k children's' success in later years (NAEYC, 2019). Within these four areas, I include a substantial review of empirical research on the language and literacy development for DLLs while highlighting the teaching practices identified by Castro (2014), Castro et al. (2011), and Tabors (2008).

Engage Learners in a Caring, Equitable Community.

Teachers who create a caring and equitable classroom community, respect every child and encourage every member in the classroom to know, recognize, and support individual strengths and differences (NAEYC, 2019). To promote a community of learners, teachers often prioritize social-emotional learning in pre-k, which is in line with current US guidelines for DAP in early childhood education (Beaty, 2014; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). According to the DAP framework, pre-k is a time for students to develop positive attitudes and behaviors about learning. These attitudes are related to the social and emotional development of young children.

Social-emotional development includes such things as expressing agency, developing relationships with teachers and peers; making friends; and developing prosocial behaviors, a sense of self, emotional competence, and resilience, while self-regulating aggressive and other challenging behaviors (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009); behaviors that help children engage respectfully with others in their learning community. The following subsections represent overarching themes from previous research that examined how teachers can engage learners in a caring and equitable community.

  Fostering positive relationships. Castro et al. (2011) and Tabors (2008) both recommend teachers facilitate interactions to support relationships with their young DLLs and between students. Castro and colleagues (2011) found that positive teacher-child relationships were essential in supporting social-emotional growth. Research posits that language acquisition is a nonlinear and complex social process. Students acquiring English as an additional language develop speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills through their interactions and collaborations with others (i.e., relationships). To nurture social interactions and relationship building with peers, teachers can proactively support young children as they develop the language skills they need to negotiate those exchanges by purposefully pairing and grouping children (Ballantyne et al., 2008) as well as modeling for children the language and actions necessary to successfully participate in a collaborative activity (Gillanders, 2007).

  Students not familiar with group work can fall into loose roles where some students dominate the work while others do little working or talking. In a small case study of students in a primary English as a foreign language classroom in Greece, Fragoulis (2009) found that teachers could remedy these problems by providing modeling through thinking aloud while working on a task or problem that came up during group work, and by illustrating effective strategies and

procedures for task completion. Teacher modeling of routines facilitated students' understanding

of how to plan for and follow through on a task while working with their peers. This way,

teachers were able to prepare students to be successful in completing tasks in their second

language.

Similarly, in a case study of an English speaking pre-kindergarten teacher's relationship

with her young DLLs, Gillanders (2007) found that the teacher's sensitivity to her students'

emotional needs facilitated her role in creating social environments in which children were able

to successfully participate with their English-speaking peers. By teaching the class strategies

such as gesturing and modeling how to check for understanding when working with a peer,

students were successful participants in collaborative learning in an expert-novice context.

Tabors (2008) suggests that teachers create opportunities for DLLs to interact with English-

speaking peers in the role of the expert even if their English is not as advanced. Such role

reversal can help boost self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. In another study of 357 four-

year-olds who attended state-funded pre-k programs in eleven states, findings showed that

DLLs' average reading scores improved when they were placed in classrooms with teachers who

were sensitive and responsive to language use during interactions (Burchinal et al., 2012).

Empirical research discussing peer relationships in pre-k is relatively small in number.

However, when teachers support interactions for young DLLs through modeling and intentional

scaffolding of practices that facilitate communication and are sensitive to language use, children

appear to succeed academically.

Creating predictable routines and structure to organize student participation.

According to Tabors (2008), another exemplary practice teachers use to support the socio-

emotional development of their young DLLs is maintaining an organized and predictable

classroom structure. Tabors argues that structure and organization support young DLLs' participation in class. Additional research confirms that an organized classroom and consistent classroom routines are essential for teachers as they support their young DLLs' social-emotional development by supporting the child's ability to follow activities and feel comfortable taking risks using a new language (Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011).   When young DLLs know when and where activities occur and what is expected during the activity, their focus can be more on instruction and learning and less on anxiously wondering what will happen next. van Lier advocated for an action-based classroom balanced in a way "there is enough predictability and security for learners not to feel lost and bewildered- but… (with) enough room to innovate and move in novel directions for learners to develop autonomy and fuel their intrinsic motivation" (van Lier, 2007, p. 53).

In Kelly's (2015) case study of four English-only pre-k classrooms with six focal DLLs in each class, she found that the children thrived when teachers were intentional with their practice of creating a rich language-learning environment. However, she also found that even community-nominated "good teachers" did not always know how to create an organized, structured learning environment.

Encouraging student agency. Tabors (2008) found that young DLLs must *want* to learn a new language. Tabors described how a 3-year old Korean boy listened to his teacher read an English story politely but chose not to repeat the English words or phrases she modeled during and after the storybook reading. Tabors viewed the child's refusal to participate in the English literacy activity as a form of agency, a conscious choice not to participate in the *game* of language learning. According to Tabors, the teacher had created an environment that supported social-emotional growth by offering children a choice to participate in language learning and

thereby facilitated a child's positive role in his own learning. An ecological perspective of language learning supports the research of this effective teaching practice for young DLLs. van Lier (2004) viewed agency as a key characteristic important to the language-learning environment.

   Building a language-rich environment. Previous research shows that second language learners must have access to comprehensible input, language that is just beyond their current level of competence (Krashen, 1982), and they must have opportunities to produce output for meaningful purposes (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Additionally, input and output are facilitated by social interaction in which DLLs actively participate in learning to foster the development of conversational and academic English (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Gass & Selinker, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). Passive learners do not learn a language.

   In the evaluation of over 300 lessons in 20 head start classrooms, Jacoby and Lesaux (2017) found that teachers' intentional inclusion of specific features of language and literacy lessons increased the overall language-richness of a classroom. The rich-language used in the classroom helped engage young DLLs in language learning while supporting cognitive development. Using the *Observation Measure of Language and Literacy Instruction* (OMLIT) tool, which measures the type and quality of talk produced by teachers, Jacoby and Lesaux found that teachers who used centers time to engage in extended discourse about language or literacy with young DLLs yielded high frequencies of rich language use than when language and literacy lessons were delivered in whole group format. The researchers found that teachers using whole group instruction more frequently asked children questions that required a one- or two- word response (Jacoby & Lesaux, 2017). In the case of teachers using language during center time, the language provided a tool for children to develop a mental representation of what Vygotsky

named verbal mediation- the ability to label objects and processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Often children demonstrate verbal mediation when participating in private speech- thinking aloud or to oneself while working through a process (Vygotsky, 1978). When teachers model, scaffold, and guide children during individualized or small group language events, they support cognitive development (e.g., verbal mediation, concept development, thinking skills, problem-solving, and private speech).

Additionally, reading aloud can promote vocabulary development, build concept knowledge, and promote participation in a language-rich environment*.* Research conducted during storybook reading found that teachers can use different question types as a means for encouraging discussion of the story and its illustrations (Gámez et al., 2017). Gámez and colleagues examined how linguistic and social cues used by teachers influenced the vocabulary development of five to six-year-old DLLs. They found that English-vocabulary development was better supported when teachers exposed children to complex language use aided by the use of gestures. Similarly, when teachers varied the types of questions (open-ended, completion, higher-level, etc.) they asked during a read aloud, children learned new vocabulary and concepts (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015). Chappero-Moreno and colleagues (2017) found that when pre-k teachers used wordless picture books during read-aloud time, teachers asked questions more frequently, thereby expecting increased student participation (Chaparro-Moreno, Reali, & Maldonado-Carreño, 2017). The support of cues, questions, and modeling from adults and other children appears to promote language and literacy development.

Scaffolding learning opportunities to meet individualized learning outcomes. Research has found that young DLLs benefit from multiple representations of content and support of oral language development (Tellez & Waxman, 2006). Teachers use scaffolding to help children meet

the language demands of the classroom, such as the linguistic features of activities likely to pose challenges for DLLs, including identifying vocabulary, understanding syntactic and semantic features of academic language, and the linguistic expectations required for successful completion of tasks.

Gestures, pictures, and objects combined with language, even the first language, can be used to support emerging second language development (van Lier, 2000). Teachers can support second language learning by creating language-rich environments that combine visual aids, gestures, repeating keywords, keeping the message simple, and repeated word exposure across multiple contexts (Castro et al., 2011; Hammer et al., 2014). Collins (2010) found that preschool teachers could support English vocabulary learning, an early literacy skill, for DLLs when they provided definitions and synonyms of the word, pointed to the word and picture in the books and used gestures to reinforce meanings. Additionally, by labeling classroom objects, teachers can support their DLL's understanding between an object, its label, and its pronunciation (Barone & Xu, 2008).

Silverman and Hines (2009) studied the effect a "multimedia-enhanced read-aloud vocabulary intervention" had on children's vocabulary knowledge compared to a read-aloud only with vocabulary instruction format. The researchers examined 85 elementary school children's (15-pre-kindergarteners, 28-kindergarteners, 25-first graders, and 17-second graders) vocabulary knowledge of words targeted in the intervention, content knowledge introduced in the intervention, and overall vocabulary knowledge. Both intervention and control students received 45- minutes of the same scripted instruction three days a week for three months. However, after the third week, the students in the intervention group watched purposefully chosen video clips that supported the target vocabulary they learned the previous three weeks.

The authors discovered that the multimedia-enhanced intervention produced a statistically significant effect on the vocabulary knowledge of both targeted words and general vocabulary knowledge of DLLs in the intervention group (Silverman & Hines, 2009).

Tabors (2008) found that when teachers are talking to DLLs, they can facilitate communication by adding body movements, gestures, or directing a child's gaze towards an item of discussion. She calls this buttressing communication, supporting the message. Teachers "double the message" through movement and words so children can use cues to facilitate meaning-making. For example, if following an art activity the classroom expectation is that students place their completed work in their cubbies, a teacher could support her DLL's understanding of this procedure by gesturing for the child to follow her and then pointing to the artwork and the cubby, all while narrating the process. Through extra verbal and nonverbal support, teachers can support DLLs' oral language development and promote communication to help children meet learning outcomes.

Creating opportunities for children to see and hear their language and culture in the classroom community. Previous research posits that when teachers are sensitive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students, they are able to support social-emotional development, which in turn can facilitate learning (Castro et al., 2017). Castro et al. (2011) suggest that teachers incorporate children's language and culture in the classroom by including materials representative of children's language and culture such as books, posters, and even staff members who are fluent in the children's primary language. Additionally, Tabors (2008) recommends that teachers not make assumptions about their students' backgrounds, but take the time to understand that children learn and demonstrate their knowledge in different ways. She suggests teachers gather information about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their young learners

through home surveys and language assessments. Research shows that regardless of the child's

cultural group, children are expected to perform certain behaviors such as developing social

interactions, thinking, imagining, and creating (Tabors, 2008).   However, the way families

socialize children into these tasks can vary. Cultural differences can lead teachers to

misunderstand or incorrectly asses the child's developmental competence (Gutierrez & Rogoff,

2003).

Non-bilingual teachers often view students' use of their native language in the classroom

as both positive and beneficial to literacy development but aren't always clear how to incorporate

the home language into instruction (Karathanos, 2009; Kibler & Roman, 2013).   Karathanos

(2009) found that elementary teachers' theoretical perspectives appeared inconsistent with their

practical perspectives. Therefore, teachers are probably more likely to hold a belief that a

student's native language can be a resource, but not necessarily know *how* to incorporate a

language different from their own into their teaching practice. Karathanos' findings emphasize a

disconnect between theory and practice. However, when the home language is used in the

classroom, teachers can successfully scaffold student learning, build on students' prior

knowledge, and develop metalinguistic and metacognitive comprehension strategies (Oliveira,

Gilmetdinova, & Pelaez-Morales, 2016). Researchers have suggested that teachers can integrate

students' home language into the classroom by providing bilingual books, vocabulary, and word

walls as a way to support continued use of the home language in the classroom to facilitate

English acquisition (Sawyer et al., 2017).

de Oliveira, Gilmetdinova, and Pelaez-Morales' (2016) case study of an English-

dominant speaking kindergarten teacher showed how a motivated teacher can use her emerging

knowledge of Spanish to support her DLLs in a variety of ways. The teacher, Ruby, taught in a

mainstream kindergarten classroom in Indiana. The authors discovered that Ruby used her

emerging Spanish to scaffold learning, create a welcoming environment, nurture students' social,

emotional, and cognitive development, and facilitate transfer of related language and literacy

skills across languages (de Oliveira et al., 2016). Although Ruby did not always use

grammatically correct Spanish, her focus was on conveying meaning to support her students'

academic success. Additionally, the authors discovered that Ruby served as a model to her

young students as she navigated learning a new language, taking risks, making mistakes, and

asking more knowledgeable others (i.e., more proficient bilingual students) for help.

Engaging young DLLs in action-based learning. *Handlungsorientierter unterricht* is a

German concept without an exact English translation, but it is defined as action-based learning

that involves all the senses and includes social collaboration with peers (van Lier, 2008).

Essentially the learner is completely immersed in a learning experience involving the whole

body *and* mind while using the resources available in the environment to participate in a

communicative act. To accomplish a task, students engage in a variety of activities in which

language is the main instrument of meaning-making.

Action-based learning is often found in project-based learning, which offers students an

opportunity to work collaboratively on a meaningful task designed to reach a defined audience.

Project-based learning is a teaching approach where teachers engage children in the study of the

world around them (Helm & Katz, 2016). During a project, children work together with teachers

and peers to investigate a question or subject. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding and

scaffolding the learning process as children observe, question, and learn about the world.

Project-based learning requires students to use age-appropriate written (i.e., books, websites,

magazines) and oral/visual (i.e., interviews, presentations, video clips) texts as a way to gather

information to support their understanding of the task. Then, students work together to make meaning of the texts through discussion and collaborative problem-solving. With the active engagement of all students, even those who are more reluctant to participate in traditional classrooms language learning can occur. Although studies that examine project-based learning for young DLLs are scarce, Hur and Suh (2012) examined how students became active learners guiding their own learning experiences while exploring their own topics of interest related to selected themes of study (i.e., body, weather, world). The teacher integrated interactive whiteboard, podcast, and digital storytelling with that belief that learning is co-constructed (Hur & Suh, 2012). This idea lends itself to creating a positive environment for students to self-select areas of further study with opportunities to work collaboratively and independently by providing support to learners as needed. The study took place in 4th and 5th-grade classrooms during an intensive summer English program where ELLs developed a research topic, created a visual presentation, and presented their research orally. The podcasts were used at home as review of course material, and the whiteboard provided opportunities for interactive practice and review of areas such as building background, activating prior knowledge, and vocabulary. This study showcased how a teacher can create a classroom where students were actively engaged in their own learning and encouraged to take risks when speaking and writing without fear of overcorrection or harsh judgment. Similar results were found in a study of one English as a Foreign Language primary classroom in Greece. Fragoulis (2009) observed that over the course of a six-month-long project, students speaking and listening skills greatly improved. Students were more eager to play with their new language since they were less concerned with "acting silly" than they had been prior to the implementation of project-based learning. Fragoulis

attributed the improvement to the increased time students spent participating in real and authentic communication activities that project-based learning afforded them.

     Teaching language through play. Action-based learning can also transpire during "play." Research affirms that a child's emerging literacy thrives when playing in imaginary situations since he must leverage his oral communication skills to participate actively when playing with peers (Bodrova, 2008). Fine motor skill development can also be fostered during play when teachers provide many opportunities and tools that encourage skill development. Recently research has turned to look at how play promotes early literacy skills of emerging bilinguals (Banerjee, Alsalman, & Alquafari, 2016; Gutierrez et al., 2011; Hegde et al., 2016; Snow, Eslami, & Hyun Park, 2015) and the impact on boosting self-esteem and multicultural identity formation (Karathanos, 2010). Additionally, the socio-emotional benefits of play have been lauded (Bodrova, 2008; Neuman & Roskos, 2005). Banerjee et al. (2016) reviewed how socio-dramatic play influenced physical, cognitive and language development of young DLLs. They explicated how students used language to communicate and interact socially around specific contexts, for instance, when building during block time or playing house. However, Banerjee (2016) underscored the important role of teachers when mediating/facilitating play and "enhancing language richness of the environment" notably by bringing students' cultural aspects to centers (e.g., play food, environmental print, etc.) and providing reading and writing materials in all centers (e.g., store fliers representative of students' native languages and paper and pencil to make shopping lists). Additionally, teachers served as a player, modeling how to use language to communicate with peers, how to write to perform specific tasks, or by extending a child's bilingual vocabulary by introducing new words or phrases (Banerjee et al., 2016). Another important role espoused by teachers was a mediator. As a mediator, teachers helped students

navigate language needed to interact and engage with peers, which the researchers found was important to the oral language and socio-development of young DLLs.

In another study that explored the significance of play on language and literacy development, Snow, Eslami, and Park (2016) examined how three young DLL kindergarteners used writing and reading materials during a literacy-enriched block center. The researchers found that after the teacher added books, paper, pencils, and crayons to the block center, the children began drawing and writing to add to the richness of their play. For instance, one student picked up a book about dinosaurs and began copying the illustrations and writing dinosaur names on the paper. The other two children joined him to create characters to play within the block village they had created. The researchers discovered that the literacy-enriched block center did not capture the full range of the students' writing behaviors, but did increase the richness of the boys' oral communication and raise the level of creativity (Snow et al., 2015). Students had 30 minutes of uninterrupted play to spend time both reading, writing, drawing, and playing, which the research suggests is important for increased opportunities to participate in extended language events while building fine and gross motor skills.

More research on this type of teacher staged literacy-enriched play for DLLs is needed to make conclusive and more generalizable arguments, specifically regarding early literacy development. Although the idea of actively engaging emerging bilinguals in learning language is not new (see e.g., Bunch, 2013; Van Lier & Walqui, 2012), the idea of using play as a means for active involvement is inchoate.

The collection of studies holds promise in contributing to the discussion on how teachers support the social-emotional development of young DLLs. However, there is a need for further research examining how and why some classroom environments are or are not effective in

supporting language and literacy development. Studies examining the social-emotional development of young DLLs do not always employ consistent identification of student's proficiency levels in English or the home language (e.g., Haywood, 2003; Kelly, 2015). Additionally, pre-k classrooms typically have more than one teacher in the room at any given time (e.g., co-teacher, assistant teacher, paraprofessional). However, if all teachers in an environment have not given consent to participate in a study, the research is unlikely to accurately capture environment (Kelly, 2015). Similarly, if the number of adults in a given room is unclear, the relationships that develop between students and teachers may not be as straightforward as presented (Schwarzer, Haywood, & Lorenzen, 2003; Kelley, 2015). Additionally, based on my literature search, research is still needed to determine if children in pre-k are affected in any way (positively, neutrally, or negatively) by working with a proficient peer versus a less capable peer in a learning-by-teaching context (e.g., Gillanders, 2007; Tabors, 2008).

The relationship between DLL's social-emotional development and language and literacy development is an understudied area worthy of more research. Depending on the learning context and attitudes of teachers and peers towards language and culture, anxiety and self-consciousness can interfere with a young child's learning potential (Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011). However, capitalizing on a child's personal history or background (i.e., early learning experiences, language, and values) can have positive benefits on his/her academic development (Espinosa, 2010). Evidence suggests that teachers can support dual language development by prioritizing social-emotional development, supporting social interactions between teacher and student and across peers, promoting student agency, maintaining an organized and structured environment, and incorporating students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the classroom.

Foster Reciprocal Relationships with Multilingual Families.

Research on fostering relationships between the teacher and families of DLLs in pre-k includes the teachers' role in communicating the benefits of multilingualism and how families can provide support in maintaining and supporting the home language (Goldenberg et al., 2013).

Many students are taught in school districts with policies that expect students to acquire English in an environment where English is the language of instruction. To counteract such restrictive policy, Schwarzer, Haywood, & Lorenzen (2003) argued that *fostering* multiliteracy is more effective at supporting early-English literacy development than prohibiting L1 use, simply *allowing* first language (L1) use or *maintaining* L1 through pull-out support from a language specialist. In one study, the researchers showed how Ms. Haywood, an English-speaking pre-k teacher, developed an enhanced skill set that supported both her students' English and home language development.   Fourteen of Ms. Haywood's sixteen students were bilingual. Like all classrooms in her district, the expectation was learning through English instruction. Ms. Haywood's diverse class consisted of Korean, Chinese, Spanish, English, and Turkish speakers. However, Ms. Haywood decided to support her students' biliteracy development by developing a working knowledge of "good language learning" to bring into her instruction by enrolling in university coursework and professional development courses (Schwarzer, Haywood, & Lorenzen, 2003, p. 455). Ms. Haywood also fostered biliteracy by inviting the bilingual community and family members to record songs and stories in their native language as well as to come into the classroom to read and write with children and administer assessments in the child's primary language. Finally, Ms. Haywood modeled her own journey into multiliteracy for her students as she learned words, phrases, and songs in her students' languages (Schwarzer,

Haywood, & Lorenzen, 2003). By building positive relationships through interactions with her students, Ms. Haywood provided students with a safe place to participate in language events using their preferred language. Ms. Haywood created an inclusive classroom environment to support language learning despite outside influences (i.e., district policies influencing instruction).

Language of Instruction- working with families to develop multilingualism. Incorporating the child's home language not only supports the child's language and literacy development in the classroom but also increases parental/familial involvement at home. Encouraging the use of home language gives caregivers opportunities to support school learning at home thereby increasing the time children spend participating in literacy events like shared book reading with parents (Landry et al., 2017) and siblings (Kibler et al., 2016) or writing about family and daily life experiences (Bernhard et al., 2006). Engagement in such home practices leads to multiple benefits, including increased print awareness and improved social and language skills, transferable literacy measures from L1 to English (Tabors, 2008).

Research shows that explicit attention to linguistic form and function is essential to second language learning. Teachers can support the young DLL's attention to form and function by drawing upon the first language, teaching cognates, words that are similar in English and the L1 like park and parque in Spanish (Gass & Selinker, 2010; Schleppegrell, 2004; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) and promoting translanguaging, the meaningful integration of multiple languages to serve specific purposes for communication (MacSwan, 2017).

Learning about students' families. Similarly, research advocates that a major principle for effective teaching is to build on what a child knows (Espinosa, 2010). Teachers can do this by drawing on the child's home language and by using information collected through

observations and interactions with the family and community to ascertain cultural knowledge, or by relying on immediate classroom-based knowledge or shared local background (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). In one study, Bernhard and colleagues (2006) found that teachers were able to build new understandings based on existing knowledge as a way to improve early literacy skills. Over 1,000 children in Florida participated in The Early Authors Program. The program linked a child's home culture (e.g., important people, customs, and linguistic patterns) with early reading and writing development through the collaboration with families, friends, teachers, and caregivers to create "identity texts." By talking, writing, reading, sharing their personal stories, and listening to their peers' stories, the children, as authors, were active participants in their own literacy learning that crossed multiple modalities.

Observe, Document, and Assess Children's Learning and Development.

As children progress through the preschool years, their cognitive development becomes quite sophisticated. The ability to move between simple and complex thinking skills advances, executive function (i.e., attention, memory, mental representation, logical thinking, reasoning) improves, imaginary play and magical thinking (i.e., animism) becomes organized through the use of pretend objects and symbols and is even coordinated with other children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Meanwhile, unlike toddlers, preschoolers can also think about past and future events, which is further supported by a rapidly developing vocabulary and ability to communicate with others. For over a decade, research has examined how students' use of their home language (L1) in the classroom can positively affect second language development (see Cook, 2001) and how teachers support L1 use in the classroom (Karathanos, 2009; Torres & Tackett, 2016).

Understanding second language development and what that looks like in the pre-k

classroom. Kelly (2015) found that even community-nominated "good teachers" did not always

know how to create an organized, structured learning environment or effectively use language

support practices such as creating teacher-child interactional opportunities, promoting

interactions between peers by scaffolding conversations and asking open-ended questions to

encourage conversation or modeling language use with DLLs at varying levels of proficiency.

Kelly also found that students with a "medium-level" of English proficiency were least likely to

receive extra intentional- language supports form the teacher. The study emphasizes the

importance of self-reflection and acknowledging how one's background can impact the way one

teaches DLLs.

In another study, Sawyer and her colleagues used the Early Language and Literacy

Classroom Observation-DLL (ELLCO-DLL; Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011), to assess the

quality of practices used to teach language and literacy to Spanish-dominant DLLs by English-

dominant and bilingual Spanish-English teachers, all in English-dominant contexts. The

components of the ELLCO-DLL include a literacy environment checklist, classroom

observation, and literacy activities rating scale, focusing specifically on linguistically responsive

practices in each component. Researchers concluded that very few teachers used linguistically

responsive practices regardless of their own bilingual ability (Sawyer et al., 2017).

Assessing students to capture an accurate picture of their abilities and strengths. In a

study of 340 DLLs in Florida, California, and North Carolina, researchers found that prior to

assessing students in their home language, they were unable to demonstrate proficiency in

mathematics and name writing (Castro et al., 2017). The opportunity to respond in the home

language afforded children the opportunity to demonstrate a more complete, full range of competency.

Tabors (2008) recommends that assessment is used to capture the whole picture of a child's development. She believed that to paint an accurate picture and to capture the child's entire linguistic repertoire; teachers should assess the child in each of his/her languages. Castro et al. (2011) also believe that assessments should be frequently given in the languages spoken by the child as well as be multi-dimensional (e.g., portfolios, observations, family reports). Additional research posits that frequent formative assessments, which assess skills as they are emerging, provide the best information as to which students will need additional support meeting specific learning objectives (Ballantyne et al., 2008). In this way, teachers can make in-the-moment instructional decisions as well as design small group interventions to support targeted skill development at differing levels of proficiency (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, & Scarcella, 2007).

Acknowledging limitations of assessments. There are a few concerns about being able to meet the recommendations for assessment. First, inconsistency in the language of assessments used is problematic. Many studies use only English assessments to assess a child's ability in various components of early literacy development (e.g., vocabulary knowledge, phonemic awareness, print awareness, letter recognition). Assessing a child in only one of his/her languages only gives researchers a partial understanding of a child's full linguistic ability. This is true even when the study is concerned with English outcomes (like the studies in this review). For example, Collins (2010) studied if the explicit explanation of target vocabulary words in English improved vocabulary learning for DLLs. Researchers assessed children's vocabulary

knowledge in English. However, assessing a child in his/her home language would allow

researchers to capture the true breadth and depth of knowledge and competencies.

Another challenge faced by researchers when trying to study DLL development is the

scarcity of parallel assessment tools standardized for DLL populations. Often assessments are

standardized on English-dominant populations, or the instruments were simply translated into the

child's home language without concern for cultural and linguistic discrepancies (Bernhard et al.,

2006). Freedson's (2008) study assessed the vocabulary development of pre-k children in both

English (L2) and Spanish (L1) using a parallel assessment (i.e., Peabody Picture Vocabulary

Test-Revised, PPVT-R; and Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody, TVIP), but both

assessments use age-norms for monolingual children. Young DLLs are not monolingual English

speakers or monolingual Spanish speakers. They have a unique linguistic repertoire that may not

be easily captured by a tool that does not allow combining or code-switching between languages.

There is a need to develop valid and reliable assessment tools to measure DLL's language and

literacy development in the early childhood classroom setting (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2014).

Advocate for Equitable Practices in Early Childhood Education.

The NAEYC (2019) position statement promotes challenging biases and unfair policies

while advocating for fair and inclusive practices that best serve all students. However, research

on how and why teachers advocate for equitable practice and policy in early childhood education

is sparse. Literature focused on teachers of older students has identified that to create change

through advocacy, educators need to understand culture in education, a commitment to learn

about students' culture and communities, and how to use culture as a basis for learning (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). An equity focus includes asking who is and is not served by a policy or

instructional practice and why. Athanases and Martin (2006) found that graduates from their teacher education program reported that to meet the learning needs of English language learners (ELLs) they were prompted to advocate for services and programs as instructional tailoring, out of class tutorials, better texts and assessments, field trips, clubs addressing culture and technology, improved parent contacts, and establishing a bilingual parent group. Findings suggest that teacher education programs can promote advocacy in their pre-service teaching programs so that students will enter the workforce prepared to speak out against unfair practices and policies.

Summary

This literature review was intended to capture the current knowledge base on practices that support the language and literacy development of young dual language learners. Research posits that language and literacy development of young DLLs and monolingual children differ in three skills required for literacy acquisition; competence with oral language, understanding concepts of print, and metalinguistic awareness of phonological forms (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). DLLs need explicit instruction to support early literacy skills such as vocabulary knowledge, oral language development, and print awareness (Barac et al., 2014, Castro, García, & Markos, 2013; Hammer et al., 2014). Likewise, existing research argues that teaching should be culturally and linguistically responsive to children's diverse backgrounds (Lucas et al., 2008), and recommend that teachers respect and incorporate the home languages and cultures of their students (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Espinosa, 2010). Young DLLs are not a homogenous population, which is why a "one-size fits all" approach to instruction is ineffective (Galguera, 2011; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). When teachers draw upon the *funds of*

knowledge each student brings to school teachers, they create a classroom that is welcoming and supportive of diverse learners, minimizes anxiety about performing in a second language (Pappamihiel, 2002), and empowers children to construct their identity as DLLs (Moll et al., 1992).

Using the DAP and advancing equity in early childhood education frameworks (NAEYC, 2009; 2019) guided by the exemplary practices recommended by Castro (2014), Castro et al. (2011), and Tabors (2008), I was able to identify trends across studies. Multiple studies recommended that for teachers to engage learners in a caring community; foster reciprocal relationships with families; observe, document and assess children's learning and development; and advocate for equitable practices and fair policies in early childhood education, they must understand the benefits of and value multilingualism. Additionally, several studies identified that engaging learners through active participation and play facilitated language and literacy development (Banerjee et al., 2016; Jacoby & Lesaux, 2017; Snow et al., 2015; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). There were also a number of studies that encouraged home-school partnerships to support children's development. These partnerships established a shared-power structure where families actively participated in decision making in areas such as program design and instructional practice and joined the teachers in the classroom by sharing their culture and language with the children (Bernhard et al., 2006; Douglass, 2007; Landry et al., 2017).

The majority of the literature reviewed was qualitative in nature, consisting of case studies and ethnographic research. The qualitative nature allows researchers to capture the practices teachers use in their classrooms in detail. However, the number of studies that elucidate each practice presented is limited, and more research is needed to generalize findings across

different pre-k contexts. The following section addresses the critical issues and knowledge gaps in the research and how the present study could contribute to the current research base.

Conclusions and Implications for the Present Study

The literature review demonstrates an understanding of the developmental differences between DLLs and non-DLLs learning English. However, the review also showed a dearth of research pertaining to the specific practices teachers use to benefit DLLs' language and literacy development, especially in English-dominant contexts. Previous research has identified considerable overlap between what is known about high-quality practice in early childhood education and what is most likely effective instruction for DLLs. However, several studies have determined that high-quality instruction must be enhanced to meet the linguistic and developmental needs of young DLLs (Castro et al., 2011; Goldenberg et al., 2013; Tabors, 2008).

A few critical areas are missing from the research on the practices that support literacy and language development in the field of early education, specifically with a young DLL population. First, the majority of the research reviewed draws implications from relatively small sample populations. Tabors' (2008) study draws conclusions about key practices for teaching young DLLs from one teacher's classroom at a university-affiliated private preschool. Tabors' recommended practices were limited to what she observed in one private-university affiliated classroom. Understanding that young DLLs attending a private university-affiliated pre-k typically represent different socioeconomic demographics than children enrolled in federally funded Head Start programs and state-funded public pre-k programs mean recognizing that teaching practices may look different in a particular context. Additional research is needed to

determine if the practices Tabors identified indeed hold true across different preschool program types. Additionally, there is a shortage of empirical research surrounding the key practices that pre-k teachers use when teaching young DLLs who speak a variety of home languages in a classroom where English is the language of instruction. More research is needed to identify examples of how pre-k teachers can incorporate all of their students' home languages when supporting learning in an English-dominant context.

An additional concern is an inconsistency in defining who counts as a young DLL, which is quite problematic. Many studies use a child's home language or immigration status as the determining factor for inclusion (Castro, 2014), but this is a tricky area to navigate. School-aged children (K-12) often receive English learner designation based upon parent responses to a language survey the school sends home with families upon registering to attend the school. Based on the results of the survey, the school may screen students using a standardized language assessment. If the child scores below a state benchmark, they are classified as an English learner.

The classification of a young DLL is not so clear-cut in the early childhood setting. The designation of DLL is locally determined, so there is not a standard way for determining who exactly is a young DLL. Private and public pre-k programs use various methods to identify DLLs, including teacher observation, family member reports, or screening assessments (W. Barnett et al., 2017). Sometimes schools send home a language survey for parents to complete or conduct in-home visits where they can ask about languages spoken at home. Frequently, the teacher is the one who assigns DLL status to the child based on the information he/she collected (Gámez et al., 2017). The problem with the DLL classification process persists in research when no other descriptive factors are given in a study to describe the DLL. For instance, the age of the

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child when he/she began learning a second language or if the acquisition was simultaneous, the amount of time a child spends learning in each language, and in what contexts learning occurs (e.g., language heritage schools, language spoken by one parent all the time, second language only spoken at school, etc.). Such factors could potentially affect a study's findings and the way a study is interpreted and or replicated in future studies.

Even turning to a more systematic data collection set of DLL designation is problematic considering only twenty-three states and the District of Columbia were able to report the various home languages spoken by their pre-k students (Barnett et al., 2016). A uniform protocol of collecting data on individual pre-k student language use does not currently exist. Similarly, most studies do not provide a proficiency level for either language spoken by the child. In one study, Bernhard and colleagues (2006) did not include a proficiency level or how DLL status was determined. Without a standardized measure to determine a child's DLL status based on their level of proficiency in English, a comparison of best practices to use with DLLs with varying English proficiency levels difficult.

Other methodological concerns include unclear proportions of DLL and non-DLLs in an early childhood classroom participating in a study and an inconsistency in reporting of teachers' education and linguistic backgrounds. When combined, these methodological concerns impede the ability to draw conclusions about implementation practices across settings. Addressing these methodological concerns can inform and shape future research projects that examine DLLs in early childhood classroom settings. The following section discusses how the present study opens opportunities to learn more about what early childhood teachers should know and be able to do when it comes to teaching the DLLs in their classrooms based on developmentally appropriate

practices for teaching language and literacy, aligned with an ecological perspective of language learning.

The present study takes into account the gaps in the literature, including the dearth of research on early childhood teaching practices that are developmentally appropriate for young DLLs. Unlike previous studies, the present study looks closely at the similarities and differences in teaching practices used in multilingual classrooms across three different preschool programs. Accordingly, this study contributes to expanding the empirical research, contributing to theory building, and supporting practice and policy.

First, to address the gaps in our knowledge base, this study will shed light on how practices are enacted in and across multiple multilingual settings (i.e., two Head Start and a private pre-k classroom) while considering how practices are similar and different across settings. I examine the practices that four teachers in three different early childhood settings use to support language and literacy development of their young DLLs so that I can provide detail and texture to those practices. Additionally, the present study uses the ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2010) to better understand which practices led to students' language development. This study used the presence of van Lier's ecological characteristics of language learning (i.e., relationships, quality, and agency) in the learning environment to indicate that teachers were promoting language learning.

Furthermore, to accurately represent the languages spoken by members of the classroom community, the present study collected language(s) used in the homes through a questionnaire sent home to participating families. Similarly, teachers reported their own linguistic backgrounds and proficiency in speaking different languages in a written questionnaire and during the initial

interview asked to elaborate on when and where they learned each of the languages they listed on the questionnaire.

Finally, the present study provides a detailed look into the practices used in classrooms where English is the language of instruction, and the lead teachers are English-dominant speakers. In the state where this study took place, teachers are not required to be certified in bilingual instruction or to have specific qualifications for working with young DLLs. Given that multiple studies identified in the literature review elucidated practices teachers use to support young DLL's academic development in bilingual classrooms, there is a need to understand better the practices English-speaking teachers use in English-dominant contexts. The present study offers implications for practice and policy. To expand high-quality preschool and develop a highly-effective ECE workforce at the national and state levels, there is a need to better understand the practices teachers use to support an increasing linguistically diverse student population.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In the previous chapters, I argued that more research is needed to describe the teaching practices used by early childhood educators to support the language and literacy growth and development of young DLLs. The present study contributes to the current research base by addressing gaps in knowledge, highlighting what practices teachers use and how teachers reflect upon their practice of supporting the language and literacy development of young DLLs. Accordingly, the present study investigated the following research questions

1. How do pre-k teachers, identified as exemplary, support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs?

2. What unique practices manifest in different pre-k settings in the study?

3. How do teachers in the study talk about and reflect on working with young DLLs?

        3a. What challenges did teachers share about working with young DLLs?

This chapter presents my methodological choices for the current study. First, I present my rationale for using a qualitative approach to research. Next, I describe my participant selection criteria, followed by an explanation of my data sources and how I used each source to answer my research questions. Then, I describe my data analysis approach. The chapter concludes with thoughts related to the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of my proposed study.

Rationale for Research Approach

To deeply understand the experiences and practices of my teacher participants, I used an instrumental qualitative study design. An instrumental study is serving a particular purpose (Stake, 2006). In the case of the present study, I examined the teaching practices of exemplary teachers using an ecological perspective of language learning. An overview of my study design can be found in Figure 3.1. I explain the figure in further detail throughout this chapter.

MSDE Early Childhood Specialists → Program Directors/School Administrators ← Private Pre-k Program Director

↓

Selection of Exemplary Pre-k Teachers

Head Start
1 Teacher

Private Pre-k
1 Teacher

Head Start
1 Teacher

Private Pre-k
1 Teacher

Data Collection for Each Classroom:
- 2 weeks of Classroom Observations (per class)
- ELLCO-DLL and ELLCO Protocols
- Teacher Questionnaire
- Teacher Interviews (2 per teacher)
- Informal Student Conversations
- Informal Teacher Conversations
- Classroom Artifacts

Data Analysis:
- Identify practices used in classroom
- Identify how ecological characteristics present in each classroom
- Identify practices unique to program or classroom
- Identify how teachers talk about and reflect upon their teaching practices
- Identify common challenges within and between classrooms

Figure 3.1. Design overview: Teacher selection, data collection, and analysis

I used a multi-case study design to analyze data at the level of the teacher. In other words, my case is at the teacher level. Yin defines case study as an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon (a case) that takes place within a real-world setting where "the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Yin states that case study research helps the researcher "understand a real-world case and... is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to your case" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). In the present study, I examined the relationships that occur in an environment without altering the context (as might be done in an experimental or quasi-experimental design). In fact, my research questions asked how pre-k teachers supported the language and literacy development of young DLLs and how they talked about or reflected upon their practice. To examine a teacher's practice, I used an ecological perspective of language learning as a lens to explain how practices contributed to language learning.

To address my second question in which I examine how practices manifested (i.e. were similar and different) across learning environments, I focused my unit of analysis at the classroom level since two of the four teachers co-taught in the same classroom. In this specific co-teaching model, both teachers planned, implemented, and assessed children. Therefore, given the importance and uniqueness of the co-teaching model to this study, I combined the data I collected on both teachers.

Research Context

Following Yin's (2014) warning against the challenges of doing an embedded case study (neglecting the whole picture) vs. holistic (neglecting the specifics). I addressed both the

representative nature of the complete context and the uniqueness of each teacher's practice. I portrayed the uniqueness of each of the teachers' preschool programs by using thick descriptions that bring readers into the setting. Therefore, readers can gain an understanding of the unique contexts in my study and relate them in such a way to bring understanding to their own unique experiences and contexts.

The following section provides a brief overview of the pre-k programs in the mid-Atlantic state in which this study took place and provides context for the programs where the participating teachers teach. A more detailed description of each setting is found in Chapter 4.

Head Start. Head Start is a federally funded program for children from low-income families. A local state-office oversees the state's Head Start program. Head Start programs in this Mid-Atlantic state are required to use the state's EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement System (I describe this QRIS system in more detail below). Head Start classrooms can be located in preschool centers, churches, community centers, and public school buildings. Head Start programs use the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) as a comprehensive approach to supporting school (kindergarten) readiness. The HSPPS, initially published in 1975, was revised in 2016 to improve the quality of Head Start programs (see https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii for more information on the HSPPS). In 2016-2017, this Mid-Atlantic state's Head Start funded 8,861 children in nineteen different programs (2016 National Head Start Profile, 2016).

Private pre-k. Private pre-k offered in the state varies widely in curriculum approach and instruction between programs. Private pre-k programs can be secular, attached to an institute of higher education, founded on religious beliefs (e.g., Christianity, Judaism), or adhere to specific early learning approaches (e.g., Montessori, Reggio-Emilia). Typically, parents pay tuition for

their child to attend a private pre-k program with little to no financial assistance provided for tuition relief.   All state-licensed childcare facilities must participate in the state's EXCELS program, so many private pre-k programs are also rated on the same quality scale as the Head Start programs (as is the case in the present study).

Participants

I employed a qualitative, multiple-case study design (Yin, 2009) with a purposive selection of four teacher-participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) to allow for the exploration of exemplary teaching practices for DLLs both within and across contexts. Table 3.1 illustrates the number of participants in this study by the program.

Table 3.1

Number of Participants in Study by Program Type

	Private Pre-k	Head Start
	n	*n*
Classrooms	1	2
Teachers	2	2
Children	22	39

Note. Private Pre-k n= two co-teachers teaching in one participating classroom. Head start n= two participating teachers teaching in different classrooms located in different school districts.

Selection of Participants

Teachers were purposely selected for participation in this study using a rigorous selection method. Given the difference in programmatic structures, distinctive sampling procedures were used for the different types of classrooms (Head Start and private pre-k programs). The selection of classrooms in each program type co-occurred. However, for both program types, I provided a

bulleted list of considerations, sent by email, for nominators taken from the literature review (see Appendix A for sample email). Additionally, I spoke with each nominator in person or by phone to address questions and clarify the criteria for nomination. Subsequently, I used two standardized evaluation protocols (i.e., ELLCO and ELLCO-DLL described below) to evaluate the teacher's use of practices identified by the observation tool to teach language and literacy to her students. I describe this process in detail below.

Head Start Teachers. To identify teachers in head start classrooms, I began my search by contacting the Education Program Specialists from the State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development. The Specialists are responsible for conducting observations of all public pre-k programs in their assigned territories. Therefore, specialists have an inside perspective of programs that demonstrate positive learning outcomes for all children combined with an in-depth knowledge of what the state defines as high-quality pre-k by using the Excels Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Excels Quality Rating and Improvement System rate the quality of early childhood care on a scale from zero to five, with five being the highest (citation removed for confidentiality.). Programs are rated on their ability to demonstrate competency in staffing and professional development, accreditation and program improvement, developmentally appropriate practice, and administrative policies and practices. A score of one to four means a program has met standards above the minimum required for state licensing.   A program that scores five means they met the highest benchmarks in EXCELS. Although EXCELS does not get as fine-grained as the individual teacher, the rating indicates that teachers teach in a highly rated, high-quality program (i.e., rating of five). By studying teachers that teach in high-quality pre-k settings as rated by EXCELS, I will be able to

remove trepidation over a question of program quality. Therefore, I could focus on the teacher-level.

The two specialists I contacted, first via e-mail and then by phone and during an in-person meeting, were also in communication with the other specialists covering different territories regarding potential sites. At this point, drawing from potential sites across the state, the Specialists either put me in direct contact with a program that met my criteria or directed me to contact the local school district's Early Childhood Coordinators for recommendations. I asked nominators to consider the characteristics that I sent by email (taken from the literature) that exemplary early childhood teachers of DLLs know and do. However, I explained that it might not be possible that every teacher always demonstrates each of the qualities. Instead, I asked them to identify teachers that exhibit most of the qualities (i.e., met at least two-thirds of the criteria most of the time). I also verified that the teachers taught in a high-quality preschool program using the Excel Rating of five as an indicator for high-quality at the program-level.

I received nine nominations from the Education Specialists. Eight of the nominees provided by the Education Specialists taught in Head Start programs located within three different local school districts. I received research approval in one of the three local districts after almost nine months after submitting my application. The other two districts denied approval for research. The remaining Head Start teacher nominated by the State Education Specialists taught for a program run by a religious charity. I received approval of research in writing from the program director. Therefore, I was able to reach out to three Head Start teachers to ask for their participation.

I reached out to each nominated teacher first over email to introduce myself, inform her of the nomination, and provide an overview of the study. The teacher recruitment letter is found

in Appendix B. Then, I met with each teacher to discuss any questions or concerns she had about my research or participating in the study. To be respectful of the teacher's availability, I met with teachers in person or via phone call. Yin reminds researchers to "learn to integrate real-world events with the needs of the data collection plan"(Yin, 2014, p. 88). All three nominated Head Start teachers agreed to participate; however, one had to rescind her offer before our first in-person meeting due to health issues.

   Private Pre-K Teachers. Meanwhile, I met with the director of the university-affiliated private preschool program to discuss my research. Based on my conversation with the director, I discovered the on-campus early childhood center was an important case for this study for several reasons. First, including this setting allowed me to replicate certain aspects of Tabors' (2008) study to see if the exemplary teaching practices she determined were effective for teaching young DLLs at her private university-affiliated setting also apply to the private-program associated with my university.   Additionally, the school population consisted of a linguistically diverse community of young DLLs, which added to the present study's contribution to the empirical literature examining multilingual classroom settings. Finally, the program had received both an EXCELS rating of five and NAEYC accreditation, which, as I mentioned in chapter 2, is a highly-regarded accreditation for high-quality early childhood programs. The NAEYC accreditation requires the program to document how it meets ten standards of high-quality early childhood education. One standard related directly to the present study requires programs to "employ and support a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse interests and needs" (as found on NAEYC's website: https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/value-naeyc-accredited-program). I learned in

my meeting with the program director that all teachers in this private pre-k program have at least a bachelors degree in early childhood education or a field related to education, and most teachers have a master's degree in early childhood education, TESOL, or Teacher Leadership or are currently working on earning one, and receive ongoing professional development. I verified teachers' degrees using the center's page for faculty and staff on the university's website (website address withheld for confidentiality). Indeed, all teachers in the preschool program hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, art education, or psychology.

After receiving the director's support for my research, I sent an email to the Director, the Assistant Director, and the Education Specialist asking for nominations of two teachers who met at least 2/3 of the criteria (for the email see Appendix A). I received eight nominations from the private pre-k program. I reached out to each of the nominated teachers by email to introduce myself, inform them of the nomination, and provide an overview of the study. The teacher recruitment letter is found in Appendix B. Two nominated teachers who co-taught in the same classroom, agreed to participate.

Summary. Table 3.2 highlights the demographics and qualifications of the four participating teachers as self-reported in the teacher questionnaire and confirmed during the initial interview I had with each teacher. I describe the teacher's teaching context in further detail in Chapter 4.

The ELLCO and ELLCO-DLL Instruments. I included standardized tools of measurement to ensure that the teachers in my study were indeed effective teachers of young DLLs. During my second classroom observation at each school, I administered the Early

Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Dual Language Learners (ELLCO-DLL). I

intended to use the ELLCO-DLL as a standardized observation tool to determine if the teaching

Table 3.2

Teacher Demographics and Qualifications

Category	Teacher			
Name	Ms. Lane	Ms. Sykes	Ms. Keller	Ms. Martin
School[3]	Bayside Head Start	Clifford Run Head Start	Valley Preschool Center	Valley Preschool Center
Degree(s) Earned	BFA Art MA Reading Education 30 Credits Beyond Masters in Science/Math Education	B.A. Early Childhood Education M.A. Special Education (in progress)	B.A. Early Childhood Education M.A. Curriculum and Instruction	B.A. Early Childhood Education M.A.TESOL (in progress)
Years of Teaching Experience	16	9.5	15	3
Years of Experience Teaching Pre-k	9	9.5	9	3
Languages Spoken (proficiency level)	English (Native)	English (Native)	English (Native)	English (Native) Spanish (novice)

practices I observe in each classroom aligned with empirically-based instructional

practices recognized by the observation tool to support the language and literacy development of

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[3] All teacher and school names are pseudonyms

DLLs (Castro, 2018). The ELLCO-DLL is modeled after the Early Learning and Literacy Classroom Observation protocol (Smith, et al., 2008). The ELLCO (2008) is divided into two subscales, *the general classroom environment subscale*, and t*he language and literacy subscale.* The *general classroom environment subscale* evaluates classroom organization, classroom management, materials, curriculum, personnel, child choice and initiative, and diversity in the classroom. The *language and literacy subscale* examines opportunities for extended conversations, phonological awareness, building vocabulary, discourse climate, the organization, and characteristics of the book area along with approaches and quality of book reading as well as the print and early writing environment. Initially, the ELLCO-DLL was designed to provide supplemental information to the ELLCO regarding practices to support DLLs; however, it is now a stand-alone instrument.

The ELLCO-DLL is divided into three subscales, *the literacy environment checklist* that examines the quantity and quality of literacy materials available in English and Spanish, *the classroom observation scale* evaluates the use of technology, classroom management strategies, presence of books, approaches to book reading, writing, curriculum integration, and assessment as well as facilitating home support for literacy development and the *literacy activities rating scale* which examines the time spent on book reading in English and Spanish. According to Castro (2018), the classroom observation scale can be used in any classroom with children from any non-English language background while the other two scales target Spanish-English DLLs but can be adapted to use with other language groups.

Although the ELLCO-DLL includes similar subscales as the ELLCO, it differs in the focus of each subscale. For example, where the ELLCO looks at literacy materials available in the classroom for teacher and student use in English, the ELLCO-DLL rates the amount and

quality of literacy materials available in Spanish[4] and English that children can use in class and

bring home to share with their families.

According to Castro, the unpublished instrument had been "used in large, multi-state

randomized controlled trials and descriptive/correlational studies for research, program

evaluation and professional development purposes" (Castro, personal communication, January 8,

2018). For example, Sawyer et al. (2017), used the ELLCO-DLL to examine the linguistically

responsive practices 72 preschool teachers used to support the language and literacy

development of DLLs. None of the classrooms in the study were considered bilingual

classrooms; however, over half of the students were Spanish-speaking DLLs, and some

classrooms did use Spanish to support the English-based curriculum. Findings suggested that

very few teachers, including those who spoke Spanish, used the practices recognized in the

ELLCO-DLL as supporting preschool DLLs.

Buysse, Castro, and Peisner-Feinberg (2010) used the ELLCO and ELLCO-DLL

Addendum (i.e., before the ELLCO- DLL became a stand-alone instrument) to evaluate the

effects of the Nuestros Niños professional development program on teacher's instructional

practices for supporting DLLs' language and literacy development in both English and Spanish.

All 55 teachers were monolingual English-speakers and taught in schools where English was the

language of instruction. Twenty-six teachers attended the professional development intervention

program that taught teachers how to incorporate practices designed to support DLLs using the

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[4] At the time of this study, the ELLCO-DLL has been used to observe Spanish-English DLL populations. However, Dr. Castro states that "it could be adapted to be used with other language groups" (D. Castro, personal communication, Jan. 10, 2018).

core curriculum. The ELLCO and ELLCO-DLL Addendum showed that professional development intervention led to improved quality ratings on both instruments.

Castro et al. (2017) repeated the Nuestros Niños professional development program study this time with 56 preschool teachers. They found that the program again produced positive effects for the overall quality of early childhood practices as well as practices focused on DLLs.

Given the instruments unpublished status, I received training from Dr. Castro at her home institution, the University of North Texas so that I could include the observational tool in my study. Inter-Rater reliability of 92% between Dr. Castro and myself was achieved during my practice observation of a pre-k classroom in Texas. Therefore, I was permitted by Dr. Castro to use the protocol in the present study. I explain my findings from both the ELLCO-DLL and ELLCO in chapter five.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

The strength of case study research is the opportunity to collect multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). Data sources include eight audio-recorded teacher interviews lasting between 25-45 minutes, over 160 hours of classroom observations, classroom artifacts, and teacher and student questionnaires. Data were collected at each site between November and March. In this section, I describe the data collected at each school site and argue that the methods I used provided the descriptive, authentic data I needed to answer my research questions. Data collection instruments are found in Appendices C-F. The ELLCO and ELLCO-DLL are copyrighted materials that are not included in the appendices; however, reference information is located in the bibliography.

Teacher Interviews

I collected eight audio-recorded teacher interviews (25-45 minutes each). I interviewed each teacher twice, once after the first few days, I was in the classroom, and the second after I completed the observations. Interview dates depended on the teacher's availability to meet with me. I used audio recorded interviews to provide "a more accurate rendition of the interview" (Yin, 2014, p. 110). I found that taking notes distracts me from being an active listener. I transcribed each interview within days of the interview.

Initially, I asked teachers about their prior experiences with learning a second language or participating in inter-cultural exchanges, as well as past and current teaching experiences, focusing on their work with DLLs. Final teacher interviews, allowed teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences within their particular contexts and time to ask questions that emerged based on my classroom observations or the survey teachers completed at the beginning of the study.   Both interviews helped me to answer my third research question that asked how teachers talked about and reflected on their work with young DLLs. I asked open-ended interview questions to allow space for individuals to reflect on their own experiences. Taking advice from Yin (2014), I approached the interview as a "guided conversation (p.110)". I asked follow-up questions or probes to understand an initial response better. All interviews were guided by interview protocols (Yin, 2014) so that the interview maintained a similar focus across contexts (see Appendices D-E).

At the conclusion of each interview, I wrote memos of my reflections, noted important non-verbal behaviors, and added observations or questions I might wish to follow up on. This process supported my ability to complete iterative data analysis across multiple sources of

evidence, even if months had passed since the interview. Interview data allowed me to focus directly on the case study topic and capture participants' insightful perspectives.

Classroom Observations

I spent over 150 hours conducting classroom observations. I spent two weeks (or ten days) in each classroom. Data collected during observations included observational field notes and a mix of selected video and audio recordings.

When observing the classrooms, I heeded Yin's (2014) warning that doing a case study means dealing with real-life (e.g., unexpected teacher absence or school assembly cancels my scheduled observation). For example, at Clifford Run Head Start, I had to reschedule days from the second week of observations to the following week due to snow day closures and an unexpected teacher absence. Table 3.3 shows the dates of data collection for each teacher or co-teacher-pair. Additionally, the school district in which Ms. Lane teaches did not permit video or audio recordings of children or teachers. Therefore, I took only detailed observational notes using my laptop at Bayside Head Start. Likewise, I had to alter my data collection process when observing Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin's school because of the co-teaching model. Thus, I focused the video recording and field note collection on who was taking the lead for a specific activity. For example, during a read-aloud event, one teacher took the lead; however, during centers, I alternated between observing the two teachers depending on who was interacting with children and or focused on language and literacy. This style of interaction required me to consistently pay close attention to the actions and whereabouts of both teachers.

Table 3.3

Dates of collected data sources by teacher

Data Source	Teacher			
	Ms. Keller	Ms. Martin	Ms. Sykes	Ms. Lane
Teacher Questionnaire	11.14.18	11.14.18	12.13.18	2.19.22
Observation Dates	Week of Nov. 26, 2018 Week of Jan. 7, 2019		Week of Dec. 10, 2018; Jan. 25, 2019; Feb. 4-7, 2019	Week of March 3, 2019 Week of March 18, 2019
Initial Interview	11.27.19	11.29.19	12.17.18	2.22.19
Final Interview	1.23.19	1.15.19	2.22.19	2.28.19

For each observation, I stayed from arrival time until naptime or approximately four-five hours. Additionally, I returned to each school at least once after naptime. The state-mandates rest time for children under five years of age[5] in full-day preschool programs. I found that after naptime, children had an afternoon snack and then about fifteen minutes of unstructured playtime before dismissal. I found that during my after-naptime visits at each site, I was able to capture what teachers and students were doing during this time and did not need to return daily after nap. During each observation, I completed an open-ended observation protocol to collect field notes, guided by the recommended practices from the literature review (Chapter 2). Multiple classroom visits allowed me to corroborate, clarify, or extend my findings. These field notes provided me with a detailed look at the teaching practices and classroom environment. After each observation, I added to my observational field notes by jotting down quick notes and writing down my initial thoughts and reflections, as well as any analytic hunches or questions that I had for my participants as a result of the observation. Ultimately, I was able to observe the classroom

[5] http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/regulations

environment and how the teacher supports language and literacy development to address each of my research questions.

Classroom Artifacts

As part of the classroom observations, to answer my first research and second research questions, I examined language and literacy-related artifacts that illustrated the use of teaching practices such as word cards, classroom labels, posters, student writing, and texts read aloud. I took photos of the artifacts in addition to including notes about the artifact in my observational field notes. I noted how each artifact was available to students and/or teachers within the classroom environment, how it was used to support language and literacy development (e.g., the teacher called attention to certain artifacts when children were completing literacy activities, or a child returned to a word card ring to support writing during play), and if this artifact was something I saw in the other teachers' classrooms or if it was unique to that one context. I situated the artifacts in the ecological theory of language learning by exploring how the artifacts supported or hindered the relationships, context, agency, and quality that occurred in the environment. The data I collected from artifacts were used to triangulate data with interviews and classroom observations to provide a more complete representation of each case.

Questionnaires

I administered a brief questionnaire to teachers and parents.

Teacher questionnaire. The questionnaire for the teachers asked educators to provide their educational background, prior teaching experiences with DLLs and non-DLLs, and to provide their beliefs and perceptions of culture and language development in the classroom as well as the practices they believe best support the language and literacy development of young

DLLs. See Appendix C for the teacher questionnaire. My questionnaire was adapted from Tabors' (2008) Language and Culture Questionnaire and Classroom Practices Questionnaire located in the "Study Guide" portion of her book. I also drew upon my prior experiences designing and analyzing data from a survey about teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding DLLs as part of my research assistantship experience. The questionnaire asked both open-ended questions and questions that asked teachers to rate their level of agreement using a five-point Likert-type scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Before administering the survey for this study, I asked four current teachers of DLLs in pre-k and kindergarten to take the questionnaire and provide me with feedback regarding the time it took to complete, ease of use, and any unclear questions. The teachers found the questionnaire easy to understand and were able to complete it under ten minutes.

Parent questionnaire. I decided to include a parent questionnaire as part of my data to better understand the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds (see Appendix F for the Parent Questionnaire). As I mentioned in my literature review, not all early childhood programs collect data on children regarding their status as a DLL. In that case, collecting this information became my responsibility. Additionally, knowing how long a child has been exposed to a given language is information that I could use to better understand participation in classroom events and explain successes and challenges in school. I included the questionnaires in my research to enrich my data collection, which provided a more thorough and accurate description of each case.

Informed Consent

According to the University of Maryland Internal Review Board (IRB), all participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study prior to participating in any data collection. Additionally, I sent a recruitment letter home to families of all children in the classroom. Prior to conducting classroom observations, consent was collected from all teachers and families of children in the classroom. Extra care was given to protect the rights of any family declining to participate in the study, such as being careful to avoid capturing the child on video. As per the IRB board request, children were asked to provide verbal assent to participate.

Data Analysis Approach

Data were analyzed thematically in an ongoing and cyclic manner during and after data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is in line with the interpretative nature of data collected during a case study (Yin, 2014). While the practices found in the literature review to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs (Chapter 2) formed a start list of codes, I remained open to new codes that emerged during my analysis. In this section, I describe my process of using a multi-phased approach of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and explain the analytic strategies recommended for qualitative researchers I used throughout the analysis, including jottings and memos (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020).

Overview of Data Analysis Approach

I analyzed data by following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) analysis approach: (1) establish codes in first-cycle coding (2) order and reduce codes during second cycle coding (3) identify themes through jottings and memoing. This process was used to answer each of the research questions:

1. How do pre-k teachers, identified as exemplary, support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs?

2. What unique practices manifest in different pre-k settings in the study?

3. How do teachers in the study talk about and reflect on working with young DLLs?

3a. What challenges did teachers share about working with young DLLs?

Establishing Codes

To establish codes, I familiarized myself with the data to identify big-picture ideas relevant to my research questions. I began the analysis of data with single case study analysis since "each case is studied to gain an understanding of that particular entity as it is situated" (Stake, 2006, p. 40). I immersed myself in the data as it was collected to understand the relationships and patterns of relationships that existed within the environment (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To sustain and maintain ongoing data analysis, I transcribed teacher interviews once completed and audio and video-recorded classroom observation data as collected. I added this data along with my typed field notes, photos of artifacts, and scanned copies of questionnaires using the NVivo 12 software platform so I could store and maintain my data efficiently and effectively.

I generated a list of codes first, by coding with what Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2020) call using a "start list" (p. 74) of a priori practices that correspond with the literature review above (see table 3.4 for start list of codes). Although the NAEYC's (2019) four areas of developmentally appropriate practice for advancing equity framework 1) engage learners in a caring, equitable community 2) foster reciprocal relationships with families 3) observe, document, and assess children's learning and development and 4) advocate for equitable

practices in early childhood education informed my analysis, I viewed these as constructs in which to conceptualize or frame my study, rather than initial codes. As my data collection continued, several new codes emerged, and others evolved from my original "start list" of codes like Miles et al. (2020) stated that "researchers with start lists know that codes will change" (p. 75). For example, my participating teachers were English-dominant speakers, but occasionally used the child's first language in the classroom. I teased apart each a priori code to capture when teachers used the child's first language, used only English, or used a non-verbal gesture (i.e., hug, or quietly working on a task side-by-side). Additionally, I used descriptive coding (Saldana, 2016) to label practices I observed such as songs, book reading in English, bilingual book reading, writing instruction, curriculum integration, presence/use of technology in English, presence/ use of technology in L1, using communication supports to facilitate language use and comprehension.

Table 3.4

Start List of Codes

"Start list" of codes- High-Quality Practices to Support Positive Language and Literacy Outcomes for All *(correspond with the literature review in Chapter 2)*	"Start list" of codes- High-Quality Practices to Support Positive Language and Literacy Outcomes for Young DLLs
Nurture social-emotional development (NAEYC, 2009)	Organize classroom environment (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Tabors, 2008)
Intentional teaching of foundational literacy (Burchinal, 2018)	Incorporate student culture (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014)
Fostering school-home partnerships (NAEYC, 2009)	Engaging instruction/active learning (National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Tabors, 2008).

Implementing ongoing assessment (Hyson, Copple & Jones, 2006)	Support interactions with teachers and peers (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, 2017)
	Holistic, multi-dimensional assessment (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Tabors, 2008)
	Communication supports (Tabors, 2008)
	Use of L1 (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014)
	Family engagement (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, 2017; Tabors, 2008).

As coding progressed, I found specific codes become quite large, so I divided them into smaller child codes. For example, I reorganized "communication supports" to identify better what "supports" the teachers were using to facilitate communication. The new codes included: asking a child to repeat, asking for clarification, asking questions to gather more information from the child to determine unclear message, gestures, physical objects, illustrations, photos, graphic organizers, giving language to for child to use, teacher models language use, and use of positive praise. Whenever I refined or added a code, I went back to the data I had previously coded to be sure I coded each data set according to the most current set of codes. I applied the same codes to all data sources: interviews, classroom observations, classroom artifacts, and teacher questionnaires.

For the third research question and its sub-question, I also coded for practices teachers talked about and reflected on using the process described for research question one. However, to better understand the reasoning behind the teacher's reflections, I used descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) to establish codes related to how teachers reflected upon working with

young DLLs. For instance, I used the in vivo code "social-emotional" when teachers referred to social and emotional development. This code appeared nineteen times during the eight interviews.

Ordering Codes

As I ordered codes and looked for patterns, different data sources were prioritized for answering each of the research questions. For the first and second research questions, to identify how teachers supported their young DLL's language and literacy development and how unique practices manifested in specific settings, I relied on classroom observational field notes and transcribed video recordings of classroom observations as a primary source and interview transcripts and artifacts serving as additional sources for triangulation. I added memos to describe visual data like photos of artifacts (Saldaña, 2016). For the third question, how do teachers talk about and reflect on the practices I used interview transcripts as the primary source with classroom observational data and visuals of artifacts as secondary sources. Additionally, during this round of analysis, I distinguished between information that was relevant to all participants from those pieces of information that were exclusive to one participant (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2003). For example, using thematic profiles I created for each teacher, I looked for similarities and differences in practices across teachers and within a program type. I used each thematic profile to answer my second research question. I also identified if and how the characteristics of an ecological perspective of language learning were present in the classroom.

Additionally, to address the third research question, I looked for patterns across teachers. For example, I found that each teacher shared experiences they had participating in intercultural

exchanges or with learning a second language as a child or adult. Including these findings in my study provided me an opportunity to consider literature that looked at how teachers reflect upon working with linguistically diverse children. I provide further discussion of the implications and considerations of the teachers' reflections on research and practice in Chapter 6.

Ultimately, for each research question, I developed matrix or network displays (Miles et al., 2020) to organize the Pattern Codes. For an example of how practices (intended to address research question one) were organized into pattern codes using the DAP framework as mentioned above, see Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Developmentally Appropriate Framework for Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Aligned with Practice Codes

DAP Framework for Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education	Teaching Practice Codes
Engage learners in a caring, equitable community	Communication Supports (e.g., revoice, ask questions to encourage student to elaborate on idea, multiple representations of a word or concept) Classroom organization Fostering relationships (interactions with peer through teacher; interaction with teacher) Predictable routines Humor Problem-solving together Sharing "stories" with teacher Social-emotional supports (e.g., choice, gives language, mindfulness) Curriculum integration Differentiation Engaged learners during play Learning is active Reading aloud (e.g., modeling comprehension strategies, modeling print awareness)

	Guided reading
	Songs
	Technology use
	Literacy (foundational skills) Development (e.g., phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, writing dictation, name recognition, writing vocabulary words)
	Technology use
Foster reciprocal relationships with families	Leverage child's bilingualism
	Relationship with family
Observe, document, and assess children's learning and development	Assessment in English
	Assessment using portfolio
	Formative assessment
	Assessing student behavior
Advocate for equitable practices in early childhood education	Critical reflection
	Double-dosing/intervention (ESOL specialist)

Writing Analytic Memos

I wrote analytic notes to describe the coding process to organize my thinking. Following Saldaña's (2016) advice, I used analytic notes in a variety of ways, including to provide a summary of the data as I moved through the collection and coding process and to capture my participants' thoughts and feelings in words that were not spoken but observed. For example, after a day spent in my private pre-k classroom and coding the data, I collected that day I created the following memo

11.26.18

There was a heavy focus today on playing in centers. Children moved freely from center to center, selecting activities. The project-based curriculum is focused on homes this unit. Children built structures in block area, added furniture to a large wooden dollhouse in art area, read books about homes. Routines are in place- children appear to know where to go and when to go to different places. There is very little teacher-centered time. Ms. Martin spent most of the

day moving from small group or individual child to the next. Is this because of project-based

curriculum? Do teachers feel less pressured to rush through the day than other teachers?

Ms. Kane spent time listening and talking with students individually in English. There

was no language used other than English. I wonder if teachers realize this? Is it intentional?

I did notice that during whole group, Ms. Martin introduced Thanksgiving food word

cards that included dumplings, fish, turkey, pie, mashed potatoes- was she thinking about her

students' culture? How and when do teachers address culture?

I used memos like the one above to begin to tie important pieces of data together.

Identifying Themes

After I coded all the data, I moved from codes into themes to deepen my understanding

of how the four teachers supported the language and literacy development of their young DLLs

and how they talked and reflected about their work. I used large sheets of papers taped to the

wall and markers to organize the themes graphically. Teaching practices were frequently

observed across different classrooms. When a practice was unique to one setting, I made a note

of that practice to address my second research question.

Throughout the process of identifying themes, I used thematic mapping, created matrices,

and wrote analytic memos identifying patterns and emerging themes. After several iterations,

themes were identified to address each of the research questions.

My Position as a Researcher

Personal Connection to the Research

To articulate how I position myself as a researcher interested in examining young DLLs,

I include a brief background to provide context. I began teaching at a young age. My mother

ran a daycare for the first eighteen years of my life in which I readily volunteered her daycare children and my little sisters to act as my first students as we played school. In middle and high school, I taught Sunday school, worked at summer camps, volunteered at the public library storytime for young children, and babysat.   My early teaching experiences, although numerous, were limited in an important way. My experiences occurred in a suburban Mid-Atlantic town where the hegemonic ideology of Whiteness ruled the community. I witnessed cruel jokes told with indifference, insensitive news stories in the local paper, and rampant intolerant behaviors like when one morning we woke to see that the walls of multiple community buildings had been spray-painted with the words "Go home illeagles *[sic]*." The hateful message was clear despite the misspelling. The predominant bigotry and deficit perspective of so many fueled my desire to help those who were unfairly targeted, culturally and linguistically diverse children.

In college, I pursued a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, minored in Spanish, and sought opportunities to work with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in camps, tutoring programs, and during my student teaching practicum. When I earned my Master's degree, I focused my studies on TESOL and Bilingual Education and realized that other teachers who grew up in similar communities as mine were effectively teaching and advocating for linguistically and culturally diverse students in communities that were not always so accepting of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. I learned that as a teacher, I could navigate hegemonic curricula and policies that were put in place to privilege English and effectively teach the DLLs in my classroom.

Now, as a doctoral candidate with a specialization in Applied Linguistics and Language Education, I find that I can support DLLs through teacher education and professional development. I encourage teachers (pre-service and in-service) to view their DLLs using an

asset-based perspective. I view an asset perspective as the ability and desire to learn about the

experiences and backgrounds of individual students and to support, encourage, and nurture their

minds, hearts, feelings, and thoughts (see López, 2017). My role as a teacher and my personal

lived experiences have helped to shape my position as an educational researcher.

My Position as a Researcher

As a White, English-dominant woman, like other scholars, I believe in the importance of

sharing my position as a researcher (e.g., Compton-Lilly, 2007). In my researcher role, I

listened, observed, and asked questions to examine how teachers use or do not use the practices

of effective teachers of young DLLs synthesized from the existing literature (see chapter 2). Yin

(2014) asserts that "being a good listener means being able to assimilate large amounts of new

information without bias" (p. 74). I worked to accurately capture the perspectives and beliefs of

the teachers using a variety of tools (i.e., observations, interviews, questionnaires, artifacts) so

that I could share the experiences of teaching young DLLs guided by my research questions and

an ecological perspective of language learning. I describe how I used standards of quality for

case study research to keep my biases in check in the following section.

Standards of Quality for Case Study Research

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of my research (i.e., internal validity), I used

Merriam's (1998) strategies of triangulation, member checks, long-term observations; and Yin's

(2014) advice to maintain a chain of evidence.

Triangulation of Data Sources

Yin (2014) states, "when you have really triangulated the data, the case study's findings

will have been supported by more than a single source of evidence" (p. 121). Following this

advice, I used multiple sources of data—classroom observations, interviews, artifacts, and questionnaires. Using multiple sources allowed me to paint a more multi-faceted picture of the phenomena. For example, interviews were triangulated with other data sources, such as observations, since participants might share what they think I wanted to hear and cause response bias.

Member Checks

Member checks were also important to achieve validity. Member checks involved taking data and interpretations back to the participant for accuracy checks by asking if I have understood my participant's actions and words clearly and interpreted data correctly. Merriam (1998) recommends doing member checks throughout the study. I explicitly conducted member checks during the second interviews with the teachers to ask for feedback.

Long-Term Observations

Third, Merriam (1998) recommends collecting field notes from observations over a period of time. I observed each classroom for ten days, staying approximately four to five hours per day. During this time, I saw many of the same practices repeated. By visiting classrooms more than once, I was able to accurately capture what the teacher did to support her young learners better than a one-time visit, which often produces a "snapshot" of a practice. For example, a snapshot observation such as using only the ELLCO or ELLCO-DLL observation protocol could cause mislabeling or misunderstanding of practices, if the teacher had only used a practice because she knew an observer focused on DLL education, was in the room.

Chain of Evidence

Finally, in addition to Merriam's (1998) strategies to support validity, and to ensure the reliability of my research, I followed Yin's (2014) advice, to "maintain a chain of evidence (p. 127)" so that my reader could follow my chain of thought from "initial research question to ultimate case study conclusions (p. 127)". By following my case study protocol and maintaining a detailed case study database, I ensured that data were worthy of analysis, and findings were plausible and accurate.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described my rationale for using a qualitative case study to address the gaps in the current knowledge base. I detailed how participants were selected to merit their inclusion in this study of high-quality teachers of young DLLs. I positioned myself as a researcher and described my data sources, collection process, and data analysis approach, and explained how my research meets standards of quality for case study research. Table 3.6 reviews my process of data collection and analysis I used to answer my research questions.

Table 3.6

Data Collection and Analysis Overview by Research Questions

Research Questions	Data Collection	Data Analysis
1. How do pre-k teachers, identified as exemplary, support the language and literacy development of their DLLs?	Primary Data: Classroom observations Secondary Data: • Teacher questionnaires • Teacher interviews • Classroom artifacts	-Transcriptions completed "Start list of codes" -Add to list using descriptive and In Vivo coding -Iterative data collection and analysis -Order codes -Identify themes (analytic memoing) -Data matrix for data consolidation (e.g., identify similarities and differences across teachers)
2. What unique practices manifest in different pre-k settings in the study?	Primary Data: Classroom observations Secondary Data:	-Use data matrix created to answer research question 1 to identify practices unique to specific settings

	• Teacher questionnaires • Teacher interviews • Classroom artifacts	
3. How do teachers talk about and reflect on about working with DLLs? 3.a. What challenges do teachers share about working with young DLLs?	Primary Data: Teacher Interviews Secondary Data: • Teacher questionnaires • Classroom observations • Classroom artifacts	-Transcriptions completed - Use descriptive and In Vivo coding -Iterative data collection and analysis -Order codes -Identify themes (analytic memoing) -Data matrix for data consolidation

In the next chapter, I describe the study participants as well as the settings in which they taught, thus providing a necessary context for my findings.

Chapter 4: Teachers and Their Classroom Environments

Pre-k Settings

Private Pre-k: Valley Preschool Center[6]

The first classroom in my study is in a private preschool program, affiliated with a large, urban R1 Institution. The student population is representative of the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of the institution. The language of instruction in the school is English. The preschool has five classrooms. Four classes are full-day (8:30 am-3:30 pm) with the option for extended before or after-school care. The fifth classroom is half-day (8:30 am-12 pm). The program enrolls children ages three to five years, and most are from families affiliated with the university. NAEYC accredits the program. A NAEYC accredited program has met all ten of NAEYC's standards for high-quality early childhood education (see Chapter 2 Literature Review for more detail).

Walking into Valley Preschool Center, I immediately noticed the bright natural light pouring in from the front windows, a child-sized shelf filled with book to borrow and take home, and a large light-filled multipurpose area often set up with gym mats and an obstacle course used for indoor recess when it's too wet to play outside. The school uses a project-based learning approach. The project approach at Valley encourages students to collaboratively and deeply investigate a topic selected by the teacher with input from the students by asking questions and researching answers through investigation and exploration (see Helm & Katz, 2016). Each classroom works on a unique project of study, selected by the teachers and students in that classroom. Therefore, each study is unique and shaped by student interest. Upon entering the

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[6] All names of places and people are pseudonyms.

building, I was greeted by a friendly receptionist and directed to Room 2, my participating classroom.

Room 2 is a bright and cheerfully appointed learning space. The smallest of the three classrooms in this study, but even when filled with twenty children and five adults (two teachers, two aides, and myself), the room always felt comfortable. Each child had a cubby labeled with the child's photo and first name. In the center of the room, there was a brightly colored carpet used during whole-group meeting times and by children playing and reading during center time. The carpet area was enclosed on three sides by an outside wall, a cozy couch often used for book reading or shared reading times with an adult, and a bookshelf filled with books that have been recently read or relate to the project of study. In this area, there was also an easel used by the teachers to display charts and posters, and a cage that was home to the class bird, Marshmallow, who made gentle peeping sounds throughout the day. To the left of the carpet area, there was a small area where children could climb two steps to look out the large picture windows at their playground. Binoculars were hanging beside the windows for children to use. In that area, the teachers have set up centers for blocks and writing. The area has been divided in half by tape on the floor. The tape marks a space where children can leave their block creations set-up for days at a time. They use their photos to indicate ownership of the block-building. Continuing to move counter-clockwise around the room, there was a door to the outside; a sensory table filled with things like water and kitchen tools, bubbles and cups, or paper and scissors; an easel set up with paints and brushes; a child's bathroom; three child-sized tables used for eating meals and doing centers; and shelves that housed a variety of learning tools from markers and recycled materials to use in art center to magnetic letters to use in ABC center. Finally, reaching the right of the

large carpet, there was an area set up for dramatic play that contained a kitchen filled with play food and utensils, baby dolls, dress-up clothing and shoes, and puppets.

The project of study that took place during the duration of my time spent in the classroom was "All About Homes." The classroom environment reflected the study. The teachers created spaces where children can investigate and explore. There was a dollhouse in the art center where children designed furniture from recycled materials and a light table in the science center where children traced shapes they found in different types of house. There were child and teacher co-created posters from the project of study hanging on the walls next to framed artwork created by the students. The children had access to the majority of the room. There were a few areas along the perimeter of the classroom that were clearly for teachers-only as they were on shelves and cupboards placed too high for little arms to reach.

Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin

The teachers in Classroom 2, Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin both identified as English speakers. Ms. Martin also identified as a beginning Spanish speaker. The school used a co-teacher model where each teacher equally shares responsibility for all aspects of teaching. Ms. Martin began teaching in room 2 in the fall of 2017 after Ms. Keller went on maternity leave that summer. Ms. Keller returned to room 2 in October of 2018. At the time of this study, Ms. Keller was in her 15th year of teaching at Valley Preschool Center. Ms. Martin was in her second year teaching at Valley.

Additionally, Ms. Martin taught for one year at a different private preschool. Both teachers earned their undergraduate degrees in early childhood education. Ms. Keller also holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and Ms. Martin was enrolled at the R1 institution affiliated with the preschool, earning a Master's degree in TESOL.

Figure 4.1. Photo of Ms. Keller and a DLL participating in a collaborative writing project
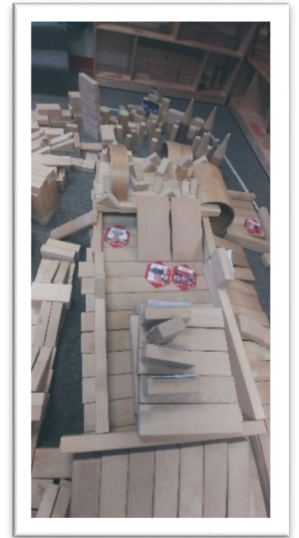
Figure 4.2 Photo of a co-created structure marked by student photos in block center

The Children of Room 2

There were 22 children in Room 2, ranging in age from 3.5 years to 5.5 years. Seven children were young DLLs. Three children were Spanish/English bilinguals; two children were Chinese/English bilinguals, one child was a Korean/English bilingual, and one child was from a home where Korean, English, and German was spoken.

Valley Preschool Center was a private school, and as such, children were eligible to apply for attendance regardless of their home address, so including a summary of the county public schools in which this center is located is outside the aim of this project. According to Valley Preschool Center's website[7], due to the high volume of applications received, the center accepts applicants from families once a child has been born. There was a waiting list. The center

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[7] For confidentiality, specific websites and references for sources containing state, county, and school data are not provide

accepted applications from families not affiliated with the university; however, only if a University affiliate could not fill a space. The tuition for the 2019-2020 school year was $12,220 for full-time with a limited number of scholarships available to offset the cost of tuition.

Head Start Classrooms

Clifton Run Head Start

Clifton Run Head Start was located in a Catholic Charities facility in a suburb of a large metropolitan community. This area had seen a steady increase in the Spanish-speaking population over the past decade. The building was home to four Head Start and Early Start classrooms where the language of instruction is English. Upon entering Clifton Run, I noticed that the facility was clean and bright. A few women worked at desks in the front office area. After signing in, I would head down a brightly lit hallway to Ms. Sykes' Head Start Room. Posted outside the classroom door was a certificate congratulating the class for having excellent attendance. I later learned that attendance had been an ongoing issue for the school, and this celebration announcement was the school's attempt to bring awareness to the community about the importance of having good attendance. Some children in the school were dropped off and picked up by parents and guardians while others rode the bus driven by Ms. Maria, a friendly Spanish/English speaker who always greeted me kindly when we passed one another in the hall.

Ms. Sykes' classroom was bright and colorful, filled with toys, books, and equipment kept in excellent condition. In the center of the room, there was a large colorful carpet where children sat at different times during the day, such as whole group meetings, small literacy and math groups, and during center time. In front of the carpet was a large whiteboard that

displayed the daily schedule, a monthly calendar, and a "who's here today" chart that listed the names of those present and absent. To the left of the carpet, there was a shelving unit that housed centers on both sides, ABC in front and science in back. Next to the science area, there were two computers with screens covered by black construction paper and a small library which doubled as the "the cool down zone" where children could go when they needed a break or to self-regulate their intense emotions. There were three tables in front of the library that the children used to eat breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks, as well as to participate in small group work and centers. A writing center sat in-between the tables and the library. Moving around the room counter-clockwise, there was a door to the outside, a small kitchenette area for the teachers to prep meals, and a bathroom with a Dutch door that allows privacy, but was still open enough for teachers to maintain safety. Along the back wall, there was a row of cubbies. Two students shared each cubby. Their photo and nametag hung inside the cubby above the hook used to hang their jackets. To the left of the carpet area was the dramatic play center, a large kitchen area filled with play food and kitchen supplies, baby dolls, a few dress-up clothes, and a small table and chairs. In front of dramatic play, there was a math center area. Additional centers were tucked away wherever space allowed. There were building and transportation centers near the carpet and art center supplies near the kitchenette. On the walls, there was an area for accountability sticks used to set daily goals such as "I will raise my hand" or "I will try my best" and a chart where children placed a popsicle stick with their name written on it to indicate which center they would visit. Children's artwork and writing were displayed around the room. Spanish/English bilingual word cards and labels identified contents in plastic containers used to store toys and learning tools.

Figure 4.3. Photo of Ms. Sykes' Head Start Classroom, Meeting Area

Figure 4.4. Photo of Ms. Sykes' Head Start Classroom, Centers Area

Ms. Sykes

Ms. Sykes was in her tenth year teaching early childhood and her tenth year at Clifton

Run Head Start. She began her teaching career after spending time volunteering in her daughter's

school as she was growing up. Ms. Sykes had a bachelor's degree in early childhood education

and was completing her master's degree in special education. Ms. Sykes identified as an English

speaker; however, I did observe Ms. Sykes communicate with her Spanish-speaking students using simple commands and phrases such as "sientete.". A full-time classroom aide and a part-time instructional assistant supported Ms. Sykes and the children in her class.

The Children in Ms. Sykes' Head Start

There were nineteen children in Ms. Sykes class ranging in ages from 4-6 years. Seven children were Spanish/English bilingual students and one child was an English/Vietnamese bilingual. The children ranged in English proficiency levels from knowing a few English words to speaking in complete sentences.

Clark County

Given that children from a defined school zone were eligible to attend a Head Start classroom, I decided to provide an overview of Clark County, the district in which Clifton Head Start was located. Children living within the defined school zone whose family had an income level at or below the federal poverty level were eligible to attend Head Start in Clark County. According to the US Census in 2018, the population of Clark County was 168,429; the per capita income was $40,667, with 6% of the population living below the poverty level (US Census Bureau Quickfacts, 2018). The racial makeup of the county in 2018 was 91.9% white, 3.8% black or African American, 2.0% Asian, 0.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0.1% from other races, and 1.9% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 3.7 % of the population and 4.9% of the population spoke a language other than English in the home. In 2010, the racial makeup of the county was 92.9% white, 3.2% black or African American, 1.4% Asian, 0.2% American Indian, 0.7% from other races, and 1.5% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 2.6% of the population (US Census, 2010). While

predominantly rural, the county had seen rapid growth and expansion over the past decade. The population growth and racial/ethnic diversification have brought the racial tensions in this county to the news.

As retrieved from the Washington Post online archives, in 2013, the county board of commissioners voted to make English the official language of the county. The local county paper reported in July of 2018 that Clark County Public Schools announced that confederate flags, swastikas, Ku Klux Klan and Aryan nation symbolism would be banned from schools.

Clark County Public Schools enrolled over 25,500 students and was the ninth-largest school district in the state. Clark County had a graduation rate greater than 95%, with over 81% of its students deciding to attend at least a 2-year college after graduation making it one of the top-ranking systems in the state (CCPS profile[8], 2018). In the 2014-2015 school year, the population was 85.2% white, 5.5% Hispanic, 2.5% Black/African American, 2.7% two or more races, with the remaining .4% identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. In 2014-2015, 20.4% of the population received free and reduced mean plans and less than 5% of the population was classified as "limited English proficient[9]."

Bayside Head Start

Bayside Head Start was located in a Title I public elementary school in a large, urban community. The school was also home to early childhood education and family support center and a health clinic. The school building was quite large, and navigating to the pre-k wing was a

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[8] For confidentiality, specific websites and references for sources containing state, county, and school data are not provide

[9] This term is used by the school district to identify students who are learning English as an additional or second language

bit tricky at first, but after a few times, I was able to arrive without asking others for directions.

The school recently became a dual-immersion school. In the 2018-2019 school year, only the kindergarten and first grades were taught in Spanish and English. However, the plan was to add a grade every year until all grades (K-5) were taught in Spanish and English. The two half-day pre-k programs, the full-day pre-k program, and Ms. Lane's Head Start were taught in English. Outside the classroom door, the class newsletter was on display. An English and Spanish version were displayed side by side. Additionally, there was a sign-in sheet posted for visitors and parent volunteers.

Ms. Lane was the only teacher included in this study who had a full-time Spanish bilingual paraeducator and an ESOL teacher who met with children for forty-minutes per day in the classroom. Both the paraeducator and ESOL teacher were in the classroom during my observations of the classroom but were not the focus of the present study.

The classroom was physically the largest of the three in this study and the only one to include a variety of technology in the classroom, such as a projector, Promethean board, and computers that were accessible and used by the children. When students entered the class at the start of the day, they would hang up their jackets and backpacks on little hooks positioned on the wall. Each hook was marked with the child's name. On a shelf above the hooks, the teacher stored baskets of books organized by topics and themes. Shelving units were strategically placed on the floor to create a cubby room feeling. In front of the shelves, there was a kidney-bean shaped table where Ms. Lane met daily with literacy groups. On either side of the table were the ABC and Science centers. Each center offered children reading and writing materials, a set of teacher and student co-constructed directions on how to appropriately participate in the center, center materials stored in baskets and containers, and labels on each storage container in English

and Spanish. Additional centers were stationed around the room and included computers, math,

play dough, writing, blocks and building, dramatic play, puppets, library, and sand table. In the

middle of the classroom were rectangular tables where children ate their meals and participated

in whole group writing activities, math rotations, and individual meetings with the instructional

assistants.   In the front center of the classroom, there was a large carpet positioned in front of the

Promethean board. Children's artwork hung on the walls around the room, along with a word

wall, a name wall, and multiple areas of alphabet letter cards.

Figure 4.5. Photo of word wall

Figure 4.6. Photo of Ms. Lane's Head Start Classroom

Figure 4.7. Photo of alphabet name wall

Ms. Lane

At the time of this study, Ms. Lane was in her nineteenth year of teaching pre-k through third grade. Ms. Lane spent nine years teaching in pre-k. Ms. Lane earned a bachelor's of fine arts with a focus in photography design. She received her Master's degree in reading education and became certified to teach early childhood education. Ms. Lane has also taken an additional 30 credits beyond her master's degree, focusing on science and math education. Ms. Lane identified as an English speaker; however, she has learned some Spanish words and phrases from her students.

The Children in Ms. Lane's Head Start

There were 20 children in Ms. Lane's class. Nineteen of the children were DLLs. There were seventeen Spanish/English bilinguals, one Amharic/English Bilingual, and one African French/English bilingual. Children ranged in English proficiency level from knowing a few

English words and phrases to reading English at an early-Kindergarten level. Ms. Lane shared with me that two of her students were staying at a homeless shelter in a nearby city and rode a bus for 30+-minutes every morning and afternoon. Through home visits and parent communication, she had an astute awareness of her students' familial situations.

Murray County

Murray County was located between two large urban areas. Murray County was mostly suburban but had areas of dense population as well as more rural areas. Murray County's total population in 2018 was 1,052,567, with 40.6 % (age 5+ years) who spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Census). In 2018, 60.2 percent of the population was white, 19.9 percent of the population was African American, 15.6 percent of the population was Asian, roughly five percent of the population was of another race, and 19.9 percent of the population was Hispanic or Latino, (U.S. Census Bureau). In 2018, the per capita income was $52,828, and 6.9 percent of the population was living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey).

Unlike Clark County, population demographics had remained relatively stable in the past decade. In 2010, 57.5 percent of the population was white, 17.2 percent of the population was African American, 13.9 percent of the population was Asian, seventeen percent of the population was Hispanic or Latino, and roughly eight percent of the population was of another race (U.S. Census Bureau). In 2009, the per capita income was $46,122, and 5.3 percent of the population was living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey).

Murry County Public Schools enrolled 161,460 students during the 2017-2018 school year. 17.4 percent of the student population was identified as an English Learner, and 34.2 percent of the population received free and reduced meals. Murray County had a graduation rate of 89.5% (MCPS profile[10], 2018). In the 2017-2018 school year, the population was 28.3% white, 21.4% Black/African American, 30.8% Hispanic, about 5% two or more races, with the remaining students identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the context and participants in this study. The three classrooms in this study have unique contexts; however, by providing an accurate description of each context, I can better illustrate the role of the learning environment in young DLLs language and literacy development. In the next chapter, I share my findings.

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[10] For confidentiality, specific websites and references for sources containing state, county, and school data are not provided.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter, I report findings addressing each research question. First, I share how teachers supported the language and literacy development of their young DLLs. I use the characteristics from van Lier's (2010) ecology of language learning approach: relationships, context, agency, and quality to show the intersection of practice and theory that facilitated student language learning. Additionally, to answer my second research question, I describe how some practices were unique to a specific classroom setting. Second, I share how the teachers talked about and reflected on their teaching practice and working with DLLs, including the challenges teachers shared when working with young DLLs in pre-k.

Teaching Practices to Support DLLs Language and Literacy Development

To answer the first research question, that asks how do pre-k teachers identified as exemplary, support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs, I used classroom observations as my primary data source. I used teacher interviews and classroom artifacts to triangulate data. This section is divided into two parts. The first part addresses how the four teachers used practices considered high-quality for all young learners. The second part discusses how teachers used practices to support (or target) the specific literacy and language needs of their young DLLs.

High-quality Practices in Early Childhood Education

As I mentioned in my literature review, research has identified several characteristics of high-quality early childhood education (i.e., developmentally appropriate practice, DAP) connected to positive language and literacy outcomes for all children, including young DLLs (National Academies of Sciences, 2017). The characteristics include nurturing social-emotional

development (NAEYC, 2009), intentional teaching of foundational skills (Burchinal, 2018), fostering school-home partnerships and family engagement (NAEYC, 2009), and the use of ongoing assessment to inform instruction and measure progress (Hyson et al., 2006).   Since these empirically-based practices were used to benefit all children, not just young DLLs, I describe how teachers used these practices in more general terms. I then explain in detail, how teachers enhanced this practice to provide extra support to their young DLLs. However, first, I share the results of the ELLCO protocol to provide a background of teachers' language and literacy teaching.

The ELLCO Protocol. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, I used the Early Language and Literacy Observation for Pre-K (ELLCO) Protocol as a tool to examine if the participating teachers were indeed highly effective teachers of language and literacy education. In this section, I share the results of the ELLCO (see Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the protocol).

The ELLCO Pre-K (2008) is divided into two subscales, the general classroom environment and language and literacy. The *general classroom environment subscale* evaluates classroom organization, classroom management, materials, curriculum, personnel, child choice and initiative, and diversity in the classroom. The *language and literacy subscale* examine opportunities for extended conversations, phonological awareness, building vocabulary, discourse climate, the organization, and characteristics of the book area along with approaches and quality of book reading as well as the print and early writing environment. During the observation, I took notes to describe what I saw and heard about each item. These notes served as evidence for assigning a score of one to five for each item.   A score of five represents exemplary, strong evidence that the teacher was meeting expectations of that particular practice to support language and literacy outcomes for young children, whereas a score of one indicates

minimal evidence was observed. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the results as measured

using the ELLCO Pre-K to evaluate the quality of the classroom environment and teachers'

practices in each program.

Table 5.1

The ELLCO Pre-k Overview of Results

| | Pre-K Program | | |
ELLCO Measures	Valley Preschool	Clifton Run	Bayside
I. Classroom Structure			
Organization of the classroom	5	5	5
Contents of the classroom	4	5	5
Classroom management	5	4	4
Personnel	5	4	4
II. Curriculum			
Approaches to curriculum	5	4	5
Opportunities for child choice and initiative	5	4	4
Recognizing diversity	4	4	4
General classroom environment subscale mean	4.57	4.29	4.42
III. The Language Environment			
Discourse climate	5	5	5
Opportunities for extended conversations	5	4	5
Efforts to build vocabulary	4	4	4
Phonological awareness	4	5	5
IV. Books and Book Reading			
Organization of book area	5	5	4
Characteristics of books	4	5	5
Books for learning	5	4	4

Approaches to book reading	5	5	5
Quality of book reading	5	5	5
V. Print and Early Writing			
Early writing Environment	4	5	5
Support for children's writing	4	5	5
Environmental print	3	4	4
Language and literacy subscale mean	4.42	4.67	4.67

Note: The general classroom environment subscale consists of sections I and II. The language and literacy subscale consists of sections III-V. Also, note the ELLCO was administered once to capture the classroom environment and teaching practices used by both teachers at Valley Preschool Center, given the co-teaching model.

The results of the ELLCO Pre-K indicated that participating teachers were highly effective at supporting the literacy and language outcomes of their pre-k students, as recognized by the evidence I collected during my observation that met the criteria of "exemplary, 5" or "strong, 4" support. Valley preschool did score at the "basic, 3" level in the environmental print category. I observed teachers referring children to print in the environment, and they guided children in shared experiences to create environmental print such as class charts to add pictures and words that identify the furniture found in different rooms in the home. However, there was significantly less print used by teachers and children to accompany specific classroom routines, especially compared to the other two classrooms in the study. For example, I observed a lack of labels and signs in the classroom.

The ELLCO provided only a snapshot of the classroom during one observation. The practices identified by the ELLCO fit into the practices of nurturing social-emotional development (NAEYC, 2009) and intentional teaching of foundational skills (Burchinal, 2018) as identified by the research I mentioned in the literature review. This snapshot alone is not

enough to accurately capture the depth or breadth of what teachers *know* and *do*. However, the ELLCO, combined with the qualitative data I collected over two weeks better exemplified what was happening in the classroom in regards to children's language and literacy development.

Nurturing Social-Emotional Development.

Each teacher promoted social-emotional learning by creating a supportive classroom environment where students were treated with kindness and love, as demonstrated through classroom observations and teacher interviews. Ms. Sykes commented, during her initial interview, "I just want all the children to come in and know how much I care about them, and how much I love them, and that they feel safe and comfortable." She elaborated during her final interview, "I want them to love school. I want them to come in and just love school because ..if they don't come into preschool and have a smile on the face and want to come to school then, they're not going to want to go into kindergarten or first grade or second grade." To create a space that children loved, Ms. Sykes stressed that pre-k was a time to attend to children's social-emotional development. "Primarily for me, it's their social, emotional health... because they'll get everything else. They'll eventually get all that [academic skills]."

Similarly, Ms. Keller shared during her initial interview the importance she and Ms. Martin placed on social-emotional development, "really we want the children to come in and develop relationships with us and then develop relationships with each other. I really feel like I want to support them there, so helping them self-direct, find a place to play, and manage the materials appropriately, helping them navigate social problems like sharing and communicating ideas is really important".

I observed several practices used to support children's social-emotional development across all classrooms. These practices included showing affection through hugs and pats on the back, using humor or acting silly to engage with children or make them laugh, incorporating songs and movement, and establishing a positive and welcoming environment (as I detailed for each classroom in Chapter 4). The *general classroom environment subscale* found in the ELLCO aligns with this practice, specifically in such areas as classroom organization, supporting child choice and initiative, and welcoming diversity in the classroom. However, the practice of nurturing social emotional development goes beyond the scope of the ELLCO. For example, during a classroom observation at the private pre-k site, one morning, I witnessed a child (a Spanish-English DLL) arrive in the classroom and greet Ms. Martin with a big hug and a smile on his face. She responded, "That makes me very happy. I knew that was coming. I love your hugs". The child was genuinely happy to greet his teacher, and his teacher responded with a hug and kind words. Affection was readily given and received by teachers in each of the classrooms.

Each classroom also instituted predictable routines that included an interactive schedule where a child, assigned to be the schedule helper, was called to the front of the class during transition times to move a clip or sign to indicate transition from one activity to the next. Children knew when to expect a change and how to handle each transition time, such as cleaning up or lining up to rotate during math or literacy centers.

To facilitate classroom expectations, teachers spent a significant amount of time during the first month of school, establishing structure and routines. Ms. Sykes commented during her final interview, "We have social stories too that we teach the children at the beginning of the school year…We make a lot of classroom books, we role-play; we help the children to learn it that way. Especially in the beginning of the year, it's a lot of emphasis on the social and

emotional components, and then we use it throughout [the school year]. Likewise, Ms. Lane's class worked together to create posters to display in each center to show behaviors and procedures expected to be followed during center time (see figure 5.1 for a photo of a poster). Occasionally, Ms. Lane and her paraeducator referred children to the posters when conflict or misbehavior occurred in a specific center, as evidenced when arguing between two children in dramatic play erupted. Ms. Lane pointed to the center column on the poster and asked, "Oh friends, what words should I hear in this center?" "Here," one of the children responded, passing a baby doll to the other child.
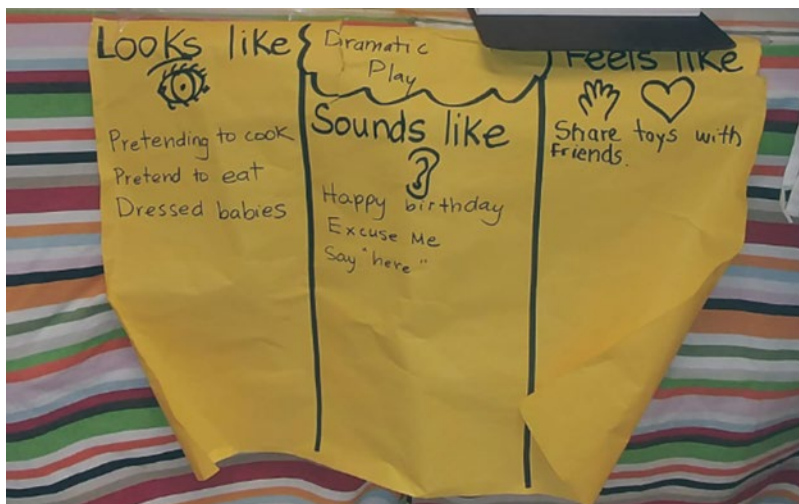
Figure 5.1. Photo of Bayside Head Start's center- expectations poster

I observed that all four teachers routinely used songs in the classroom. Songs were especially present during transition times or when children needed a break from sitting. Most of the songs were accompanied by movement or gestures to encourage children to move. Teachers intentionally incorporated songs for reasons such as to encourage movement and to support learning concepts like rhyme or print awareness while creating a positive learning environment. Ms. Lane commented during her final interview that she included songs to help students feel like part of the decision-making that happened in their classroom,

We actually build a repertoire [of songs]… the first two months of school. We're using the same songs. Now, they kind of have a little bit more choice. They like to vote, and that took a long time to get that routine down…but now they're having that [choice] throughout the day and feeling like oh, I'm choosing what we're doing.

Intentional Teaching of Foundational Literacy Skills.

Teachers understood children to be active learners and used play as a means to intentionally facilitate and practice language and early literacy skills. The categories found within the *language and literacy subscale* of the ELLCO fall into this practice of teaching foundational literacy skills including the intentional teaching of print awareness (e.g., characteristics of books), vocabulary development, phonological awareness, early writing, and using quality read alouds to support instruction.

I observed many moments during classroom observations and through classroom artifacts where children were engaged in active learning and guided play. Ms. Martin shared her belief that "There's a way to get in those academics in really all of the centers that we have. I know like later on, in first, second grade it's going to be different, but for right now I think they're so young, they need play".

Teachers took time to set up the environment in a way that encouraged exploration and choice but guided children to meeting learning outcomes. Whether that was the teacher participating in dramatic play using imagination and dialogue as in the case of Ms. Sykes who ordered and "ate" dinner at the child-created "1, 2, 3 Restaurant" or Ms. Martin who joined a group of children in block area where they had created a catapult to talk about fulcrum and balance there were so many moments of joyful, engaging learning happening every day. For example, Ms. Lane worked with small groups of children each day to provide instruction of

literacy skills. She made this small group time interactive and engaging while explicitly teaching foundational literacy skills. Ms. Lane began this particular group time by showing children a bag filled with small objects. She told children they would take turns picking an item from the bag and sorting it by objects that started with /t/ or did not start with /t/. "Close your eyes. No cheating," Ms. Lane said. The children were excited to draw an object from the bag. The first child selected an object.

> Ms. Lane: Let's say each item first. What is that? [silence] Turtle. Say turtle.
>
> Children: Turtle
>
> Ms. Lane: Does turtle start with /t/?
>
> DLL: Yes.

Ms. Lane turned a simple phonological awareness activity focused on distinguishing between initial sounds into a fun and interactive game using objects.

Furthermore, in each of the three classrooms, children spent time engaged in both structured and unstructured playtimes. For instance, each class had a time in the schedule where children selected "centers" to visit and as the case of the private pre-k when to move to a different center. As I mentioned, these centers were staged by the teachers to provide opportunities for children to practice previously taught skills and to encourage creativity, exploration, and inquisitiveness. Additionally, each classroom had two scheduled times for outdoor playtime, where children had free choice to play with toys such as balls and tricycles or climbing equipment provided by the school in the playground area. Even when the weather was too cold or rainy, teachers did not cancel outdoor time but moved it inside and provided children with extra center time, recognizing that unstructured play was necessary for a child's development. During this time, teachers would often "open" centers that might have been

"closed" during structured playtime for reasons such as the center did not apply to support the targeted learning outcome that day. For example, one bitterly cold day, Ms. Sykes had to move outdoor play inside; she "opened" the sand table, art easel, and playdough area, which had been "closed" earlier that morning during the structured center time. During this time, teachers engaged with students to practice a review literacy and language.

Fostering School-Home Partnerships and Family Engagement.

As demonstrated through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and classroom artifacts, I found teachers intentionally worked to build relationships with families in and sometimes out of school. For example, all three classrooms sent home newsletters to share upcoming units of study, meaningful information about school events, and tips for supporting literacy at home.

In addition to communicating information in writing, teachers met with parents during both formal conference times and communicated as needed by phone and email. In both of the Head Start classrooms, teachers met with all parents four times a year, twice they visit the families in their home and twice at school. During these meetings, teachers and parents set academic and social goals for the child. Ms. Lane shared during her initial interview how she supported home-school relationships.

> I tell parents, you're your child's first teacher, and so we want to help you foster that in Head Start, and I think that Head Start model lends itself to that. But parents are overwhelmed and busy, and so I think that that's something that I try to keep in mind too, where I'm like, oh, I'm not getting as many parent volunteers as I would like, but they're trying. It's just a struggle a little bit, some of the families.

Teachers also described how they like to use portfolios that include student work samples to share student growth with families. For instance, Ms. Lane shared, "Most of the kids don't come in writing their name, so then you can say, look! We practice this every day. So they're able to kind of see that growth".

The private pre-k holds "getting to know you meetings" at the beginning of the school year and then offers multiple opportunities for parents to come into the school throughout the year. Ms. Keller shared,

> That maybe makes us unique. Families are very involved. There are breaks in the university schedule where they [parents] can come and spend time in the classroom, or they can come for drop off and have a quick chat with me or Ms. [Martin], and that does allow for the children to have a little stronger of a homeschool connection maybe.

To foster relationships with families, teachers also went outside of the school walls. For example, at Clifton Run, many children were planning to attend a large Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored by a local church. Ms. Sykes volunteered to serve the meal because she enjoyed "seeing the children and their families interact outside of the school day."

Using Ongoing Assessment to Inform Instruction and Measure Progress.

Teachers took part in rigorous and varied practices to assess student progress. I observed a variety of assessment practices used during classroom observations. Additionally, teachers described practices to me during interviews, and assessments were documented as part of classroom artifacts. The assessment practices found consisted of formative assessment, portfolios, and screenings or summative assessments. First, in each classroom, teachers kept ongoing documentation of observed behaviors. Each teacher has a system unique to his/her

class. For instance, Ms. Keller kept notes on a clipboard that she would then enter into a computer file she saved for each child at the end of the day. Ms. Lane and Ms. Sykes both used post-it notes to jot down quick anecdotal notes (see figure 5.2). Ms. Lane's aide filed the post-its into individual student folders. Ms. Sykes filed her notes away by the student. Ms. Martin often captured student behaviors using the class camera; she would later add photographs accompanied by anecdotal notes to a computer file she kept for each student.
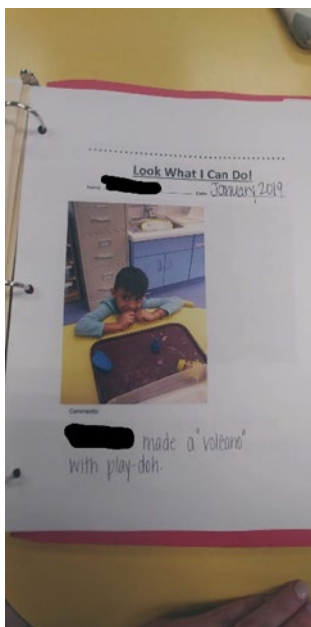
Figure 5.2. Example of student portfolio where Ms. Sykes used photos and text to provide a description of student progress to share with families during conference time

Second, each of the classrooms kept student portfolios to document student progress and growth over time. The portfolios included a combination of photos documenting student work, student work samples, anecdotal notes, and assessments if required by the organization or school district. For instance, Ms. Sykes evaluated children's letter ID and sound recognition quarterly, which she included in their portfolios. Similarly, Ms. Lane did monthly data checks assessing her students' alphabetic and phonological awareness that she kept in students' portfolios.

Finally, summative assessments were used in both of the Head Start classrooms. At Bayside Head Start, Ms. Lane was required to administer the Early Screening Inventory-Revised, ESI-R (2008) that looked at the whole child by sampling their skills across areas of language, reasoning, gross and fine motor, and social development. Additionally, both Head Start teachers were required by their respective school districts to administer county assessments at least twice a year, once in the winter and again at the end of the year. The assessments evaluated literacy and math skills. The data collected on these assessments were shared with the district and again with the child's kindergarten teacher next school year. The private pre-k teachers used the Work Sampling System[11] to routinely identify and evaluate what children can do across domains such as writing, language literacy, and speaking. Teachers wrote narratives sharing how a student had progressed toward meeting the goals found in the Work Sampling System. Documentation was collected ongoing throughout the school year; however, the written narratives were shared with parents twice a year.

High-Quality Practices for Young DLLs

In addition to the practices described above that are considered high-quality for all children, the teachers also used many practices specifically designed to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs. I present the practices under overarching themes. For instance, practices such as revoicing, asking questions to encourage elaboration of ideas, and using multiple representations of a vocabulary word are found in the instructional practice of "communication supports," which is included in the theme "Teachers support language comprehension and production" (See Table 5.1). Practices were taken from practices identified

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[11] The Work Sampling System is published by PsychCorp, an imprint of Pearson Clinical Assessment.

in the literature review in Chapter 2. To provide a detailed description of how teachers approached their practice under each theme, I use data-based vignettes to highlight how a teacher used the smaller practices found within each instructional practice to support the language and literacy development of her young DLLs. Vignettes are used to provide "contextual richness" to display data (Miles et al., 2020, p. 180). I selected each vignette out of the entire data set to conceptualize learning in a situated context, in the moment teaching and learning. The use of vignettes complements multi-case study research, given the highly contextualized situation of each classroom environment. After each vignette, I use the characteristics from the ecological perspective of language learning to analyze the language-learning that occurred in the environment.

Table 5.2

Overview of How Instructional Practices and Micro-Practices Combined with Supporting a Theme

Theme	Instructional Practice	Example of Micro-Practices Within the Instructional Practice
Teachers Support Language Comprehension and Production	Provide Communication Supports	Asks for repeat Asks questions to encourage child to elaborate Deliberate language use and pacing Uses gestures Uses graphic organizers Models language use Prompts by giving language choice Multiple repetitions of important information Multiple representations of concepts or vocabulary Positive reinforcement Uses puppet to model language Uses realia

		Provides sentence prompts/frames Uses resources on classroom walls Uses visuals like photos and illustrations Using the child's first language to support English acquisition
	Build on Previous Learning Experiences	Stimulated recall KWL chart Explicit reference to past lesson or experience
Teachers Assess Language Learning and Use Assessment Data to Plan/Modify Instruction	Use Holistic, Multi-Dimensional Assessment	Assessment using nonverbal or behavior Formative assessment Authentic assessment Multiple ways "to show what you know."
	Differentiate to Meet Individual Learning Needs	Data-driven planning Small group needs-based instruction Use paraeducators Use specialists (TESOL teacher)
Teachers Intentionally Structure the Learning Environment to Support Language Learning	Create a Welcoming and Safe Learning Environment	Languages of children displayed Student work displayed Photos of children displayed Teacher responds to anxious behavior
	Cultivate Relationships between DLLs and Their Peers	Problem-solving through teacher Teacher facilitates collaboration in learning task Teacher facilitates play Teacher provides communication support Explicit instruction on how to work/communicate with a young DLL
	Actively Engage Children in Language Learning	Language as action *Handlungsorientierter unterricht* Songs and music
	Provide Authentic Experiences	Relevant to child's interests Relevant to real-world problem Connected to real-world project

	Teach Mindfulness to Lower Anxiety	Yoga Calm-down strategies Breathing techniques
Teachers Use Curriculum to Facilitate Language Learning	Use an Integrated Curriculum	Makes connections across subject lines (e.g.,. Refers to math concept during non-math time) Use of a theme or project topic
	Explicitly Teach Foundational Literacy Skills	Games/activities to practice alphabetic knowledge/ Phonological awareness Activities to promote name recognition Explicit vocabulary instruction Time for oral language interaction, practice, feedback Interactive read aloud Modeling reading comprehension skills Encouraging "Pretend" reading and writing Making connections between L1/L2 explicit
English-Speaking Teachers Intentionally Leverage Student's Bilingualism	Establish a Community of Learners	Children as language experts Teachers as language learner First language used to clarify First language used for pointing out behavior or giving directions
	Foster Relationships with Families	Written communication in English Written communication in the home language Talking with parents during drop off or dismissal Home visits Phone calls Interaction outside of school

The ELLCO-DLL

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, I intended to use the Early Language and Literacy

Observation for Dual Language Learners (ELLCO-DLL) Protocol as a tool to examine how the

participating teachers used practices of language and literacy education identified as high-quality

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for DLLs. In this section, I share the results of the ELLCO-DLL (see Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the protocol). The ELLCO-DLL goes beyond the measures of the ELLCO by measuring what teachers do specifically targeting the academic development of their young DLLS. Thus, Castro (2018) states, "when used together, the ELLCO-DLL score will always be equal to or lower than the ELLCO score" (p. 2).

The ELLCO-DLL is divided into three subscales, *the literacy environment checklist* that examines the quantity and quality of literacy materials available in English and Spanish, *the classroom observation scale* evaluates the use of technology, classroom management strategies, presence of books, approaches to book reading, writing, curriculum integration, and assessment as well as facilitating home support for literacy development and the *literacy activities rating scale* which examines the time spent on book reading in English ***and*** Spanish. According to Castro, the classroom observation scale can be used in any classroom with children from any non-English language background while the other two scales target Spanish-English DLLs but can be adapted to use with other language groups (Castro, 2018). Table 5.3 provides an overview of the findings.

Table 5.3

The ELLCO-DLL Overview of Results

ELLCO-DLL Practice	Valley Preschool	Clifton Run	Bayside
Literacy Environment Checklist			
Book Selection	1	4	4
Book Use	0	2	4
Writing Materials	0	0	1
Writing around the room	0	1	1
Total Possible Score /16	1	7	10
Classroom Observation			
General Classroom Environment Checklist (scores on a 1-5 scale)			

Presence and use of technology	1	1	4
Classroom management strategies	4	3	3
Total Possible Score /10	5	4	7
Language, Literacy & Curriculum (scores on a 1-5 scale)			
Presence of books	2	4	3
Approaches to book reading	3	3	3
Approaches to children's writing	2	2	2
Approaches to curriculum integration	3	2	1
Facilitating home support for literacy	2	4	4
Approaches to assessment	1	2	2
Total Possible Score /30	13	17	15
Classroom Observation Subscale mean	2.38	3.50	2.75
Literacy Activities Rating Scale			
Book Reading Total Possible Score /14	1	2	2

Note: The literacy environment checklist is scored on a range between one and sixteen, where a higher score indicated an increased presence of bilingual materials accessible to the children. The classroom observation subscale is the mean score derived from the general classroom environment checklist and the language, literacy, and curriculum section. A score of 5.0 indicated "exemplary" or "strong" evidence that the teacher applied the specific practice to supporting the language and literacy learning outcomes for young DLLs. The literacy activities rating is scored on a range between zero and fourteen, where the higher score indicated the more biliteracy support present in the classroom.

The strengths observed across programs as measured by the ELLCO-DLL include classroom management strategies that address the social-emotional developmental needs of young DLLs and approaches to book reading that showed teachers purposefully selected books to read to children that aligned with language and literacy learning outcomes.

The two Head Start classrooms had similar strengths in book selection and the presence of books indicating the presence of bilingual and books in the students' first language at varying levels of reading difficulty were available to the children in different areas of the room including math center and dramatic play area.

Individual programs demonstrated varied strengths and areas for improvement. For example, Bayside Head Start scored well on the use of technology in the classroom to support first and second language development. Whereas, the Valley Preschool Center provided students with an integrated curriculum that combined skills and concepts across subject areas. For the majority of the categories, scores greater than one were only achieved if teachers incorporated the child's home language in combination with specific practice.

As I previously mentioned, I purposely selected classrooms where English was the language of instruction. A limitation for all teachers in this study, at least according to the ELLCO-DLL tool, was they did not speak Spanish and did not always have access to bilingual books and other resources to use with students. To score "5, exemplary" in each category, teachers must possess knowledge of the child's home language and a certain level of fluency in that home language and English. For example, the first subsection looks at the literacy environment beyond what is available to students in English. Thus, within this sub-section, for the category "book use," the observer counts how many Spanish or bilingual books are available in specific areas of the classroom such as the dramatic play area. In this category, observers must also count the number of recorded books/stories available in Spanish. Additionally, for the category "book selection" the observer evaluates that the Spanish or bilingual books accessible to children range in reading level and are representative of the levels of the children in the classroom.

Ultimately, for a teacher to be considered "5, exemplary" in any category found in the subsection "classroom observation" or to score well in the "book reading" category of the "literacy activities rating scale" the teacher must be a trained, bilingual teacher. A bilingual teacher who could provide students with support in dual language literacy development could meet the expectations of required activities such as reading aloud and teaching writing in both the child's first language and English. A monolingual English teacher who does not possess the knowledge and skills required to teach in a dual language program would expect to perform poorly or score low in the categories of the ELLCO-DLL.   I will discuss the implications from the ELLCO-DLL in Chapter 6.

The next section highlights the instructional practices teachers used to support language and literacy development in English as the language of instruction, classroom setting, specifically targeting the needs of their young DLLs.

Teachers Support Language Comprehension And Production.

The four teachers in this study each facilitated their young DLLs' ability to participate in learning by using the instructional practices of providing communication supports and building on previous learning experiences. These practices provided young DLLs the support they needed to understand and communicate in English or non-verbally. All four teachers supported the language and literacy development of their young DLLs by using both planned and spontaneous practices found under the broader instructional practices of communication supports and building on previous learning experiences as evidenced during teacher interviews,

> [I] look ahead of time a lot. I'll look at the vocabulary that's going to be in the story. I'll
>
> try to either have objects or picture cards or something that connects to what we're doing.

For books, I'm specifically looking for, like verbs or things like that, I might put like a

post-it note in there, kind of saying, okay, this is where we're going to act out that and I'll

just put it right in the book so I can remember. Or I'll write it down in my plans so that

I'm looking to target those words or that I'm looking to, you know, be reemphasizing…

but it's also just been like a process of like what's going to work for this kid? (Ms. Lane,

Final Interview)

Ms. Martin shared during her initial interview that when working with the young DLLs in

her classroom, she found that, "asking or explaining in the moment is going to be most

beneficial, rather than later on addressing [a misunderstanding or confusing part]. Again, it's the

authenticity. "

Provide Communication Supports.
Each teacher used multiple communication supports to facilitate comprehension and

production. Communication supports used to facilitate comprehension, also known as input

included: deliberate language use and pacing; using gestures, realia, photos, illustrations, and

graphic organizers; multiple repetitions of important information; and multiple representations of

concepts or vocabulary, and using the child's home language. For example, one morning, Ms.

Lane gave her usual directive, "Please find a number and face me." The children began to move

quickly from their original positions in the center of the large carpet in the front of the classroom

to a number on the perimeter of the rug. Joselina, a young Spanish-dominant DLL, continued to

sit still, not moving. "Joselina," called Ms. Lane. Joselina looked at Ms. Lane, standing in front

of her. "Joselina, dos, two." Ms. Lane holds up two fingers on her right hand while using her left

to point to the number two. "Here. Siéntete aqui." Joselina moved to the space indicated by Ms.

Lane. In this episode, Ms. Lane notices that Joselina did not move to a number. Ms. Lane

provided communication supports to help Joselina follow directions. Specifically, she used Joselina's first language, Spanish, to translate and repeat the instructions while gesturing to draw attention to the number two this time, providing an exact place to go- on the number two.

Communication supports teachers used to facilitate student language production (also known as output) included: asking students to repeat their thought or idea, asking questions to encourage child to elaborate and expand on a thought or idea, modeling language use, prompting by giving language choice, using a puppet to model language, providing sentence prompts/frames to scaffold language, encouraging children to use resources displayed on classroom walls, and providing positive reinforcement when children took risks using new vocabulary and linguistic patterns. For instance, during an observation at the private pre-k, Valley Preschool Center, I observed a young Chinese-dominant DLL tap Ms. Martin on her shoulder to show an object she had just made in the art center.

Ms. Martin: Is it for me or for you?

Child: ((points to herself))

Ms. Martin: For you. Ok, can you tell me about it?

Child: ((Holds the art project up to her eye and looks through it.))

Ms. Martin: Oh. Do you use it to look up at the night sky?

Child: ((Nods head yes)).

Ms. Martin: Is it a telescope?

Child: ((Nods her head, smiles, and walks to cubby to put her project away to take home))

In the previous episode, Ms. Martin asked questions to engage the child in conversation. Although the child was responding nonverbally, Ms. Martin reacted positively to the child by giving her the language that she could use to talk about her project.

In addition to language observed during observations, there were several classroom artifacts present in each classroom that teachers had made, purchased, or created with students to provide communication support. Objects such as vocabulary words with photos, graphic organizers, and posters. See figures 5.3 and 5.4, for example.

Figure 5.3. Word wall display in Bayside Head Start with photographs to represent each word

Figure 5.4. Ms. Martin uses word cards, photos, and graphic organizers to facilitate a discussion

Build on Previous Learning Experiences.

In addition to communication support, teachers built upon previous learning experiences by making connections between new concepts and learned knowledge explicit to young DLLs and by drawing upon the children's funds of knowledge, the knowledge and skills children brought from learning outside of school. I chose the following vignette out of all the vignettes in my data collection because it exemplifies how teachers used the practices of building on previous learning experiences and communication supports both planned and in-the-moment to help with their young DLLs language and literacy learning.

The children of Valley Preschool Center had just returned from winter break. Ms. Keller informed me that morning during parent drop-off, that after children had been away from the project for a while, they sometimes have a difficult time remembering what they had previously learned. Before the break, the children were working on a project, investigating and exploring "homes." Valley Preschool Center implemented a project-based curriculum approach, and the children with the guidance of their teachers had selected this particular unit of study. To help children remember previous learning experiences, Ms. Keller created a book, an authentic text

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using photos taken by the teachers from previous weeks, that included the language and vocabulary she wanted students to recall and use (see figure 5.5). Ms. Keller read the book aloud, checking in with students as she read, pausing to ask questions that began, "Do you remember…?" and " Who can tell me about when we…?" In the dialogue below, Ms. Keller used her finger to draw the shapes the children had identified as part of homes. The children use their fingers to do the same. Ms. Keller read aloud,

> We also noticed there were many different shapes in our homes, like circles. Can you draw a circle? ((Uses gestures to draw circles)). It's very round. Squares. Can you draw a square with four sides? ((Uses gestures to draw circles)). Squares. Triangles. ((Uses gestures to draw a triangle)). Triangles have three sides. One, two, three, and rectangles have four sides. ((Uses gestures to draw rectangles)). Two of the sides are longer, and two are shorter.

After finishing the book, Ms. Keller directed the children's attention to the set of questions they had generated as a class before leaving for winter break. She asked the class,

> Can I show you something? I took this list of questions ((she points to the list of questions printed in the book)), and I wrote it nice and large on two pieces of chart paper ((she places her hand on the chart paper displayed on a large easel sitting next to her)). Starting today, it is our job to figure out if we know the answers to these questions. I'm not going to read them right now. During center time, we're going to work in small groups at the snack table. I brought in some really great books. This is a great book ((Holds up a book for children to see)). What did you see on the front? (see figure 5.6)
> English-speaker 1: People building houses.

Ms. Keller: Do you see that? Does it look like people are building a house? It says,

building our house and it has a lot of great information about how these people built this

home, and it is a true story. This really happened. We will take a close look-

German-English-Korean Trilingual: ((interrupts)) They're not real workers.

Ms. Keller: Right, not workers. Interesting. I'm going to write down all these words. I

have my sticky notes ready. Then, I'll write down all the things you know… All right,

that's our deal for today.

Ms. Keller dismissed children to their play centers.
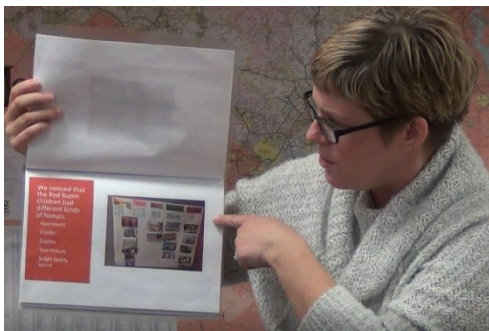
Figure 5.5. Ms. Keller reads an authentic text to the students of Valley Preschool

Figure 5.6. Ms. Keller points to a text

Ana, a Spanish-English bilingual DLL, and Rachel, a Chinese-English bilingual DLL,

joined Ms. Keller at a small circular table in the back of the classroom (i.e., the snack table). Ms.

Keller has placed books about homes on the table along with her sticky notes and the chart with

the children's questions that was previously hanging on the easel. As the girls shared their thoughts and ideas, Ms. Keller wrote down their words on the sticky notes.

Ms. Keller: I saw you looking at this book. What do you use the hammer for?

Rachel: I can never say.

Ms. Keller: It's hard to say. Look at this one. ((Opens another book, points to a photo)). Look, she is hitting something with the hammer. What is she hitting?

Rachel: (points in the text at the object being hammered and then at an object on the next page)

Ms. Keller: Do you know what this is for? (pauses) It's a saw. What will he do with all these tools?

Rachel: Fixing stuff

Ms. Keller: Look at this page. Did they use it for building? See here. He's using the saw to cut. ((Moves hand in a sawing motion)) The piece is too big. What's this? We had this at the math table, remember?

Ana: Measuring

Ms. Keller: Mmm. Right, a ruler. We use it for measuring things. What are these people doing? Can you tell me about it? ((Writes a ruler is used for measuring things on a sticky note))

Ana: Building a house

Ms. Keller: What's that person doing?

Rachel: Ladder

Ms. Keller: Climbing a ladder. Why does he need a ladder?

Rachel: Building

Ana: To go up.

Ms. Keller: Yeah, to maybe get up higher. Is it taking a long time or a short time to build this house?.

Rachel: A long time. ((Ms. Keller writes "it takes a long time to build a house" on a sticky note))

Ms. Keller: What do you think that is?

Rachel: I don't know (quick answer)

Ms. Keller: What does this look like?

Rachel: A house

Ms. Kellar: Does it look like the house they built?

Rachel: I don't know

Ana: Kind of a little.

((Interruption from art center located in front of Ms. Keller- there is an argument over scissors that requires Ms. Keller's attention))

Ms. Keller: Thanks for working with me. I have a lot of great words form you both. I'm going to stick these (sticky notes) on the front (of our chart).

In the above episode, Ms. Keller focused her instructional conversation with two DLLs, Ana and Rachel, and guided them to use a book to find answers to unknown questions, an authentic task common in project-based work. Given Ana and Rachel's age level, attention span, and the emerging English language proficiency level, Ms. Keller planned for this lesson in several ways. First, she created a text to stimulate recall of previously taught skills and experiences and to link curricular subjects. She also brought math (i.e., shapes), reading, and writing together during this literacy episode. Additionally, Ms. Keller selected books that could

be used to find answers to the class questions and planned to use with small groups or individual students. Finally, she planned to record the children's ideas on sticky notes and then stick those notes to the chart paper where she had written the questions.

In addition to planned practices, Ms. Keller used several spontaneous practices intended to support the language development of her young DLLs. Spontaneous practices were used when a student did not understand a question or concept or did not have the vocabulary or language in English to respond to the teacher or a peer. For example, while pointing to pictures in the text, Ms. Keller provided the girls with language support by asking questions to encourage participation while simultaneously building vocabulary with high-occurrence project-based words like hammer, ruler, and saw. She brought in another text and points to additional photos in the book to support comprehension when Rachel does not respond to her questions. Ms. Keller later explained how she facilitates vocabulary development during her final interview, "I try to connect it (vocabulary) if it's coming up in conversation naturally, and maybe we're not as systematic there with our approach. We tend to do a lot of project words."

Ms. Keller did allow the girls to give her one word answers; which perhaps could have been expanded upon. However, accepting brief responses might have been intentional on Ms. Keller's part given, the girls English proficiency level. Additionally, Ms. Keller built on what was already familiar to the students. During the whole group episode above, Ms. Keller used the book she created to review with students what they did to learn about homes before winter break. She used the photos of students in the book to stimulate discussion so that the read-aloud became an interactive event. She then moved from what children knew about homes to introducing books that children would use to find answers to questions posed. She demonstrated for the class how

they would use the pictures and words in the book to help them answer their questions by modeling how to use the photo on the cover of the book to explain the topic of the book.

Furthermore, in the above vignette, Ms. Keller revoiced Ana and Rachel's responses, extended upon a student utterance, and asked for elaboration like "Climbing a ladder. Why does he need a ladder?" and prompted the girls to use the words "long or short" while checking their understanding of time. Additionally, Ms. Keller asked questions to encourage the girls to use more descriptive language to describe what they saw in the books. Finally, Ms. Keller captured Ana and Rachel's words in writing. For instance, when she said, "Mmm. Right, a ruler. We use it for measuring things." She wrote, "a ruler is used for measuring things" on a sticky note. In the above vignette, Ms. Keller implemented several empirically-based micro-practices to support her young DLLs' comprehension and production. Ms. Keller's practices were successful in supporting her young DLL's language development because as she explained she spent time planning but understood that learning also occurred in-the-moment, "how am I going to get her to understand… I think using visuals is definitely something I fall back on a lot. And then taking dictation where it's applicable. I take their words and write it down, and then we talk about the different letters or that this is what they said and it's here [written on this paper]. That's the authentic piece."

Ecological Perspective. I analyzed the above vignette using an ecological perspective of language learning to examine how Ms. Keller supported her young DLLs' language development. First, Ms. Keller fostered **relationships** during the above literacy event. She interacted with students during both a whole class and small group setting to provide multiple opportunities for children to participate in sustained dialogue in a setting in which they felt comfortable speaking. Additionally, she provided **affordances** for the children to interact with

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their environment by creating a **context** or space rich in opportunity for students to interact not only with her but with various books to support meaning-making. By using the texts, the children were successful in participating in the activity of answering the questions posed by the class. Ms. Keller promoted student **agency**. The children were seemingly proud of their accomplishments as recognized by their eagerness to engage in the literacy event and the smiles they gave to Ms. Keller when she complimented the sticky notes that contained the words and ideas they had contributed. The children were **invested** in the learning that took place in the classroom. In other words, Ana and Rachel were motivated to participate in the lesson because Ms. Keller **mediated** the opportunities for children to engage in conversation about the topic of study in a manner where they felt safe to participate. Finally, Ms. Keller made the content accessible by supporting her young DLL's language needs through modeling, revoicing, asking questions intended to encourage students to elaborate on an idea or clarify their utterance. Ms. Keller facilitated **quality** language learning experiences through the use of the child's active involvement in learning through conversations (i.e., **learning as action)**.

Teachers Assess Language Learning and Use Data to Plan/Modify Instruction.

The second thing teachers did to enhance instruction for their young DLLs intentionally was to assess children's' language learning using holistic and multi-dimensional assessments and then provide individualized, differentiated instruction based on the data obtained from those assessments.

Use of Holistic, Multi-Dimensional Assessment.
All four teachers used planned and spontaneous practices to differentiate instruction for their young DLLs. Teachers planned for differentiation after analyzing data from assessments and learning the strengths and areas for improvement for each student but also often modified

their original instructional plan spontaneously when checking for understanding using formative assessment. Teachers commented during their interviews, "I plan lessons a week in advance using the curriculum guide and Head Start Standards... but I know my kids, and I have to do a lot of individualizing" (Ms. Sykes, final interview).

All the teachers in the present study acknowledged during interviews the benefit of assessing DLLs in each of the languages spoken as a way to better understand the child's full depth of understanding by tapping into what they knew in both languages. However, I did not observe teachers using L1 assessment practices. When I followed up about the missing L1 observations during interviews, the teachers explained how assessing children in their first language was a challenge since they (the teacher) did not speak the languages of the children. Ms. Keller admitted, "I do struggle sometimes with assessment when maybe [a young DLL] doesn't have a lot of English yet, or they're not comfortable using English yet in getting responses."

Instead, teachers explained how they tried to capture knowledge in different ways by using behavioral and performance assessments and taking anecdotal notes to illustrate progress over time. Ms. Keller noted,

> So with like my dual-language, I would bring in some three-dimensional objects and maybe ask more like what is this questions, or kind of try to tweak the formal assessment in ways that make it a little more tangible. Our assessment is really performance-based. We have sticky notes. We take a lot of anecdotal notes, and then we try to sit with [the child] where they are and ask or observe or things like that.

Likewise, Ms. Martin described how she assessed her young DLLs by

tak[ing] language into consideration. If I were to be assessing someone that didn't have the English language or word... I would assess them, for example, by asking, 'Can you point to the triangle?' If they don't know the name of something, [I use] identification instead of production.

Additionally, teachers described how they reached out to families for information on student development and progress, too. For example, Ms. Lane shared,

There's a whole lot of assessment at the beginning of the school year. But, before we even do that, we do home visits and so when we go to do the home visits, we're trying to kind of learn about kids and what interests they have and their strengths and what their families feel like are things that they need to work on.

In addition, teachers were continually using formative assessment with their young DLLs to check for understanding. For example, I observed Ms. Lane use a quick formative assessment during a whole group lesson on healthy habits. Children were naming healthy habits they had learned throughout the week to prepare for creating a poster to hang in the classroom on ways to be healthy. Ms. Lane asked volunteers to share ideas. One child shared, "cover your cough." Ms. Lane asked the class, "Everyone show me cover your cough." Most children gestured coughing into their elbow; however, a few DLLs sat unmoving. Ms. Lane quickly asked a volunteer to stand and show everyone how to "cover your cough." The child rose and modeled for the class. She then asked the DLLs who sat still before to repeat the phrase and show how "to cover your cough." Everyone was able to successfully model the behavior and repeat the phrase, "Cover your cough." This quick formative assessment allowed children to show Ms. Lane verbally and non-verbally, who understood the healthy habit and who needed communication support.

Differentiation.

Along with assessment, teachers demonstrated how they viewed their young DLLs as individuals who learn and progress at different paces. Ms. Lane stated during her final interview, "I take all that data from small groups in my formal assessments and informal assessments, and then I plan for activities for small groups or individuals." She also commented, "for [the school district], they have us, when students are not performing well, we have to put documented interventions in place. So my assistant will pull those kids again. So, they're getting me, and then they're getting her, and then sometimes the ESOL teacher as well. So it's like a double dosing of important [skills or concepts].

Ms. Lane also described how she promoted alphabetic knowledge,

It's really individualized. Like when we are going to work on letter books, and we start grabbing some pictures. I look at their beginning of the year interviews and say like, oh, you know, [X, a DLL] really likes Paw Patrol. So, I get pictures of some of those characters and put them in his alphabet books. So maybe he'll pick up some more letters because that has meaning to him.

Ms. Martin commented during her final interview how she and Ms. Kane moved from teaching in a whole group setting to working with small groups of children or individuals,

It depends what we were talking about and what the goal of each meeting was, but [the whole group is] no longer than 15 minutes. I think our mindset is we're just going to come together for a bit and [then] disperse and do the individual work.

Ecological Perspective. I used an ecological perspective of language learning to examine how teachers supported their young DLLs' language development through assessment and differentiation. First, teachers attended to the **relationships** by using assessment and

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differentiation to **negotiate** for each learner how learning outcomes were met. Through

differentiation, teachers ensured that children met with success instead of frustration, thus

lowering the students' affective filter (Krashen, 1982) to remove the anxiety and stress

associated with using their second language to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Additionally, teachers created **affordances** for students to interact not only with her but with

various resources in the classrooms to support meaning-making, thus providing a **context** rich in

semiotic budget. By providing concrete experiences and facilitating **language as action,** the

children were successful in participating in the lesson. Teachers supported student **agency** by

focusing on the individual such as in the case of Ms. Lane using Paw Patrol to engage X in

participating in reading his alphabet book. Ms. Lane created a safe space for her students' to

make an **investment** in language learning as presented through their willingness to participate in

the target language. Teachers supported their young DLL's language learning needs through

differentiating instruction so children were able to progress toward meeting learning outcomes.

Finally, teachers created **quality** assessment opportunities for children to demonstrate what they

knew about a concept or the topic of study through differentiation or supporting multiple means

of representation such as expressing knowledge through actions or gestures in addition to or

instead of using oral language.

Teachers Intentionally Structure the Learning Environment to Support Language Learning.

All four teachers in the present study created an environment that supported language and

literacy development. This practice included creating an environment that was welcoming and

safe for all children, fostering relationships between young DLLs and their non-DLLs peers,

understanding that actively engaged learners learn language, providing authentic learning

experiences, and teaching mindfulness to lower anxiety. Knowledge of instructional practice was demonstrated during classroom observations and artifacts and through teacher interviews.

Create a Welcoming And Safe Learning Environment.

Teachers created a welcoming and safe environment for their young DLLs in serval ways. Practices that promoted a positive learning environment included student work and photos of children displayed, children provided with a clean and organized space, and teachers effectively responded to anxious behavior.

In each classroom, student work was displayed, adding to the colorfulness in the environment while providing an opportunity for children to see their work, as well as the word of their peers, posted (see figures 5.7 and 5.8). Likewise, teachers displayed photos of the children with their families on a wall in each of the classrooms. Children went to the area throughout the day to take the picture off the wall and could be seen carrying it around with them while they felt sad or homesick.
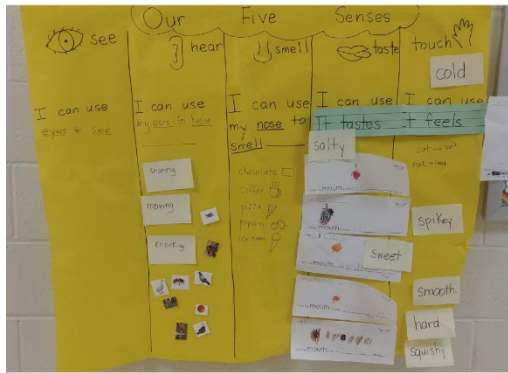
Figure 5.7. Bayside Head Start's shared writing posted in the hall

Figure 5.8. Posted student
work at Clifton Run

Additionally, teachers responded to their students quickly and effectively when they saw

anxiety levels rise. For example, at a little after 10 am one February morning, the children in Ms.

Syke's class were actively engaged in their math rotations when a visitor wearing a uniform

entered the classroom. Valeria, a young DLL, looked up from her math mat, where she had

followed Ms. Sykes' instruction and placed an item that she found to be the same length of the

piece of string she was holding in her hand. The fear and concern etched on Valeria's face was

immediate. "Is that the police. She the police?" Valeria questioned Ms. Sykes. "No.," replied Ms.

Sykes. "She is the fire marshal. She needs to make sure we are safe." Ms. Sykes gently rubbed small circles on Valeria's back. "She makes sure our building is safe from fires." "I stay?" asked Valeria. "Yes, you stay with me," replied Ms. Sykes. After another minute of sitting side by side, Valeria returned to her math task in search of another object to measure. When I asked Ms. Sykes about this incident later that afternoon, she shared that many of the children at school have become fearful of the police as they have witnessed or heard about ICE raids in the Latinx community. Valeria's mother, an immigrant from Mexico, had been recently detained. Ms. Sykes affirmed that she wanted her classroom to be "a community where [the students] feel safe when they come in." Ms. Skyes' desire to create a welcoming and safe environment showed as she gently calmed Valeria was evident in how quickly Valeria responded to Ms. Sykes's reassurance and returned to her math activity.

Creating social environments that foster positive relationships is vital for all children but most likely critical for young DLLs as they navigate their environment while learning a second language. The relationship between DLL's social-emotional development and language and literacy development is an understudied area worthy of more research. Previous research has shown that the learning context and attitudes of teachers and peers towards language and culture, anxiety, and self-consciousness can interfere with a young child's learning potential (Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011). Ms. Keller stated during her initial interview, "We have early learning goals for the kids …and, so I try to infuse that within this environment of social-emotional support, and managing emotions." Ms. Lane commented during her final interview, "I have two children who are living in a homeless shelter right now. They are on the bus before 7 (am) and travel thirty-plus minutes to get to me each morning. Letting them spend a few extra minutes

eating breakfast or napping in the afternoon is fine- they need time like that or else I can't teach them." Ms. Lane, like the other teachers, recognized that a child with a mind in a constant state of worry and unease cannot efficiently process new information. Learning occurred when teachers created an environment to lower anxiety, support the child's well-being, and nurture a feeling of safety and security.

Cultivate Relationships Between DLLs and Their Peers.

Additionally, part of a language learning environment is the positive peer relationships found within the environment. Teachers provided support in ways that facilitated communication between peers such as giving a DLL the language he or she needed to communicate feelings, wants, or emotions to a peer or by encouraging a non-DLL to ask his or her DLL peer to repeat him/herself to say, "I don't understand. Can you show me?" Ms. Keller explained during her interview,

> I just believe in having real conversations with children and speaking to them as people, so explaining to them, "Well, this child took something from you, and yes, that's wrong, but they did it because of this reason, and let's try to see both sides here and figure out how we can work together on this." Then, we might use the timer; it really helps us with turn-taking.

Ms. Martin evidenced Ms. Keller's sentiment as she facilitated communication between Sebastián, a Spanish-English DLL, and his English-speaking peer Jackson. Sebastián grabbed a pair of toy pliers from Jackson. Ms. Martin walked over as the argument escalated and asked, "[Sebastián], I hear [Jackson] saying he wants to use something. Did he want to use them?" Sebastián replied, "yes." Ms. Martin explained, "we can't just take things from people. I'm going to give this back to [Jackson]." Sebastián asked, "why?" Ms. Martin explained, "because it's not

nice. Would you like it if I just took your toy? Ok, so let's go over to [Jackson] and ask if we can use it after he is finished." Ms. Martin held Sebastián's hand as she repeated the question to Jackson. "Ok, he's going to let us know when he is finished." A few minutes later, I heard Jackson inform Sebastián, "I'm done with that, you can have it now."

Likewise, Ms. Lane helped one of her Spanish-English DLLs with the language he needed to communicate effectively to an Amharic-English DLL. "I hear you getting mad and frustrated. You want him to stop touching? Say stop touching." The child repeats, "stop touching," and his peer walked away.

Actively Engage Children In Language Learning.

In addition to supporting peer relationships, teachers demonstrated that children used language more often when they were actively engaged in learning experiences as Ms. Lane explained in her initial interview, "They are so active, and we are doing a lot of like when we have words that we don't know we are trying to move around and act them out. It just comes naturally to them to do things like that".

In the following vignette, Ms. Lane created an engaging learning experience for her young DLLs during their study of healthy foods, where they were actively involved in following directions to make a salad. The children in this vignette are all DLLs at varying stages of English proficiency.

Ms. Lane: Let's unpack my bag. ((The children's eyes are glued to Ms. Lane watching as she unpacked her bag.))

Children: "WOW. COOL."

Ms. Lane: Anyone know what this is?

Lila: Fork?

Ms. Lane: Good guess. This is a peeler. What can you peel with this?

Luca: Potatoes

Julia: Maybe an apple.

Ms. Lane: Yes. You can peel those things. But, we will use it to peel something different. What is this with all the holes?

Elena: The thing you can put something else here and some soap.

Ms. Lane: Oh, we can wash things in here because the water can come out of the holes. What is this called? ((Ms. Lane continues asking children questions as she unpacks a bowl, a cutting board, and a knife from her bag)). Ready? Let's look at our cookbook. ((Ms. Lane displays a picture book on the Promethean board)). It says, "How to make a salad." So we are going to take the colander, and we are going to wash them. Please grab out the lettuce. ((Children are laughing, smiling engaged)). Someone shares, "I like lettuce."

Ms. Lane: Where am I going to wash them?

((Children join Ms. Lane at the sink. Helping her to wash the lettuce and then with tearing leaves). This part here is the part that was on the ground ((Ms. Lane points to the bottom of the head of lettuce)), and the roots are going under the ground, and the farmer cuts here, and this part of the lettuce grew up.

Yamilet: Wait to my mommy sees that!

The children and Ms. Lane worked together to prepare the salad according to the directions in the book. Children took turns participating in different steps and responding to Ms. Lane's questions about what comes next and how you used a certain tool or cleaned a certain vegetable. Finally, once the salad was ready, the children sat at the tables to eat it while chatting

with Ms. Lane and with one another in Spanish and English about the vegetables in the salad they liked and did not like.

Ms. Lane used many practices to support the language and learning development of her young DLLs during this engaging learning opportunity. She introduced new vocabulary, modeled complex language, and provided children with an authentic way to use language in context. This type of learning experience helped children to build background knowledge and vocabulary in English and was referenced later that day in a math activity where every child placed a graphic of their favorite food from the salad in a picture graph on the Promethean board. Overlap in practices between the themes informed that these practices are appearing repetitively in the classrooms in this study.

Authentic Learning Experiences.

Teachers also provided their young DLLs with authentic experiences to engage children in real-world problems and projects that support learning. For example, one morning, a young DLL in Valley Preschool was crying for her daddy after being dropped off during arrival time. Ms. Martin engaged the child in an authentic task that calmed the child and targeted early writing outcomes. Ms. Martin said, "I know its hard, sweetie. Let me show you how to write goodbye, and I will take a picture of it and send it to your daddy. Goodbye. What do you think it starts with?" Ms. Martin writes down the word on a piece of paper. "Do you know what the opposite of goodbye is? Hello". The child laughed. Ms. Martin suggested, "I have an idea. I have some magnet letters maybe you can find these letters to make these words 'Good-Bye'." Ms. Martin brought the magnetic board and letters to the child. The child eagerly placed the letters to spell good-bye on the board. Ms. Martin took a photo to send to the child's dad.

Later that day, Ms. Martin shared with me, "You really have to think on your toes. Just to find those authentic opportunities".

[Mindfulness] to Lower Anxiety.

A practice I noticed repeated by each of the four teachers in this study was explicitly teaching mindfulness techniques to their students. I hypothesize that by teaching mindfulness, teachers were able to support a warm and welcoming classroom environment. Although more research is needed to confirm my hypothesis, I believe including my observations from this study is pertinent in helping to explain how teachers structured an environment to promote language learning for their young DLLs. First, teachers facilitated communication by providing students with a common language to describe emotions and feelings. I observed this language used by teachers and students with their peers as shown below in Ms. Sykes' classroom

Ms. Sykes: What does calm mean? Have you ever felt calm before?

Spanish-English DLL 1: You get better

Ms. Sykes: I see everyone is looking calm right now. Which one helps you feel safe mad, or calm? Does anyone know how to change their body to feel calm? If you are feeling really really mad how can you make your body feel calm?

English-Speaker 1: You take a deep breath and calm down.

Spanish-English DLL 2: Feel bad.

Ms. Sykes: But, how can you feel calm?

Spanish-English DLL 2: Say bye-bye cranky and smell it ((gestures smelling a rose, a previously learned strategy))

Spanish-English DLL 1: You make happy.

English-Speaker 2: She shared a calming strategy. You pick one of the calming strategies, and that will make you calm.

Likewise, at Valley Preschool Center, Ms. Martin led her class in a yoga practice after lunch and before naptime.

Ms. Martin: We are going to do yoga today. Jackson, come up and ring the chime because he's the helping hand. Let's all start in easy pose. ((In a singing voice to the tune of Frere Jaques)) Welcome [children], welcome [children]. It's yoga time. It's yoga time. Ring the chime. Ring the chime. Close your eyes. Close your eyes.

Ms. Martin: When you don't' hear the chime anymore, you can open them. What do you think? You can find easy pose and let me know how your body feels.

Children: Calm. Quiet.

Ms. Martin: Your calm? Namaste is a word in a different language called Sanskrit. It's a language from India. Can you say Sanskrit? I have to tell you something really quick. My grandpa grew up in India. Isn't that neat?

Similar to Ms. Sykes, Ms. Martin asked children to recall previously learned vocabulary taught to provide children with language to use to describe feelings and emotions (e.g., calm, quiet, mad) as well as strategies to use (e.g., deep breath, smell a rose, easy pose) when feeling calm or "cranky."

I selected the following vignette from the entire data set to exemplify how teachers demonstrated understood that the learning environment was critical to supporting young DLLs' social-emotional needs by engagingly providing language needed to facilitate communication. The vignette below illustrates how Ms. Keller prepared children for an unusually loud event.

On a sunny day in November, I observed that Ms. Keller has strayed from the regular daily schedule and began morning meeting earlier than usual.

Ms. Keller: I have some important news for you. Today we are going to have a special kind of fire drill. Touch your nose if you've had a fire drill before. I have had many fire drills. Today we're going to have a special kind of fire drill. We're going to hear a sound. Can you find this in the room somewhere? ((points to the first picture on the poster she created)). See figure 5.0.9.

Children: Oh, there. Over there. ((pointing to the alarm on the wall))

Ms. Keller: We are going to hear a loud sound come from this first, and when we hear the loud sound, what will we do next? ((points to the second picture on the poster)).

Children: Go.

Ms. Keller: We are going to line up at the door. We are going to stand at the door in a line.

Spanish-English DLL: Go outside?

Ms. Keller: And then we're going to go outside. That's right. But we're not going to stop at the fence this time. We are going to go out of the fence and go to this building. ((points to the next picture on the poster.)) The whole school will go there. This building is our safe place. Today, we're going to practice going to our safe place.

Ms. Keller: What if there was a big storm outside, and the fire alarm went off? Could we go outside and stand there?

Children: No.

English-Speaker: Then we're going to get all wet.

Ms. Keller: That's not safe, is it?

Children: No.

Ms. Keller: We would go here. This is our safe place to go if our fire alarm goes off, and we can't stand at the fence. So we're all going to practice going there. When you go here, you need to be very... ((points to the third picture on the poster)).

Children: Quiet.

Ms. Keller: And your eyes need to be looking at.. ((points to the next picture on the poster)).

English Speaker 2: Teacher.

Ms. Keller: The teacher. That's what you need to be doing, and we're going to walk there in a... ((points to the final picture on the poster)).

Children: Line.

Ms. Keller: So first, we're going to hear the sound. Then we're going to walk to our safe place. We're going to be very... ((points to each picture on the poster)).

Children: Quiet.

Ms. Keller: We're going to have those listening eyes on. And we're going to walk in a line. Those are your most important jobs. Everyone got it?

Children: Yeah.

Figure 5.9. The visual Ms. Keller created to help explain the evacuation drill to the children of Valley Preschool

Ms. Keller later explained to me her reasoning behind her lesson.

> I was really trying to think about okay, so we have this drill. How am I going to make
>
> sure, especially like [Yoon, a Korean-English DLL], how am I going to get her to
>
> understand what is going to happen, so she doesn't worry. So, I definitely thought a lot
>
> about that. So, I was like, well, let me at least get some picture so I can briefly go through
>
> these pictures so at least she has something in her mind. And then, even if she doesn't
>
> understand everything I'm saying right now when it happens, she can be like, "Oh, this is
>
> like the picture."

Ms. Keller anticipated that the evacuation drill would be scary for many of her students; however, she explained that this drill could be even more worrisome for her young DLLs. By taking the time to carefully explain the event in words, pictures, and visuals, she was able to make clear for children what to expect while providing the children with a clear plan on what to do.

Ecological Perspective. I found that in the above vignette, Ms. Keller designed a learning environment to support the language and literacy development of the young DLLs as she

attended to the characteristics of an ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2010). For example, Ms. Keller facilitated **relationships** between the children and the new event that was to occur in the learning environment by explicating expectations during the drill through modeling and explaining the language, procedures, and expectations. She essentially made the unspoken rules and expectations of what to do during a drill clear for her students. The **context** was structured and organized to promote efficiency and calm and lower anxiety during the drill. As Ms. Keller shared in her interview, she felt that even if children did not understand the language of the event, they could recall the photos they had seen and perhaps make the connection between the actual drill and the images. Ms. Keller supported student **agency** by presenting a movement or change in routine in advance to prepare and support students for the difference in routine. Ms. Keller used **quality**, empirically-based practices like visuals, modeling, and repetition to convey the new procedure to her young DLLs.

Teachers use Curriculum to Facilitate Language Learning.

The fourth way teachers supported the language learning for their young DLLs was through the curriculum. Teachers integrated the curriculum across subject area lines, made clear those connections between one subject area and another, and explicitly taught foundational literacy skills.

Use an Integrated Curriculum.

Each classroom used an integrated curriculum approach to support instruction. For instance, Valley Preschool Center met learning standards by connecting subject areas to one project, the study of homes. Similarly, the two weeks I observed at Bayside Head Start, the instruction was centered around the five senses and then healthy habits. At Clifton Run Head Start, the curriculum was text-based; each week, subject areas were centered around a different

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text, for example, *The Little Red Hen.* Additionally, the text was part of a larger theme such as *Stories and Rhymes* or *Choices*. In the episode below, Ms. Sykes demonstrated how she integrated the curriculum across subject areas. She displayed a black line with yellow dots on it to a small group of four children, three of whom were DLLs during a math lesson on ordinal numbers.

> Ms. Sykes: We are going to retell the story we read this morning by looking at these picture cards to tell what happened. We are going to put the picture of the event that happened first on the first yellow dot. Then, we'll put the second story event on the second yellow dot….

Ms. Sykes used the read aloud when teaching math. She connected the curriculum areas to support concept development. She also used visuals, illustrations of the events from the story to support comprehensible input. After asking students to find the illustration that would go first, she realized students were not understanding the task. She modified her lesson by modeling the task for students. Ms. Sykes picked up the first card and asked, "look at the picture. Tell me what happened".

> DLL 1: The rooster wanted to eat the golden.. the golden
>
> Ms. Sykes: do you remember what this is?
>
> DLL 1: no
>
> Ms. Sykes: corn. The golden corn. Please take that picture and put it on the first dot. ((points to the first dot)).
>
> Ms. Sykes: ((looks at the children in her group)) This is corn. Remember when we had corn in the science center? Do we still have corn there? Can you go get it?
>
> DLL 2: ((Picks goes to science center to get acorn kernel)).

Ms. Sykes: See, this is golden corn.

Ms. Sykes used the student's previous learning experience to build new knowledge. She supported her young DLLs' language and content development. Ms. Lane shared during her final interview, "even in math; we were using healthy foods that we were reading about during our literacy. So everything is just connected throughout the day."

Explicit Instruction Of Foundational Literacy Skills.

In addition to using an integrated curriculum approach, all four teachers addressed foundational literacy skills through explicit instruction. The teachers evidenced this instruction through the use of games and activities to practice alphabetic and phonological awareness and to promote name recognition, incorporating time for children to engage in oral language interaction, practice, feedback, teaching vocabulary, using interactive read alouds to model and practice reading comprehension skills, encouraging "pretend" reading and writing, and by making connections between a child's first language and English explicit.

For example, Ms. Lane taught literacy in small groups of children daily. In one lesson, she told the five young DLLs in this particular literacy group, "You are going to find the Ds like D[avid] or the d like in [Vader]'s name." Teachers frequently referred children to the names of classmates when providing alphabetic instruction. Like the other teachers in the present study, in the example mentioned above, Ms. Lane spends a significant amount of time working with children on reading their names as well as the name of their classmates. I observed several examples where teachers referred children to look at the names written neatly on strips of paper (Bayside and Clifton Run), hung on a classroom wall (Bayside and Valley Preschool) or displayed under the child's photo on a small piece of paper used to indicate a child's choice for

center (Bayside and Clifton Run) or to mark a building in block center that was built by a

particular child or group of children (Valley Preschool).

At Clifton Run Head Start, the children participated in a daily reading of the alphabet

chart. Each morning, Ms. Sykes assigned a different child to be the foundational literacy helper.

This helper would come to the front of the class, and guide the children in reading the alphabet.

The helper used a pointer to keep a slow and steady pace while Ms. Sykes stopped the class if

children said the alphabet faster than the pointer was moving like in this example, "Oh, my

friends, we haven't got that far. Please wait for [young DLL] to point to the letter first. " (see

figure 5.10 for photo) Additionally, Ms. Sykes explicitly taught phonological awareness skills

such as rhyming by displaying a large poster of a poem or nursery rhyme. Children were asked to

circle rhyming words. (see figure 5.11).

Figure 5.10. A young DLL at Clifton Run modeling how he uses a pointer to point to the
alphabet chart

Figure 5.11. A Young DLL circles the rhyming pair of words in the poem

I selected the following vignette out of all the vignettes in my data collection because it exemplifies how teachers enhanced their instructional practice to help their young DLLs meet language and literacy learning outcomes. The following vignette highlights how Ms. Sykes' students participated in the interactive read aloud by presenting a retelling of *The Little Red Hen* followed by explicit instruction focused on print awareness and alphabetic letter knowledge provided during a follow-up lesson with a small group of students.

Ms. Sykes had previously read the story of *The Little Red Hen* three days that week. For the fourth reading of the story, Ms. Sykes had children volunteer to act out or retell the story. Ms. Sykes, made necklaces for each "actor" to wear with a picture of a character from the story. Four children volunteered to retell the story as the rest of the class sat on the carpet to watch. The child who wanted to be the Little Red Hen (the only volunteer for this role) was a monolingual English speaker. Two of the children were Spanish-English bilinguals, and the fourth child was an English-speaker whose parents were second-generation Americans from Vietnamese immigrants. Ms. Sykes served as the narrator, guiding the "actors." However, the children were the ones acting out the story. In the story, The Little Red Hen does the majority of the speaking;

however, the other characters reply to the Little Red Hen's requests for help with "not I" or at the end with, "I will." This division in the level of required communication in English facilitated the young DLLs' participation in the retelling. Once they wrapped up the retelling of the story, Ms. Sykes announced that she was adding the necklaces to a center and encouraged children to participate in acting out the play during their center time. Figure 5.12 shows an image captured from the acting out of the *Little Red Hen.*

Figure 5.12. The children in Ms. Sykes' class retell the story of the Little Red Hen.

After the retelling experience, Ms. Sykes announced the three group rotation the class would take part in to reinforce specific foundational skills. The three group rotation that followed a whole class literacy event was a routine occurrence in the classroom. This particular three group rotation consisted of one group of children drew and wrote about their favorite part in the story with the paraeducator, one group of children played a familiar card game, and the third group worked with Ms. Sykes. Each group lasted for about nine minutes before a timer dinged, indicating time to move onto the next rotation. In this rotation, six children gather around Ms. Sykes. The children were Spanish-English DLLs. During Ms. Sykes' small group rotation, children were introduced to a word card with the word "bread" printed on it. Bread is a word that appears repetitively in the *Little Red Hen*. The word card is attached to a magnetic board.

Ms. Sykes: This is the word for bread. Let's all say bread.

Children: Bread.

Ms. Sykes: Let's say each of the letters in the word bread. B-R-E-A-D. ((Ms. Sykes points to each letter as the children read.)) How many syllables are in bread? Let's clap it out.

Ms. Sykes and Children: Bread ((they clap once as they say the word))

Children: One.

Ms. Sykes: Right, there is one syllable in the word bread. Everyone will get their card and their letters ((holds up a cup filled with letters)) and then they will spell the word bread. Then, they will show me how they used the letters that make up the word bread. Then, you will get your whiteboard, and you will write the word bread (see figure 5.13).

Young DLL: I thought we draw.

Ms. Sykes: We don't draw words, we write words. You draw pictures.

Ms. Sykes divided the group of children into pairs, and each pair was given a magnetic board, a cup containing the letters b, r, e, a, d, and a word card with the word bread printed on it. The children went to work using their letters to spell the word bread (see Figure 5.14) as Ms. Sykes moved from child to child, taking notes on a clipboard while reminding children, "Please do not move your letters before showing me."
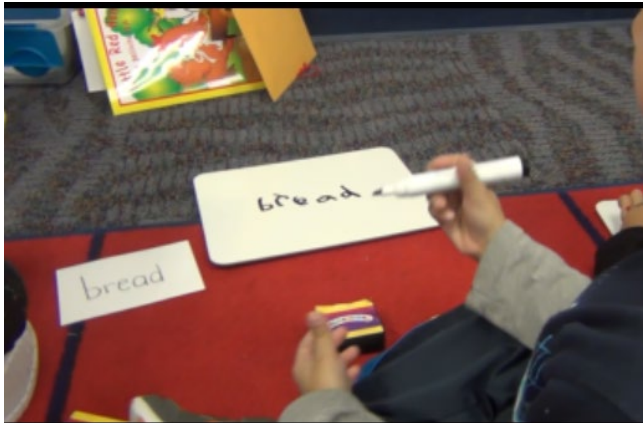
Figure 5.13. A young DLL uses a whiteboard to practice writing

Figure 5.14. A young DLL uses magnetic letters and a word card to practice print awareness concept; words are made up of letters

In the above vignette, Ms. Sykes used multiple practices to enhance instruction specifically intended to support the language and literacy development of her young DLLs, she used multiple strategies to aid in reading comprehension. Ms. Sykes had children engage physically through acting out the story, used pictures to identify characters, and provided multiple re-readings of the same story.

Additionally, this lesson encouraged children to volunteer in a setting in which they felt most comfortable presenting a retelling of the story, either as a volunteer in front of the class or at a later time during center time when they could practice the retelling in a small group setting. During center time, the children could choose to retell the story in their first language or English. During the small group rotations, Ms. Sykes provided explicit instruction in print awareness and alphabetic knowledge. She drew attention to the concept that words are made up of different letters (a concept of print awareness) and then had children practice identifying and writing the letters b, r, e, a, and d. Additionally, Ms. Sykes took anecdotal notes that allowed for multiple ways for children to demonstrate understanding as she observed the children orally identify, place the letters found in the word bread in the correct order, and write the letters.

Ecological Perspective. Analyzing the above vignette from an ecological perspective of language learning, we see Ms. Sykes support her young DLL's language development in several ways. Ms. Sykes fostered **relationships** during the above literacy event. She interacted with students during both a whole class and small group setting to provide multiple opportunities for children to participate in sustained dialogue as well as to demonstrate their alphabetic knowledge.   Additionally, Ms. Sykes provided students with a context high in **semiotic budget** that included multiple sources to support meaning-making, including pictures, using one's body, speaking, letter tiles, word card, and a whiteboard. Ms. Sykes supported student **agency**. She encouraged her DLLs to become actors who retold the story of *The Little Red Hen* while leading the learning experience for the class. As a result, children made an **investment** in their role as a language learning. Ms. Sykes also created **quality** opportunities that actively engaged children as actors and audience members and later as a partner completing a shared task and then as an individual writing a word. Finally, Ms. Sykes made the content accessible by supporting her

young DLL's language needs through protracted language use and by providing children with the option to retell the story during center time. She lowered the **affective filter** by offering children a time and space where there would be less performance pressure than performing in front of the entire class.

English-Speaking Teachers Intentionally Leverage DLLs' Bilingualism.

All four teachers in the present study identified as English speakers. Only Ms. Martin felt she was at a "novice or beginning-level" experience communicating in Spanish. Teachers commented on how leveraging students' bilingualism created a community of learners and fostered relationships with their families. All four teachers spoke of the importance of leveraging their young DLL's bilingualism and drawing upon their language as a resource, as evidenced during classroom observations, observed in classroom artifacts, and shared during the teacher interviews.

Community of Learners.

Previously, I described how teachers recognized the individual learning needs of their students. However, Ms. Martin admitted that the way she meets a child's needs, "depends on the child and their personality and their family." Ms. Martin recognized that children develop at an individual pace and that many factors influence how quickly a child meets a specific learning outcome. However, a keyword in her quote is 'family.' Like Ms. Martin, the teachers in the present study recognized that DLLs brought different language and literacy experiences to the classroom that children from English monolingual families might not. Ms. Keller shared during her interview that she promoted her DLL's strengths by "using the kids as experts." She encouraged children to "share their language [expertise] but also their knowledge as students with individual passions and interests who are learning new things and eager to share with others

what they have learned." In every interview, teachers commented on how they approach

language use in the classroom environment. The teachers understood as four-year-old Chris

shared in Ms. Sykes' class one afternoon that "All of the Earth doesn't speak English. They can

speak Thai or Spanish." "That's right!" Ms. Sykes replied, "Even in our classroom, we have

friends who can speak English and Spanish." Teachers recognized that children came with

unique linguistic backgrounds and viewed bilingualism as an asset. For example, Ms. Martin

encouraged her students to share their language with the class. She explained, "You can tell that

they're very proud of their language. I think it's just something special to see them teaching our

class. "

I selected the following vignette from the entire data set to highlight how teachers

recognized the assets children contributed to the learning environment. This vignette examines a

moment in Ms. Lane's Head Start classroom where a community of learners came together as

children and teacher traded roles of "language expert."

The school day has just begun. Children were finishing breakfast, signing-in by writing their

names on a piece of paper attached to a clipboard, as they do every morning, and unpacking their

belongings. Ms. Lane sat down on the carpet in the front of the classroom with a group of

children who were finished with their morning routine. A child handed Ms. Lane, a

Spanish/English bilingual picture book about food. The children had been studying healthy

eating and taking care of your body for the past few weeks. Two children gathered around Ms.

Lane as she read aloud.

Teacher: *(points to the words)* Carrot. Zan… Zan-a…

Child 1: *(points to the picture)* Zanahoria

Teacher: Oh, boy. Zan- a-hor-a?

Child 1 & 2: (laughing) No. Zanahoria

Teacher: That word is hard for me to say! I need to practice. Can we try another one?

Teacher: *(points to the word)* Ice-cream. Helado. I know that one!

Child 2: Yes. Helado.

Teacher: Mmmm. I like helado.

Child 1: I like. I like.

Teacher: What flavor ice-cream is this?

More children gather around as she reads for another five minutes.

….

Teacher: Ok. We need to get ready for meeting. We can look at this book anytime. It's in our library.

In the above vignette, Ms. Lane sat down with children as she does many mornings ready to participate in a shared reading experience. However, on this day, the children brought Ms. Lane a bilingual book. Ms. Lane positioned herself as a language learner allowing children to demonstrate their language expertise. In this way, Ms. Lane surreptitiously showed her students that what they know and do at home is valued and encouraged in their classroom.

Ms. Lane commented during her final interview that, "the kids help me out too. They really like to be able to say, "That's this word in Spanish," and then when I say it incorrectly, they kind of laugh and then I say, "Well Ms. [Lane] is learning Spanish, and you're learning English so we're

all trying to learn from each other." The dialogue below highlights another example of how this language learning occurred naturally in the classroom while preparing students for the day's read aloud.

> Ms. Lane: Look at the front cover what else do you see that you can add to a salad?
>
> Child: Tomatoes.
>
> Ms. Lane: How do you say lettuce in Spanish?
>
> Children: Lechuga
>
> Ms. Lane: Letuga?
>
> Children: Lechuga.
>
> Ms. Lane: Oh, thank you for teaching me Spanish!
>
> Isabela: You learning Spanish?
>
> Ms. Lane: Yes, and you are all good teachers for not laughing at me. You are teaching me.

Ms. Lane noted during her final interview that she believed it was especially important for her to emphasize that we learn Spanish and English from one another because

> It's hard teaching students that are learning another language and then have all these other things on top of it as well. Next year the kids in the class will move to the dual-language program here; it's Spanish and English. That will be better for them.

Ecological Perspective. Analyzing the above vignette from an ecological perspective of language learning, we see how Ms. Lane viewed her DLLs' bilingualism as an asset, she leveraged their linguistic abilities and emphasized how children could teach the teacher. Ms. Lane fostered **relationships** by participating in a dynamic back and forth exchange with her

students. Additionally, Ms. Lane provided a **context** for students to use multiple sources to support meaning-making, including using pictures and words to bridge two languages and by encouraging exploration during in-the-moment (seemingly spontaneous) student-initiated learning opportunities. Ms. Lane supported student **agency**. She **positioned** DLLs as language experts to share their knowledge of their home language and promoted their self-confidence by encouraging students to teach the teacher. Ms. Lane also created opportunities that actively engaged children in high-**quality** practices of language learning, such as being responsive to students and finding ways where students and teachers share in the talk happening in the classroom.

Relationships with Families.

The teachers also shared their thoughts about family-teacher interactions and parental involvement in the school. Teachers described their relationships with the families of their DLLs in a multitude of ways, including positive, supportive, and challenging. For example, when teachers discussed getting in touch with parents to discuss concerns, Ms. Sykes shared, "you call them, they call you right back. They're respectful of our time." Similarly, Ms. Keller shared, "we're able to communicate really effectively with families, which we're very fortunate. Everyone has access to a computer, and I can email." For example, as part of their study of homes, Ms. Martin and Ms. Keller requested that all families send in a photo of their home for their child to share with the class. "All the children participated and were excited to tell us about their home."   However, Ms. Lane had a different experience with many families the year this study occurred. She told me during her final interview,

Sometimes I run into like, this is your job and this is my job, and our jobs are not to work together. I struggle with that my job, your job, and then shifting it to this is our job. [However], We're lucky because the majority of the kids in our class are walkers. So with the exception of four kids, everyone walks. So you see families at arrival time… we encourage parents to drop off at our back door, and in the afternoon, families are picking up their kids here, too. So if there's something that went really well that day or something that the kid struggled with, we can just talk to the family right when they come, which is really nice. I try to build relationships that way.

Ms. Lane also explained that she has gotten to know parents and their children over the past few years because

I get a lot of siblings and cousins; there's a lot of families that I've had that it's like, oh, that's my cousin, or that's my uncle or my aunt. So over time, you kind of get to know families, you get to know particular things about the families and the children because you're working with them so closely in their homes with siblings, then you kind of get to have a relationship.

As part of the Head Start program, to help build home-school relationships, teachers visit each child's home twice a year. Ms. Lane described how she brings items to families like bubble letters, playdough, letter cards, and games. She modeled how to use the materials. The following scenario illustrates how Ms. Lane explicitly refers to the games she brought to the children's' homes during a recent home visit and provided time for children to play the same game in school.

Ms. Lane: When I was at your house two weeks ago, I gave you all a board that looks like this and letter cards and bears ((Ms. Lane pointed to each object as she named it)). Have you played this at your house? [Elena], ((a Spanish-English bilingual) who can you play with at your house?

Elena: My mom, and my dad, and my brother

Ms. Lane: I know all of you have brothers and sisters to play with. Can you do that at your house this weekend? Will you tell me how it goes?

Teachers demonstrated how families could support classroom learning to deepen the child's understanding of the concepts or ideas; however, they also saw that they could support the child's home-learning experiences at school. In another example, Ms. Keller shared, "I'll talk to families and just see what do they do at home, and here's what we're talking about at school, can you reinforce this at home, and things like that." Ms. Martin echoed Ms. Keller's response, "when we were first began sharing our homes, we asked specifically for our parents [of DLLs] to tell us a little bit about their home so that we had background information and could plan what to ask [the child] questions about [their home]."

Teachers also reached out to parents by email when concerned about a young DLL's change in behavior. Ms. Keller shared one afternoon that she noticed that Yoon, a Korean-English DLL, was withdrawn, playing by herself, and not speaking. She sent an email to her parents the night before to ask if something had happened at school. That morning the child's mom told her that she was feeling left out. A pair of students that had initially welcomed her into their group had begun to exclude her. Yoon's mother shared that Yoon did not realize she could

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choose to play with anyone in the class. Ms. Keller and Yoon's mom decided to pair her up with another child who seemed to be having difficulty making friends after moving from a part-time preschool classroom to this full-time preschool. Ms. Keller commented, " When children can't express themselves, I know parent communication is super important in helping to figure out my DLLs."

Additionally, all four teachers cited how they have reached out to parents for home language support in the classroom. During our first interview, Ms. Martin showed awareness of her own limitations in understanding different cultures and speaking languages other than English.

> We tell the families that they can come in and share about the holidays that they celebrate, or different traditions, or about their culture or language. Last year, we had one mom come in and read a book in Spanish and do yoga poses in Spanish. Really, we want to provide families the opportunity to bring language and culture into our classroom, because we're not experts on culture, so we don't want to be teaching something that we don't really know about.

These examples elucidate the teacher's commitment to understanding how to build and nurture home-school relationships with families of young DLLs. Each teacher welcomed and encouraged parents to come into the classroom to share their time, skills, or knowledge. Additionally, teachers made phone calls, home visits, sent emails, and spoke to parents during drop-off and pick-up times as a way to engage in reciprocal communication. They made a point not to send home paperwork that may be difficult for families to read or understand without offering translation services or going over the documents together in person. Ms. Sykes shared

that the bus driver, a Spanish-English bilingual, would frequently volunteer her time to help Spanish-speaking families complete and understand paperwork. Teachers demonstrated that they had to think deeply about how they communicated with families and adopt the best way to do so.

     Ecological Perspective. Using an ecological perspective of language learning, I found that when teachers positively engaged with families, they used **relationships** to facilitate negotiations in how a child's learning goals were met. The ecological perspective of language learning posits that **negotiation** between the learner and his/her teacher supports language learning (van Lier, 2000). In this case, the child's parents worked with the teacher to assist the child's progress toward meeting learning outcomes. Additionally, van Lier (2004) asserts that the learner's **perception** of the world is shaped through observations in their **environment**. When conversations occurred during drop-off or pick-up times, the child observed his or her parent and teacher communicating and working collaboratively to support his or her language development. Likewise, when the child watched his or her parents and teachers conversing, the child observed adult conversations. The child's sense of **agency** may develop when children see their parents and teachers invested in their education and well- being (van Lier, 2010). Furthermore, access to adult conversations that model complex linguistic features such as semantics, pragmatics, and syntax provide **quality** learning experiences for young children who are developing oral communication skills.

Practices Unique to a Specific Setting

     To answer the second research question: What unique practices manifest in different pre-k settings, I used classroom observations as my primary source of evidence. I included teacher

interviews and classroom artifacts as secondary sources to triangulate my findings. I first provide practices by setting and then explain how practices support young DLLs' language and literacy development from an ecological perspective of language learning

Valley Preschool Center (Private Pre-k)

Co-teaching. During each of the classroom observations at Valley Preschool Center, I observed Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin sharing the role of lead-teacher equally. Often Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin would take turns leading the morning meetings, but when one teacher was in the front of the classroom, the other teacher was sitting on the floor with the children observing or taking notes and photos to use for documentation/assessment purposes. Ms. Martin shared during her final interview,

> I love co-teaching, and I think we build off of our strengths…and [we] kind of throw ideas off of each other. Like, "This is my idea, what do you think," and coming up with a compromise. So, for instance, [Ms. Keller] did most of the planning for the week for the whole-class meetings, we typically…alternate but I was like, "This is your plan and you know what the idea was. You envisioned it, so what do you want to do this week?" Yeah, having that flexibility is really nice.

Unlike Bayside and Clifton Run Head Start classrooms that used a lead teacher-paraeducator model, the co-teaching model with two lead-teachers was unique to Valley Preschool Center. Each teacher held a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and had a Master's degree or was working on her Master's degree in Education. Both teachers used her expertise and experience as they participated in the co-planning and co-implementation of

lessons as described above by Ms. Martin as well as the co-assessing of children as described below by Ms. Keller,

> We always have a math center activity plan, and a writing center activity plan, a sensory experience plan, a fine motor experience plan, our investigation plan. [Ms. Martin] and I talk every day at nap time, we talk about who did this today. What did we observe? We're constantly taking notes, so yesterday I said to her, "I'm really worried about [young DLL's] fine motor development. Let's figure out something we can do to support him." We document with our cameras, so if someone did some amazing writing, I would share that with her, and then we'd talk about how maybe we could get a child to do more or to take more risks. She and I also talk off the clock very often.

The co-teacher model increased the amount of time children spent with a highly qualified teacher. For instance, during one observation, I observed Ms. Martin working with a small group of children on subitization using teddy bear counters. Ms. Martin varied the level of difficulty for the task depending on the child's current skill level with subitizing. For some children, she provided a single tens-frame and less than five bears while for others, she gave a double tens-frames and increased the number of bears used from five to ten or even up to twenty. For other children, after completing the first task, she would line up the bears and place a small sticky-note under each bear for the child to practice writing the corresponding numeral. Meanwhile, Ms. Keller worked with two students at a time to record the furniture found in different rooms of their individual homes (see figures 5.15 and 5.16). During this experience, Ms. Keller provided communication supports by reviewing vocabulary using illustrations, photos, and dollhouse furniture for children to point to if they did not have the English word. She also took dictation for

each child writing the furniture name on a chart divided into sections by room. The children not

participating in either group were involved in learning centers set-up around the classroom.
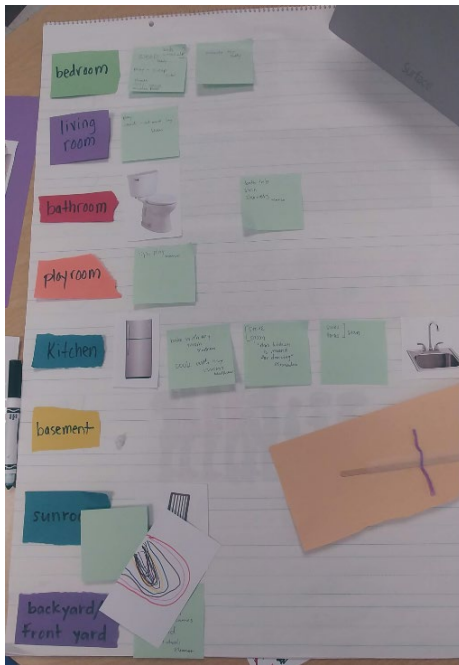
Figure 5.15. Co-created chart displaying pictorial and written items found in the rooms of children's homes
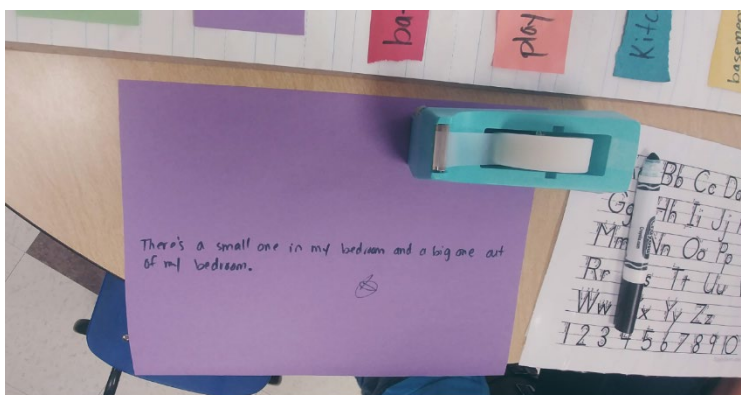
Figure 5.16. Dictation taken by a teacher of a young DLL's explanation of where to find desks in his home

Two adults working with children in small groups to complete different tasks is an

approach that I have observed in many pre-k rooms during my career as a teacher and researcher.

However, what made the practice unique at Valley Preschool Center was that both adults were

certified, early childhood teachers. In my previous experiences observing pre-k classrooms, the second adult was typically a paraeducator with a high school diploma or sometimes a 90-hour certification in early childhood who completed the same activity with every child, an activity that was planned for by the lead-teacher. However, both Ms. Martin and Ms. Keller were highly-qualified teachers who were successful at co-planning but also at using in-the-moment practices to differentiate instruction to support individual language and academic learning.

Project-Based Learning. As I described in Chapter 4, Valley Preschool Center used a project-based approach to learning, also known as PBL. When planning for a day using PBL, Ms. Keller commented that she and Ms. Martin first plan for the "[whole class] meeting question and then what kind of fieldwork are we going to have, so that's the project work. What hands-on experience are we going have to fulfill these questions, and then what's it's gonna look like? Are we gonna make list? Are we gonna make a chart?" PBL is an approach to teaching. Whereas curricula guided the two Head Start teachers in the present study by providing them with a scope and sequence to address what needs to be taught and when it should be taught during the school year, the teachers must create the scope and sequence. Ms. Martin described her approach to PBL in her initial interview

> for this particular study, the first study of the year, the teachers have more of a say [in the project of study]. We picked this study [Homes] with our special needs children and our language learners in mind because everyone has a home, and the vocabulary that comes from that topic is very applicable and useful. I think the great thing about the project approach is you can go as deep as you need to for those kids that need to be challenged, but then you can also stay surface level for those kids that just need the more vocabulary.

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We think about the different levels that we can hit in each study… but also if they're interested, they're going to want to learn and use that vocabulary.

Ms. Keller shared during one of her classroom observations that during PBL teachers spend the majority of the day working with children individually or in small groups to answer the questions the class created during small group and whole-class meetings. The questions were child-generated and based on individual interests and curiosity. In the episode below, Ms. Keller reviewed the questions and the class' progress in answering the questions with the children during a whole-group meeting on a Friday before lunchtime. She pointed to each question written on the chart paper. The first three questions had sticky-notes posted below each question. Each sticky-note was the dictation of a child's answer to the question that Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin had collected over the past five days.

Ms. Keller: Let's read through our list of questions.

How can you make a building without bricks and sidings?

Why do some people live in a hotel?

How do people build bedrooms?

How do people make a bedroom if people are inside?

Do you remember anything from our building house books that we could use to answer that question? Hmm. We'll have to think about that one next week.

How do you make drawers that open and close? Did we get that from our books?

Children: No!

Ms. Keller: No? We might have to find another way to answer that question.

Children learned language and literacy skills and concepts in this classroom at Valley Preschool Center through the PBL approach by actively engaging to answer complex, real-world questions.

Ecological perspective. Viewed from an ecological perspective of language learning, the co-teaching and PBL approach used by Ms. Martin and Ms. Keller supported language learning for the young DLLs at Valley Preschool Center. First, the large amount of time children spent receiving individualized attention from their teachers, facilitated **relationships** between the adults and children in the classroom. These adult-child relationships provided children with models of complex and sophisticated language use. Additionally, the **context** was structured and organized to encourage curiosity and exploration. Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin supported student **agency** through encouraging students to **invest** in learning by promoting student **motivation** and independence by creating experiences that responded to students' interests (through the investigations created to answer the students' questions) and abilities (through differentiation and individual or small group work while guided by their teacher). Ms. Keller and Ms. Martin used **quality**, empirically-based practices such as communication supports, authentic experiences, and curriculum integration to support their young DLLs' academic success. The children in Valley Preschool were completely immersed in **language as action** or shaping their own learning or understanding while participating with others.

Bayside Head Start

Access to an ESOL Teacher. Bayside Head Start was located in a school district that allocated certified ESOL teachers to early childhood classrooms. In the present study, only Bayside students had access to an ESOL teacher. Ms. Lane commented that the ESOL teacher

worked with children in the classroom daily for 40-minutes in addition to participating in weekly co-planning meetings. She described how the co-planning time was useful because the ESOL teacher was able to support student outcomes while connecting to what the children were doing in the classroom with Ms. Lane. During her initial interview, Ms. Lane described how the ESOL teacher supported student writing and vocabulary.

> Last week we were doing a book called *Too Loud Lily*, and so the ESOL teacher created pictures that would go along with the sounds that Lily was making. When we were reading it, we would show the picture, and then the kids would act out the picture as well. Then they were drawing and writing about what their Lily would do [with the ESOL teacher]. They're saying what Lily is going to be able to do because they've already seen the picture, heard it in the story, and then acted it out as well, so they're us[ing] those words.

Technology. In addition to the ESOL teacher support, Ms. Lane was the only teacher in the present study who used computers or technologies in the child's L1 *and* English to support student learning. The students at Bayfield Head Start had multiple opportunities throughout the day to learn in Spanish and English with support from technology. For instance, children took turns during center time using one of the two classroom computers to play educational math and reading games using bilingual software purchased by the school. Children were able to listen to the audio in English and then again in Spanish or vice versa. The teacher set which language the child would hear first depending on his/her English language proficiency (ELP). For instance, Ms. Lane set Joselina's profile to Spanish as the primary language. According to Ms. Lane, Joselina had very little exposure to English before coming to school.

Additionally, Ms. Lane regularly used a smartboard and projector with her students during whole group instruction. Although the majority of the instruction was in English, she also used the smartboard to show an alphabet song sung in Spanish and English. Ms. Lane commented during her final interview,

> I think that the technology is helpful. I think also, you know, using actual objects the first time around, like as concretely as possible, is more helpful. Like, were you here when we were graphing? So the kids are actually moving around and voting. [First,] they're drawing a picture or coloring a picture, and then they're using that [to create a class picture graph]. Then, we're using the data to create a bar graph on the promethium. So it's not just one way that we're able to see it [the voting data] we see it in many different ways. I don't like to rely too heavily on the promethium board. I would be able to actually survive throughout the day without technology, but I think it's helpful when it's [using and not using technology is] balanced.

During one classroom observation, I observed how technology facilitated the young DLL's participation in a whole-class discussion.

> Ms. Lane: We have been talking about ways we can stay healthy. Yesterday we talked and wrote about ways we can stay healthy. Can anyone remember ways we stay healthy that we saw yesterday? ((two hands go up)) Hmm. Maybe if I pull up the photos we sorted yesterday that will help. ((Ms. Lane opens the photos on the Promethean board that children sorted yesterday by "healthy" or "not healthy." Most of the class raises their hands.))
>
> DLL 1: eat
>
> Ms. Lane: eating what? Candy or fruit?

DLL 1: Fruta. Fruit.

Ms. Lane: So say that.

DLL 1: She is eating fruit.

DLL 2: ((gestures sleeping by laying is head on folded hands and closing his eyes and gives a thumb up))

MS. Lane: Yes. He is sleeping. Is that healthy?

DLL 2: ((nods head))

DLL 3: Brush teeth

Ms. Lane: He is brushing his teeth.

DLL 3: Yeah, he brush teeth. It is good.

Ms. Lane: It is good. It is healthy!

By showing children the sorting task they completed in the day before using the Promethean Board, she increased the number of volunteers who raised their hand to answer her question from two to sixteen. Ms. Lane supported the conversation by using photographs, stimulating prior learning, and using communication supports like restating, gestures, and giving students the language they needed to respond.

Ecological perspective. Viewed from an ecological perspective of language learning the use of technology and co-planning with the ESOL teacher-supported language learning for the young DLLs at Bayside Head Start. First, Ms. Lane and the ESOL teacher provided students with communication supports and technology (i.e., language learning tools). Through the use of tools (i.e., because of the **relationship** between the tools and students), students were successful in meeting learning outcomes. Additionally, the **context** provided a structured and organized **semiotic budget** to facilitate student's use of technology in a way to support both the child's L1

and English development. Ms. Lane supported student **agency** by increasing student **motivation** to use language. Children were **invested** in the learning the technology offered, constantly asking if today was their day for computer center and were eager to volunteer to move images and write on the Promethean Board. The other two classrooms in this study did not provide children with access to technology because they did not have access to a technological **affordance**. Finally, Ms. Lane and the ESOL teacher used **quality**, empirically-based practices such as communication supports, authentic experiences, and the child's home language to support their young DLLs' academic success.

Clifton Run and Bayside Head Start

Language in the Classroom. I observed the languages of children represented in classroom displays in both of the Head Start classrooms (see examples in Figures 5.17 and 5.18). I also found occasional bilingual book reading in the Head Start classrooms. Once at Clifton Run, children listened to a story first in Spanish and then English, and twice at Bayfield, the teacher sat with a group of students to read a Spanish/English picture book together (one of those times is included in a vignette found in this chapter).

Ecological perspective. Viewed from an ecological perspective of language learning, the use and display of the children's first language led to language learning. First, teachers fostered **relationships** between bilingual children by encouraging and supporting their home language use. The teachers also nurtured the relationships they had with their young DLLs by showing they valued the child's linguistic knowledge. Additionally, the **context** was structured and organized to facilitate student's use of both their home language and English. Finally, including the student's home language in the classroom supported the child's self-concept, which fueled

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agency and supported student motivation to use language in the classroom. Teachers supported

student **investment** in learning because they helped children navigate their bilingual **identities**

by supporting students' full linguistic repertoire. By attending to relationships, context, and

agency, teachers provided children with **quality** learning opportunities.
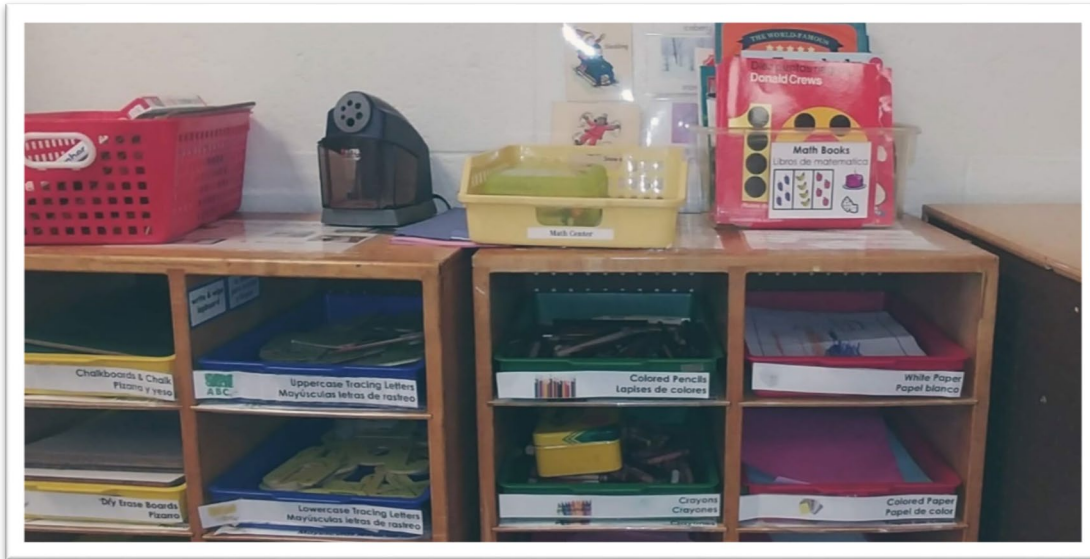
Figure 5.17. Bayfield Head Start writing center with bilingual labels and materials

Figure 5.18. Clifton Run Head Start behavior reminder cards in English and Spanish

Missed Opportunities.

      Although the exemplary teachers in the study provided a large number of supports to facilitate the language and literacy development of the young DLLs in their classrooms, I want to explain that I do not mean to insinuate that teachers exhibited a perfect practice without error or missed opportunities. For example, when teachers asked young DLLs questions about a text, they could have included more higher-level questions that went beyond asking children to point to a photo that was right there in the text. Even children with beginning levels of English proficiency can name some familiar objects in English, use formulaic phrases, use their home language to respond while teachers used an electronic translator or an app on their phone to translate, and use non-verbal communication.

      Additionally, I want to share that in no way did the teachers believe they had a perfect practice. In fact, each teacher found the nomination to be surprising. The teachers in this study were quite humble and very reflective of their strengths and weaknesses when working with young DLLs. The following section examines their reflections.

Teacher Reflections on Working with Young DLLs

      I included many teacher reflections shared during teacher interviews throughout this chapter as evidence to support my findings. However, to address my third research question, I present how teachers reflected upon working with young DLLs. In hindsight, I now see that this section of my dissertation could perhaps have been a complete and separate dissertation. However, by sharing teacher reflections, I am able to provide initial insight into future implications to consider in teacher education when preparing teachers to work with young DLLs. That said, in the following section I share the teachers' perspectives of the purpose of pre-k for

young DLLs, how pre-k was similar or different for young DLLs than their non-DLL peers, their

opinions on language and culture in early childhood education, and how their personal

experiences shaped their current perceptions of young DLLs. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, I

identified the themes in this section by establishing descriptive and in vivo codes (Saldaña,

2016), refining and ordering codes, writing analytic memos, and finally looking for patterns and

identifying themes. Table 5.4 illustrates codes found in each theme.

Table 5.4

Overview of Themes and Codes Found in the Teachers' Reflections

Theme	Sample Codes
Purpose of Pre-K	"Social-emotional" "infuse" academic and social-emotional goals
Similarities and Differences in Pre-K for DLLs and Non-DLLs	Similarities in instruction Differences in instruction
Reflection on Language and Culture in the Classroom	"I wish I spoke Spanish." First language use Cultural consideration Language in the classroom
Cross-Cultural/ Language Learning Experiences	Reflects on personal experiences as an adult Reflects on language learning as a child or teen Reflects on professional development experiences

Teachers' Reflection on The Purpose of Pre-K For Young DLLs.

As I mentioned in this chapter under the subheading "High-Quality Practices in Early

Childhood Education," each teacher emphasized their belief that the purpose of pre-k or

preschool, in general, was to provide a social-emotional foundation for children. Similarly, when

I asked teachers specifically about the purpose of pre-k for their young DLLs, teachers still

emphasized: "getting kids emotionally ready, while getting them the academics they need for

getting ready for kindergarten" (Ms. Lane, final interview). Ms. Sykes echoed Ms. Lane's

comment, "I want to give children a head start for kindergarten. But primarily for me, it's their

social-emotional health.. because if they don't have a strong foundation going into

kindergarten… I don't think that they can succeed as well." Ms. Keller shared, "we all have early

learning goals for [our DLLs] and curriculum goals, and so I try the infuse that within this

environment of social-emotional support." Ms. Slough also felt that social-emotional

development was critical specifically for DLLs in pre-k, "how to interact with other children,

sharing, being kind to one another. Then the academics kind of come along with it. That's why

we're so play-based, I think. Depending on what level each kid is on, they will get the academics

that they need and through the project. Yeah, I think social-emotional is key".

Teachers' Reflection on the Similarities and Differences in Pre-K for DLLs and Non-DLLs.

Teachers identified ways their practice working with DLLs compared to the way they

worked with children from monolingual English-speaking families. When discussing practices

used for social-emotional development, Ms. Sykes shared in her first interview, "I don't think it's

any different teaching any of the other children. I just want all the children to come in and know

how much I care about them and how much I love them and that they feel safe and comfortable".

When addressing academic outcomes, Ms. Keller believed, "So often the kids are immersed in

an English environment [at school]. So strategies? I would say that I use a lot of visual

prompts… and songs. It's been my experience that especially like three-year-old children coming

in with no English will often pick up the songs so quickly, and their families are saying, "Oh,

they're singing this," or, "Oh, they're singing that." So I try to use songs to help.

Additionally, Ms. Lane found that her DLLs benefited from extra support, "building background knowledge and connecting new learning to" previously learned material. While Ms. Martin shared in her first interview, she found that she was most successful in supporting her young DLLs when " little teachable moment type things pop up. It happens a lot when you're working with one kid or within a small group; it's the in-the-moment type teaching".

Teachers' Reflection on Language and Culture in the Classroom.

The four teachers shared a similar opinion about how language and culture were viewed in their classrooms. Many ideas shared are found in the practices above, such as using the children as language experts, and working with parents to identify areas of strengths and needs as well as inviting families into the classroom to share their language and culture. I noticed that the teachers were reflective of their own linguistic and cultural limitations. For example, while reflecting on her ability to speak Spanish, Ms. Sykes shared,

> I wish I could speak Spanish so I could meet their needs. I really wish I could help
>
> them more by being able to communicate with them, but that falls on me. I mean,
>
> they're perfect the way that they are.

Similarly, Ms. Lane commented, "I mean, I have a very limited Spanish, but being able to use like specific words in Spanish and in English and having also, you know, [a bilingual aide], especially at the beginning of the year help is really important."

Ms. Lane shared in her final interview that when she planned for culturally and linguistically diverse students she

> Tr[ied] to have books that reflect, you know, diverse situations and diverse students. We
>
> have books in every center. If I'm using Google images, I'm trying to not just pick white

children for everything. I'm trying to find people that look like the children in the class. I also mainly ignore holidays that are not applicable to the kids. Like we'll talk about springtime and symbols of springtime, but we're not going to go crazy for Saint Patrick's day projects because nobody in the class celebrates Saint Patrick's Day.

Likewise, Ms. Martin shared,

At the beginning of the year, we have all of the kids share their family pictures, so that provides an opportunity for them to look at the different family structures. And we do self-portraits, so that brings about the conversation about skin color.

Ms. Martin also shared a plan she hoped to implement in the future,

I found this idea online where you can do a voice recording of the story being read and then put it on a little iPod Shuffle or something. I thought that having the parents do it, it could be in English or it could be in their first language. Yeah, that was just something that I want to eventually incorporate into the classroom.

Teachers' Personal Cross-Cultural and Language Learning Experiences.

The final theme in this section was that all four teachers shared personal cross-cultural experiences. For instance, Ms. Sykes reminisced on her own schooling experience in the school district, where she now teaches,

my mother's English, and my dad's Greek. I was born in England. So, I grew up with an English accent. When I moved over here in kindergarten, I had speech services because I had a very strong British accent and moving into [this] County with an accent-- they put me in speech services. That wasn't right and it wasn't helpful.

Ms. Keller described her relationship with a former colleague at Valley Preschool

We had a facility worker that was here for many years. She would teach me Spanish, like conversational Spanish. She would help me with my conversational Spanish, but I've never been super fluent in another language. I only took Spanish for three years in high school.

Ms. Keller also shared that when faced with challenges where she felt that "There's something better I could be doing" she would rely on previous professional development experiences

> I'm very active in NAEYC, and I've had the benefit of going to many NAEYC conferences. And almost always, especially my early teaching years, I would choose sections that gave me support for working with children that are dual language.

Ms. Martin shared during her final interview, "When I was in elementary school, we had to take Spanish. And so I still remember a lot of the songs that we learned. Throughout high school, I took it for two years. But my boyfriend's family is from El Salvador. Both of his parents don't speak English very well, so it's hard for me. I try to communicate with them in Spanish, but you can't have the same conversation in a language that you don't really know much. That's why I am learning Spanish again."

Ms. Lane also shared her connection to second language learning,

> my grandmother was from France, so we used to go to my great grandmothers over the summer when I was a kid… I used to speak two languages because my French grandmother only spoke to us in French, but my American grandmother, my grandmother that was living near us she was, "I only speak in English, I'm an American." So after my great grandmother passed away, we only spoke in English, so I took French through high school, but I didn't keep as much. I can still understand, but my speaking is terrible.

Challenges Teachers Identified When Working with DLLs.

Teachers shared several challenges they faced when working with young DLLs during their interviews with me. I have provided many examples of those challenges throughout this chapter. However, in this section, I share the common challenges teachers identified: not being able to speak the home language of every child in their class and not being able to or having access to someone who could assess children in their L1. Teachers also shared concerns specific to their context, such as not having access to specific specialists or support staff and working with children living in poverty.

Challenges with Language. All four teachers commented on their desire to speak the languages of their students. For instance, Ms. Sykes described in her initial interview,

I wish I could speak Spanish so I could meet their needs. I really wish I could so I can meet ... Because like little Iker, I asked him to "Please turn off the lights," and he went back into the bathroom and washed his hands. I wish I could just say turn off the lights and close the door. Like, but that's the only thing. I wish I could help them more by being able to communicate with them, but that falls on me. I mean, they're perfect the way that they are.

Ms. Keller echoed Ms. Sykes' sentiment during her final interview.

In particular, it is really challenging for me to comfort [young DLL] when she is upset because she is not comfortable yet speaking in English. I just try to get close and I try to talk quietly and put my arm around her, have her sit on my lap to show her that I love her and that's she's safe. I think that's the biggest thing, and I think one word, maybe I'll try a word and see if I get a response and then if I get a nod or a head shake, then I'll try

something more. I'll add on to that or I'll try another word, so that's what my gut just telling them. I just don't know.

Challenges with Assessment. Another common constraint shared by teachers was their inability to assess their students in the child's first language. Ms. Keller explained during her initial interview

> We use the work sampling systems, so our like school assessment is really performance-based to some extent. We have sticky notes. We take a lot of anecdotes, and then we try to sit with them where they are and ask or observe or things like that. But, I do struggle sometimes when maybe they don't have a lot of English yet or they're not comfortable using English yet.

In addition to the common constraints shared by teachers, there were a few challenges unique to individual teachers.

Challenges with Staffing. Ms. Sykes explained that as a Head Start program funded by a non-profit organization

> we don't have a nurse on staff. We also don't have a behavior specialist. We don't have any of the luxuries like at a public school. A lot of the staff that the public school has, we don't have here. So that can be challenging.

Challenges with Teaching Children in Poverty. Ms. Lane shared how, as a Head Start teacher, she worked with children and families living in poverty. She explained during her final interview, "It's hard teaching students that are learning another language and then have all these other life- things [homelessness, hunger, problems sleeping, health issues] on top of it as well."

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the practices teachers used to support their young DLL's language and literacy development by first sharing high-quality practices for all students. Then, I discussed how teachers used practices intentionally designed to support the literacy and language needs of their young DLLs. I used the characteristics from van Lier's (2010) ecology of language learning approach; relationships, contexts, agency, and quality to show the intersection of practice and theory that facilitated student language learning. Additionally, I described how certain practices were unique to a specific classroom setting. Finally, I explained how teachers talked and reflected on working with DLLs, including the challenges teachers shared when working with young DLLs in pre-k. The results of this study show that early childhood teachers use both planned and spontaneous practices to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs in pre-k. Teachers in this study were tuned in to language acquisition. Additionally, the teachers in the present study used an enhanced instructional practice to support second language acquisition.

Additionally, I found that one instructional practice consists of many planned and spontaneous micro-practices that teachers could skillfully enact as needed to provide effective instruction. For example, providing support for language comprehension and production consists of using communication supports and building on previous learning experiences, which involved even more micro-practices that teachers enact during lesson implementation. Understanding the micro-processes that build an enhanced practice is complicated, but the more we can tease apart the act of teaching, the more we can support teachers in enacting practices.

Simultaneously, teachers engaged children in active learning using the characteristics of an ecological perspective of language learning, such as through creating opportunities for positive interactions between students and teachers in the classroom.

In the next and final chapter, I revisit my conceptual framework, discuss implications for research and practice, and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Contributions to the Field

This study adds to the literature on dual language learner education in early childhood because I elucidate what four English-dominant teachers teaching in three different pre-k contexts did to support the language and literacy education of their young DLLs, one of the fastest-growing student populations in the nation, yet largely understudied (Castro, 2014; Gutiérrez et al., 2010). Similar to the recommendation found in the literature on effective instruction for young DLLs, all four teachers in the present study demonstrated an enhanced instructional practice that went beyond high-quality teaching (for all) to provide effective instruction targeting the specific language learning needs of young DLLs (Castro, 2014; Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; National Academies of Sciences, 2017). Prior literature on this topic has offered recommendations in the form of promising practices for early childhood teachers when teaching young DLLs effectively but has not provided a detailed and rich description of what these practices look like across different settings. I offered vivid descriptions of the practices I observed.   In addition to providing the richness and depth of teaching practices through observation, I investigated how teachers talked about and reflected upon working with young DLLs in pre-k. Thus, I build upon and expand the recent studies that explored how early childhood teachers' perspectives and beliefs of working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners influence their teaching practice (Jacoby & Lesaux, 2019). However, my study is different from Jacoby and Lesaux's (2019) study, in that I asked teachers to reflect upon the

practices that I observed in their classroom instead of using an interview format where teachers were provided with a fictional DLL student and asked how she would support his language learning. Finally, pre-k programs are reporting an increase in DLL student population as well as a greater representation of different languages spoken among the children and families they serve. My study sheds light on classrooms that include a wider diversity of languages. Meanwhile, few early childhood teachers are fluent in more than one language (Adair, 2015). I view my work as an extension of the literature that examines the practices of one teacher in one specific setting (Kelly, 2015; Tabors, 2008) or in a classroom where only Spanish and English are the languages spoken by children (Sawyer et al., 2017).

Through data triangulation of data from classroom observations, teacher interviews, and classroom artifacts, my findings revealed opportunities and challenges teachers faced when implementing instructional practices to support the language and literacy of DLLs. These findings lead to significant implications for research and practice. However, before discussing implications, I revisit the conceptual frameworks from previous studies focusing on young learners that informed this study.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

Returning to NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice Framework for Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education (2019)- I reflected on how teachers used practices to support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs in an age-appropriate and equity-forward manner. Although this framework guided my analysis, as I explained in Chapter 5, I wanted to provide accurate representations of what teachers were actually doing in the classroom to support learning without limiting myself to the pre-defined

categories the framework recommends teachers use to promote equity.   Additionally, I

acknowledge that equity is much more complex than NAEYC's (2019) definition of equity as

"the state that would be achieved if individuals fared the same way in society regardless of race,

gender, class, language, disability, or any other social or cultural characteristic. In practice,

equity means all children and families receive necessary supports in a timely fashion so they can

develop their full intellectual, social, and physical potential" (p. 17). To suggest that individuals

should "fare the same way" is based on homogeneous and monolingual assumptions that gloss

over cultural diversity. In education, equity is a highly complex and contested notion that

indicates if students have the resources they need to be successful. However, the specific needs

and distribution of resources will be different for specific segments of the population, such as

DLLs versus monolingual English speakers. Murphy (1988) asserts that simply providing

students with access to resources or 'supports' like teachers and curriculum as "insufficient" (p.

146). Murphy reminds us that the *quality* of those resources accounts for more than access alone.

The four categories of NAEYC's Framework for Advancing Equity in Early Childhood

Education (2019) begin to address access and quality of resources. The four categories are as

follows: engage learners in a caring and equitable community; foster reciprocal relationships

with families; observe, document, and assess children's learning and development; and advocate

for equitable practices in early childhood education. In the section that follows, I go beyond the

framework provided by NAEYC, expanding its assumption that "individuals should fare the

same way" by connecting the findings from my multi-case study and existing literature on

practices that support the language and literacy development of young DLLs.

Engage Learners in a Caring and Equitable Community

Teachers who nurture a caring and equitable classroom community, respect each child and encourage every member in the classroom to know, recognize, and support individual strengths and differences (NAEYC, 2019). Practices that previous research has found to promote a caring and equitable classroom include fostering positive teacher-child relationships (NAEYC, 2009), intentional teaching of foundational skills (Burchinal, 2018) through movement, and hands-on opportunities, including learning centers and cooperative learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Hegde et al., 2016), fostering school-home partnerships and family engagement (NAEYC, 2009), and using ongoing assessment to inform instruction and measure progress (Hyson et al., 2006). Findings from the present study support previous research that has suggested that general high-quality early childhood instruction although a positive start in supporting young DLLs, must be enhanced to meet their linguistic and developmental needs (Castro et al., 2011; Espinosa, 2010; Goldenberg et al., 2013; Roberts and Neal, 2004). While early childhood instruction with a focus on oral language development and early literacy skills is essential for all children, the National Academies of Science (2017) asserts, "generic high quality without attention to the unique language needs of DLLs is probably not sufficient to significantly reduce the achievement gap at kindergarten entry and ensure long-term educational success." The unique language needs of DLLs include targeting three specific skills required for literacy acquisition that develop differently for bilingual children than for monolingual children; competence with oral language, understanding concepts of print, and metalinguistic awareness of phonological forms (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In the present study, teachers supported second language acquisition by placing it at the forefront of the curriculum. They combined a variety of evidence-based strategies such as

linking subject areas, using language and vocabulary to preview what was to come, capturing the students' words in writing, and using multiple means to communicate content or what Tabors (2008) calls "double buttressing" such as using gestures and repeating and rephrasing important ideas, or using pictures combined with words.   These extra-linguistic supports made the English language comprehensible. Additionally, teachers provided multiple opportunities for children to participate in a language-rich environment creating what ecological theory describes as affordances and semiotic budget by participating in extended conversations in a setting where the child felt comfortable, in front of the whole class, or a small group or individual discussion with the teacher. Teachers also explicitly drew attention to previous learning experiences for their young DLLs and connected new concepts to children's interests. Previous research has also shown that promoting a child's background (i.e., early learning experiences, language, and interests) can have positive benefits on his/her academic development (Espinosa, 2010).

For over a decade, researchers have examined how student's use of their home language in the classroom can positively affect their second language development (Cook, 2001). Non-bilingual teachers often view students' use of their home language in the classroom as both positive and beneficial to literacy development but are not always certain how to incorporate the home language into instruction (Karathanos, 2009; Kibler & Roman, 2013).   However, when the home language is used in the classroom, teachers can successfully scaffold student learning, build on students' prior knowledge, and develop metalinguistic and metacognitive comprehension strategies (deOliveira, Gilmetdinova, & Pelaez-Morales, 2016).

While previous research has shown that classroom instruction that supports students' home language has tremendous benefits for students who are DLLs (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015; Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Espinosa, 2010), studying teachers within

bilingual/dual language education programs was not the focus of this study. Given the low supply of qualified, bilingual teachers (and the lack of bilingual early childhood teacher preparation in this Mid-Atlantic state), at present most pre-K programs do not have bilingual teachers or resources or development to support high-quality dual language programs (following the guidelines suggested by Castro, 2018; Howard et al., 2007).

Foster Reciprocal Relationships with Families

The second category of the NAEYC (2019) framework recommended that teachers work closely with families to understand and support familial values and expectations in regards to the child's education and development. Additionally, the framework recommended teachers provide ongoing support and encouragement for family involvement and continued multilingualism development. In the present study, teachers welcomed and encouraged parents to come into the classroom to share their time, skills, or knowledge. Additionally, teachers made phone calls, home visits, sent emails, and spoke to parents during drop-off and pick-up times as a way to engage in reciprocal communication. Teachers worked with parents to ensure that language would not exclude them from understanding paperwork by offering translation services or going over the documents together in person.

Research explains when DLLs are learning in English-only during the preschool years, they often start to show a preference for speaking English and a disinclination to continue speaking their home language (Hakuta and D'Andrea, 1992; Oller and Eilers, 2002; Wong-Filmore, 1991). Children who do not develop and maintain proficiency in their home language may lose their ability to communicate with parents and family members and risk becoming estranged from their cultural and linguistic heritage (Wong-Filmore, 1991). DLLs with a strong

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foundation in their home language who go onto acquire high levels of English proficiency will realize the cognitive, linguistic, socio-cultural benefits of becoming bilingual as well as the ability "to establish a strong cultural identity, to develop and sustain strong ties with their immediate and extended families, and thrive in a global multilingual world" (Espinosa, 2006, p. 2). Early childhood professionals need to understand that there are developmental risks associated with loss of a child's L1. The teachers in the present study worked to leverage DLLs bilingualism by establishing a community of practice where children were the language experts and teachers and peers were the second language learners, but did not provide explicit instruction in the child's first language; however, during our interviews, expressed a critical awareness of their limitations in speaking the children's home languages.

Teachers' awareness of their own limitations, combined with the beliefs they have in regards to dual language learners, is a type of knowledge teachers draw upon much in the same way they draw upon pedagogical or curricular knowledge to shape their classroom instruction (Shulman, 1987). Previous research has found that teacher's prior experiences working with young DLLs combined with previous professional development or coursework focused on effective teaching of young DLLs can inform the way a teacher perceives this population of students (Karathanos, 2010, Torres & Tackett, 2016). Limited research has found that early childhood teachers may eschew an emphasis on language and literacy learning in preference for developing children's' social-emotional development (Hollingsworth & Winter, 2013). Jacoby and Lesaux (2019) found that early childhood teachers of young DLLs also believed that social-emotional development was essential for supporting student's language acquisition. I found the teachers in the present study held similar beliefs in regards to prioritizing social-emotional development. However, the four teachers also provided numerous authentic opportunities for

language comprehension and production, skills essential for later reading comprehension. Since Jacoby and Lesaux (2019) did not conduct classroom observations, they were not able to conclude if what teachers said during interviews aligned with practices used in actual classroom settings. Across the participating classrooms in the present study, I found teachers attending to the specific learning and developmental needs of DLLs by placing language acquisition at the forefront of teaching.

Observe, Document, and Assess Children's Learning and Development

The third category of the NAEYC (2019) framework suggested that teachers examine their own culture and background and how preconceived conceptions or behaviors might affect their ability to observe, document, and assess children's learning. Additionally, under this third category, NAEYC suggested that teachers use authentic assessment and focus on a student's strengths. The NAEYC position statement (2009) identified three bodies of knowledge, what NAEYC calls core considerations for pre-k teachers to consider when implementing developmentally appropriate practice; knowledge of how children develop and learn, knowledge of what is appropriate for an individual, and knowledge of what is culturally appropriate. Tabors (2008) recommended that assessment be used to capture the whole picture of a child's development. She believed that to paint an accurate picture and to capture the child's entire linguistic repertoire; teachers should assess the child in each of his/her languages. Castro et al. (2011) also asserted that assessments should be frequently given in the languages spoken by the child as well as be multi-dimensional (e.g., portfolios, observations, family reports). During interviews, the teachers in the present study acknowledged the benefit of assessing DLLs in their home language(s) as a way to better understand the child's full depth of understanding by

tapping into what they knew in both languages. However, I did not observe teachers using home language (L1) assessment practices. When I followed up with teachers asking about the use of L1 to assess children during my interviews, the teachers explained how assessing children in their first language was a challenge since they (the teacher) did not speak the languages of the children. The two Head Start teachers both lamented about the amount of time they spent each year giving assessments designed for English speakers to DLLs, yet assessments were required by their school districts. The teachers in the private pre-k described feeling less pressure to spend time assessing students since they were not required to administer standardized assessments to their students. Although L1 assessment practices were not observed, teachers did describe their vision of assessment for young DLLs as holistic and multidimensional.

Teachers explained how they tried to capture knowledge in different ways by using behavioral and performance assessments and taking anecdotal notes to illustrate progress over time. Additionally, I observed teachers were continually using formative assessment with their young DLLs to check for understanding. My findings were in line with previous studies that English-speaking teachers of young DLLs rely heavily on formative assessment to make in-the-moment instructional decisions as well as design small group interventions to support targeted skill development at differing levels of proficiency (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Gersten et al., 2007).

In addition to supporting previous research, this study contributes new findings to the field by exploring practices of observation and assessment across three different settings and two different program types. Interestingly, the assessment practices outlined in my findings were similar across program types. Teachers conducted assessments in English but used a variety of assessments to capture the child's knowledge in more than one way, such as performance-based

assessment and through multiple conversations that occurred in different group settings like whole group and one-on-one conversations.

Advocate for Equitable Practices in Early Childhood Education

The fourth category of the NAEYC (2019) framework recommended that teachers speak out against "unfair polices or practices" (p. 8) and form collaborative groups to challenge unfair policies and promote equity. For monolingual English teachers to foster equitable practices in their classroom, they may need to navigate the polices intended for monolingual students that do not meet the needs of young DLLs, as well as stand-up to opposition from local and district imposed English-only mandates (de Jong et al., 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Furthermore, teachers may not have easily accessible multilingual materials and resources to share with their students. Therefore, they may find themselves needing to clearly articulate their need for such materials and justify the expense by providing evidence-based reasons for their instructional choices. Thus, teachers wishing to incorporate an environment supportive of young DLLs requires both an inclination to advocate for their linguistically diverse learners as well as an understanding of how to navigate systemic constraints that are in opposition to the practices teachers believe are most effective in providing equitable instruction.

The realization that a teaching practice stems from a deficit perspective is powerful in facilitating action toward promoting equity. Getting to know the family and community that shape the child is essential in early childhood education, however alone cannot address the inequities and biases that are deeply rooted in our nation's socio-political and education systems. Assumptions based on social identities such as culture, race, languages, class, and immigration

status and superficially promoting learning about the child's culture can stem from explicit and implicit biases.

The findings presented in the present study demonstrate how teachers were critically reflective in areas such as the languages used in the school, communicating with families, and questioning the narrow focus of accountability measures used to assess children. Teachers identified ways they acknowledged their limitations in areas like language knowledge and cultural awareness and shared how they could improve their practice. During my many informal conversations as well as the semi-structured interviews engaged with teachers, I heard my participants continuously reflect on the way they view and teach children whose identities are different from their own, as evidenced by the findings in Chapter 5. However, I did not observe teachers nor hear them describe past experiences speaking out against unfair practices or policies.

Although the call for early childhood educators to advocate for effective practices and programs to support young DLLs is abundant (Gutiérrez et al., 2010; NAEYC, 2019; Zepeda, Castro, & Cronin, 2011) a dearth of research exists connecting teacher advocacy to improved literacy and language outcomes for young DLLs. Although one can make connections between having access to empirically-based practices and programs that support the language and literacy development of young DLLs and improved learning outcomes, future research would benefit from evidence to support how educators advocate for their young DLLs and the results obtained from that advocacy.

Teachers Reflections

Social-Emotional Development

Pre-k teachers in the current study emphasized social-emotional development as an important focus for pre-k students.   Across multiple studies, early childhood educators show a preference for focusing on social-emotional development (Hollingsworth & Winter, 2013; Jacoby & Lesaux, 2019), which is in line with current US guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education (Beaty, 2014; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Previous research posits that social-emotional development supports academic learning (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). However, researchers have found that some early childhood teachers align social-emotional development for young DLLs with school readiness (Piker & Kimmel, 2018). This alignment becomes problematic as teachers prioritize social-emotional development over English language acquisition. Children attending kindergarten in the United States, where English is the language of instruction, are expected to demonstrate communication skills across domains (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Although the teachers in the current study emphasized social-emotional development during their interviews with me, I found that teachers implemented balanced instruction, focused on building foundational skills in English language and literacy while addressing the social-emotional development of their students. Their practice aligns with research in the fields of medicine and psychology, which has confirmed the adverse effects of toxic stress experienced in early childhood on lifelong learning and development (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Teachers in the present study demonstrate an awareness of research by promoting children's sense of self-

efficacy and perceived control by offering children choices in such areas as center selection, songs that the class will sing, and books to read independently or with the teacher.

Reflective Practice

In chapter five, I shared how the teachers in the present study demonstrated a reflective practice by sharing awareness and vulnerability in areas such as knowledge of languages other than English, explaining how lessons could be improved upon better support young DLL's language and literacy development, and their participation in professional development designed to support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs. Existing research asserts the positive relationship between improved teaching practice and teachers' engagement in reflection, evaluating the quality of their lessons in meeting learning objectives or goals, and planning for future lessons with DLLs (Walqui, 2011). Additionally, each of the teachers shared how they participated in co-planning sessions with other educators, as mentioned in Chapter 5, such as Ms. Lane and the ESOL specialist, Ms. Martin and Ms. Keller's co-teaching model that included planning outside of school hours, and Ms. Sykes and the program director. Existing research suggests a positive relationship in distributive learning or how opportunities for professional development across educators when engaged in reflection (Peercy et al., 2015). Furthermore, Ms. Keller shared with me during the conclusion of our final interview, "Just having you [the author] here makes me more intentional; it's just more in my mind and planning for [the young DLLs]…is always something I consider…but I feel like now I'm being a little more intentional about that". Although not the focus of this dissertation, professional learning appeared as a result of this study's design and could be considered for future design-based research focused on teacher learning.

Cross-cultural Awareness and Language Learning Experiences

Existing research demonstrated the effects that pre-service teachers participating in coursework that provided opportunities to participate in cross-cultural experiences and language learning opportunities demonstrated an increased awareness of the challenges students learning a second language in school experience (Coates, 2016; Heineke, Kennedy, & Lees, 2013). Karathanos (2009) used a survey design to evaluate US mainstream teachers' perspectives on the use of student's home language in instruction of DLLs. She argued that teacher attitudes and beliefs about language greatly influenced their practices and behavior. Karathanos surveyed 327 pre-service and practicing teachers predominantly English-speaking, who taught in traditional mainstream settings and were enrolled in an ESL endorsement program at a large university in Kansas. Her findings suggested a link between formal professional development, prior experience working with emerging bilinguals, and length of teaching experience, and increased support for home language use in instruction. Karathanos (2009) also found that teachers' theoretical perspectives appeared inconsistent with their practical perspective. Therefore, teachers are probably more likely to hold a belief that a student's native language can be a resource, but not necessarily know *how* to incorporate a language different from their own into their teaching practice. Karathanos' findings emphasize a disconnect between theory and practice.

As I mentioned in Chapter 5, the teachers in the present study shared experiences as language learners. Although not the focus of this dissertation, nonetheless, the teachers' shared experience offers implications for teacher education coursework design, specifically providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to participate in experiences that expose teachers to cultures, languages, and communities different than their own.

Implications for Research and Practice

My research offers important implications for research and practice by providing detailed descriptions of what practices for young DLLs recommended in extant literature look like in the classroom. Additionally, this study expands the current body of work on early childhood education that until now has been largely based on research in one private pre-k setting (Tabors, 2008) and Spanish-English settings (Castro et al., 2011; Castro, 2014) by including Head Start classrooms with some linguistic diversity. This study contributes to scholarship by connecting ecological perspectives of second language learning with early childhood education research to offer new insights into the nature of teaching young DLLs.

Observational Protocols Designed to Examine Supports for DLLs

My findings suggest that we need to re-think observational protocols designed to evaluate how teachers in linguistically diverse settings address the academic needs of young DLLs while attaining to the linguistic diversity of the classroom (i.e., addressing all students' first language). Although I initially used the ELLCO-DLL as an instrument to understand practices that would support young DLLs, when I applied this tool across these three pre-K settings, I discovered the limitations of this tool because it was designed for bilingual Spanish/English programs. Further research is needed to develop a tool that would help teachers and researchers understand teaching practices that support young DLLs in English-medium classrooms. On the other hand, the ELLCO evaluates the practices teachers use to support the language and literacy development of their students but does not look specifically at empirically-based practices for effectively teaching young DLLs. As I mentioned, the practices considered high-quality for all children most likely support the language and literacy development of young DLLs but are not enough to address the learning needs unique to second language acquisition.

For example, to score "exemplary" on the ELLCO-DLL, teachers must purposefully and consistently *integrate the home language* of the children in the classroom. For example, one criterion from the literacy environment checklist asks observers to look for familiar words written on word cards, puzzles, labels, and posters *in Spanish* visible in the classroom. Although the two head start classrooms had labels and a few word cards written in Spanish and English, the other items were not present in any classroom. The ELLCO, however, looks for the teacher's awareness of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom and that teachers display child-created work that reflects that diversity, but does not provide specific data-driven requirements such as using the child's home language to explicitly make connections between the first language and English, reading stories in the home language, and using ley vocabulary words in the home language (Lugo-Neris, Jackson, & Goldstein, 2010). A protocol that can provide feedback in specific areas known to support language and literacy development for DLLs would be a valuable tool for teachers, school administrators, and researchers interested in program quality and improvement.

Implications for Early Childhood Teacher Education

Given my study's level of description of the many micro-practices that make up a larger instructional practice, my findings suggest that it would be helpful to support novice teachers to examine how to enact a complex set of practices both through planning and in-the-moment scaffolding. Peercy (2014) found that engaging preservice teachers in opportunities for practice-based teaching (also called core practices or high-leverage practices; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009) facilitated the bridge between how teachers plan for and implement language learning. Peercy (2014) argued that this process is often overlooked

in traditional education courses where planning lessons that seek to engage learners in second language development overshadow actual rehearsal and enactment of teaching practice (i.e., *doing* teaching). According to Grossman et al. (2009), enacting in-the-moment scaffolds requires a teacher to pay close attention to students' verbal and non-verbal signs of comprehension or confusion and have access to models for improvement. Therefore, new and experienced teachers need opportunities to observe expert teachers. Additionally, research posits that teachers require opportunities to decompose scaffold use into identifiable and replicable steps (Johnson, 2019).

The role teacher education programs have on preparing teachers for success in the classroom has been clearly documented (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Teacher education programs have focused on providing pre-service teachers with inter-disciplinary content and pedagogical knowledge supported by effective teaching strategies (Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009). The required coursework typically includes a variety of foundations and methods classes combined with practical experience intended to prepare future teachers with the skills and knowledge base necessary to competently teach English speaking children. However, the present study found along with previous research that teachers who work with young DLLs need to understand how children acquire a second or additional language and the practices that best promote language and literacy development. Research shows a significant improvement in pre-service teacher attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of preparedness of working with DLLs after taking ESL-specific coursework and participating in practical experiences working with linguistically diverse students and families (Karathanos, 2009; Kidd, Sánchez, & Thorp, 2008; Sehlaoui & Shinge, 2013). Given that teacher education programs significantly impact a novice teacher's DLL specific pedagogical knowledge as well as their skills, confidence, and preparedness for teaching linguistically diverse learners, close

examination of *what* aspects of linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and related fields are most appropriate to include and *how* early childhood teacher education programs can incorporate linguistically responsive pedagogy into their programs is warranted.

Implications for Developmentally Appropriate Practice

As the standards era movement surrounding NCLB and Common Core gained ground, academic skills infiltrated into earlier grades and were mandated to be taught to children at progressively younger ages. National and local education policies increased the amount of time young students spent in school to accommodate an increased focus on academic standards in the schedule. Meanwhile, early childhood teachers are pressured to replace free playtime with teacher-directed learning activities. Unfortunately, "play" has taken on the equivalency of a "dirty word" since the standards era movement. However, there is little evidence to support that removing playtime guarantees future academic success (see, e.g., Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006). However, guided play, as seen in the present study, was successfully implemented by teachers to support opportunities for young DLLs to participate in meaningful output. Effective scaffolding supported young DLLs' participation in rich, meaningful lessons and interactions with their peers and teacher.

As I previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the Developmentally Appropriate Practice framework has been criticized. Children belong to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and families, and what is considered "appropriate" for one child may not be viewed as "appropriate" by the family of another child. The term "appropriate" draws upon the monolingual, hegemonic populations' definition of appropriate or "best" practice.

Research affirms that a child's emerging literacy thrives when playing in imaginary situations since the child must leverage oral communication skills to actively participate when playing with peers (Bodrova, 2008). Additionally, the socio-emotional benefits of play have been lauded (Bodrova, 2008; Neuman & Roskos, 2005). Recently research has turned to look at how play promotes early literacy skills of young DLLs (Banerjee et al., 2016; Gutierrez et al., 2011; Hegde et al., 2016; Snow et al., 2015) and the impact on boosting self-esteem and multicultural identity formation (Karathanos, 2010). Additionally, when teachers engage children in active and playful learning experiences, they use the characteristics of an ecological perspective of language learning where children are immersed in learning through collaboration with others (van Lier, 2010). For these reasons, the ability to advocate for and appropriately facilitate opportunities for play and meaningful interactions in the classroom is the third skill for teachers of emerging bilinguals to add to their knowledge base.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study included four classroom teachers to facilitate in-depth data collection. Though through the purposeful sampling of four teachers, I was able to elucidate the practices teachers used to support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs. Taking such a close look at individual classrooms enabled a rigorous process of triangulation from multiple data sources (interviews, classroom observations, video recordings, and classroom artifacts). However, along with the strength of focusing in such detail on specific classrooms comes a particular limitation, the ability to see how practices manifest across different contexts taught by different teachers. Several possibilities exist for future research that could continue to enhance the current knowledge base about teaching young DLLs.

First, additional iterations carried out with different teachers in different settings would contribute to the richness of the data set. Teachers must understand that no teaching practice is foolproof in that it will be effective for all children. Therefore, research is needed to better understand why some practices work in some settings and with some children. There is a lot of room for further investigation in classes taught by pre-service, novice, and experienced teachers as well as teachers teaching in different states where bilingual education policy supports dual-language immersion pre-k programs.

Second, the scope of the study was limited to practices used to support language and literacy. Including additional subject areas such as math and science would allow comparisons to be drawn across these practices, and those early childhood teachers use to support language and literacy development.

Finally, an enduring issue in early childhood education includes the inequity of the profession and perceiving teachers as experts in the field. Including teachers with varying levels of teacher education could offer additional insight into how teachers are prepared to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs.

Conclusion

Young DLLs in the United States are one of the fastest-growing populations; however, they remain largely understudied and misrepresented (Gutiérrez et al., 2010). The impact that dual language development has on a child's social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development, which supports later academic success, has implications for developing high-quality early childhood learning environments. Alarmingly, despite a steady increase in the population of DLLs in early childhood settings and constraining factors (e.g., determining DLL designation status, varying levels of teacher expertise), many states lack specific policies that

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require teachers to take coursework designed to adequately prepare them with the knowledge base necessary to teach DLLs. Unfortunately, many DLLs in early education learning environments spend the day in classrooms with teachers who are not prepared with the knowledge base and specialized skill set necessary to work with students acquiring a second language (Buysse, Peisner-Feinberg, Paez, Hammer, & Knowles, 2014; de Jong et al., 2013). An absence of teacher preparedness can be especially problematic for pre-k students given the impact early literacy development has on the success of long-term literacy outcomes (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2015). There is a limited understanding of the instructional approaches and practices that target the specific needs of DLLs (Buysse et al., 2014). Thus, research such as the present study is needed to identify exemplary teaching practices and how those practices look across different settings.

Additionally, policymakers are receiving increased pressure to fund more early childhood programs. In fact, when looking at national data, allocated funding to early education has increased by more than 560 million dollars in 2015/2016 from the previous year (Barnett et al., 2017). Yet, expanding preschool programs without fully understanding the specific academic and socio-emotional needs of the linguistically diverse children enrolled in these programs is potentially detrimental considering what is known about the long-term consequences of low-quality early education on a child's later academic and social-emotional success (Reynolds, Ou, & Temple, 2018). This study will bring new insight into the field of early childhood education and DLL education by examining the exemplary teaching practices that support DLLs in pre-k, an understudied area. To expand high-quality preschool and develop a highly-effective early childhood workforce at the national and state level, there is a need to better understanding the practices teachers use to support an increasing linguistically diverse student population.

Furthermore, the present study contributes to theory building by using an ecological framework of language learning to better understand how contextual factors at the teacher-level, student-level, and program-level relate to teacher's use of practices. By using an ecological perspective of language learning and teaching, I can examine how the classroom and program environments support or hinder a teacher's implementation of exemplary practices. Findings from this study offer implications for improving teacher education and targeting professional development that supports DLL education in specific contexts.

The current political climate and uncertainty that cloud the lives of immigrants and minority language speakers have fueled my desire to conduct my multi-case study dissertation research in a manner that will benefit our youngest and most vulnerable learners. The majority of the early childhood workforce, pre-k teachers who identify as monolingual English-speakers and teach in English-dominant contexts, must be able to successfully meet the academic and social-emotional needs of their young DLLs. This study had elucidated the practices of truly exceptional teachers of young DLLs while considering the contexts in which they teach.

Appendices

Appendix A. E-mail stating criteria for teacher nomination

Sample email asking school administrators, MSDE early learning specialists, early childhood program coordinators, and directors for nomination of teachers:

Dear (*insert name*),

Hello. My name is Christina Budde, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in language, literacy, and social inquiry at the University of Maryland. I am reaching out to you to see if you would be able to nominate a teacher for participation in my dissertation research.

My research examines how pre-k teachers support the language and emergent literacy development of their dual language learners (DLLs, also known as English language learners) when English is the language of instruction.

As a former teacher, I learned so much from my co-workers but often felt like I didn't have the time to observe and talk about teaching as much as I would have liked. Every teacher has his/her strengths, and we can learn a lot from those teachers.   I believe that many others (teachers, administrators, teacher educators) will benefit from understanding how teachers support the language and literacy development of their young DLLs. I want to understand better what are those supportive practices used by teachers, what do they look like, how they are implemented, and what are the challenges and opportunities that teachers have when educating young DLLs within their particular contexts.

Participation in the study would be quite minimal and involve such things as classroom observations and interviewing the teacher on his/her perspectives of language, culture, and teaching children learning English as an additional language.   My research will inform the practices surrounding the conversation of young DLLs that take place in teacher education, professional development, and policy reform.

That said, I am interested in observing how *exemplary* pre-k teachers support the DLLs in their classrooms.   I am particularly interested in finding teachers who are effective at supporting the language and literacy development of DLLs.

Exemplary teachers of young DLLs frequently...

- Foster relationships between young DLLs, teachers, and peers
- Create classroom environments that are structured, predictable, safe, and welcoming of diverse cultures and languages
- Incorporate student's language and culture into instruction
- Have a deep understanding of how first and second language develops
- Provide a language rich-environment where supports are put in place to facilitate communication and language development
- Use authentic, holistic, multidimensional assessment to assess learning goals
- Encourage play as a way to support language and literacy learning

In your experience, can you think of any pre-k teachers that fit the above description (at least 2/3 of the criteria)?

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to talk in further detail.

Appendix B. Teacher recruitment letter

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership

2311 Benjamin Bldg.
College Park, Maryland 20742-1125
301.405.3324 TEL 301.314.9055 FAX

Dear *Insert Teacher Name*,

My name is Christina Budde, and I am a doctoral candidate in Language, Literacy, and Social Inquiry at the University of Maryland College Park. I specialize in Applied Linguistics and Language Education. As a mother of two young girls and a former teacher, I believe that educators are very important people in the academic and social development of our children. This year, I will examine how exemplary teachers of dual language learners (DLLs), as nominated by leaders in the school and community, support the language and literacy development of their young students. You have been nominated as an exemplary teacher by *insert title of persons here.*

I will be collecting data for this research during the first half of the 2018-2019 academic year. Therefore, I am asking for your permission to observe and video/audio record of some of your teaching. During these classroom observations, I will record video and audio data and take observational field notes of your teaching practices with minimal to no disruption to regular classroom activities. Additionally, I would like to examine some of your classroom artifacts, including student work samples and instructional resources. I also ask for your permission to participate in two interviews and a brief survey concerning your teaching practices and beliefs on culture, literacy, and language in education. The interview would be audio recorded.

I will be writing a research report on what I observe. I will also use the research data for presentations at education research conferences and to write articles for scholarly journals. I will, however, protect your identity by using pseudonyms.

If you are willing to take part in this research, please let me know in person, via email *xx* or phone *xxx-xxx-xxxx,* as soon as possible.

I will also be asking for your official consent on a consent form.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Warm regards,

Christina Budde

Appendix C. Teacher Questionnaire

Name (First and Last) _____ Date: _____

	1. Please describe your educational background:	
Level of Education	**Circle**	**Additional Information**
Bachelor's degree?	Yes No	If yes, what was your major?_____ If yes, what was your minor? _____
Master's degree?	Yes No	If yes, in what area or subject did you earn your degree(s)? _____
Thirty credits beyond Master's?	Yes No	If yes, what was the focus or content of this coursework? _____
Doctoral degree?	Yes No	If yes, in what area or subject did you earn your degree? _____
What certifications do you hold? *(e.g., Elementary Education, Early Childhood, Special Education, Reading, ESOL, etc.)*	_____	

In this questionnaire, the term *Dual language learner (DLL)* refers to a child who is exposed to more than one language on a daily basis.

2. How many years (including the current year) have you taught at the Pre-k level? _____

3. How many years (including the current year) have you taught dual language learners? _____

4. Do you speak a language other than English? **Yes** **No** (circle one choice)

If yes, which language(s)?	How would you rate your proficiency level?
	fluent/advanced, conversational/intermediate,

	novice/beginner
	fluent/advanced, conversational/intermediate, novice/beginner
	fluent/advanced, conversational/intermediate, novice/beginner

5. How much professional development have you had for working with Dual Language Learners? *(please check one box)*	
Number of courses taken through a college/university: ☐ No courses ☐ 1 course ☐ 2 courses ☐ 3 courses ☐ 4 or more courses	Number of sessions of professional development: ☐ None ☐ 1 session ☐ 2 sessions ☐ 3 sessions ☐ 4 or more sessions

Read each statement and then select the one response that most closely fits your level of agreement with each statement.

Part I. Language and Culture*	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. It is easy for children to learn a second language.					
2. It is a good practice to use the same instructional techniques and materials with all students.					
3. It is important that all early childhood teachers know how children learn a new language.					
4. The same educational program will work for all children, DLL or not.					
5. English should be the only language spoken during school.					
6. Parents whose first language is not English should speak only English at home to help their children learn it as quickly as possible.					
7. It takes more than two years for young children to become proficient in a second language.					
8. Early childhood teachers can help children from other cultures become bicultural by respecting their home culture while introducing aspects of a new culture.					

9. It is important for teachers to share information about home languages with all of the children in the classroom.					
10. Parents should continue to speak their home language with their children.					
11. The process of learning English is similar for all children, no matter what other language they speak.					
12. All children should be exposed to materials from other languages and cultures.					
13. The more DLLs there are in a program, the more need there will be for special education services.					

Part II. Instructional Practices *	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. I receive adequate support from my principal and/or other school administrators when I have DLLs in my class.					
2. I collect information about all of the families whose children are in my class, including where the families come from and what language is spoken at home.					
3. I use pictures, objects, gestures, and other forms of nonverbal communication to help DLLs understand what I am saying.					
4. I ask bilingual parents to provide a few key words in their home language so I can use them with their children in my class.					
5. I include materials, such as books, pictures, toys, and labels, that reflect the cultures and language of all the children in the classroom.					
6. I keep careful notes about the language skills of the DLLs in my class.					
7. I make sure that DLLs have opportunities to interact with English-speaking children in my classroom.					
8. I talk with parents of DLLs about their language goals for their children.					
9. I spend time thinking of ways to make bilingual parents feel welcome in my classroom.					
10. I attend cultural festivals and community activities related to the cultures of children in my classroom.					

11. I encourage parents of bilingual children to continue to speak their first language at home.					
12. I plan specific activities in the classroom, like story time or circle time, as opportunities for language development for both English-speaking children and DLLs.					
13. I invite parents and others who speak the languages of the children to come to class and use those languages to do activities with all of the children.					

*Adapted from Tabors, P. (2008). *One child, two languages: A guide for early childhood educators of children learning English as a second language.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Appendix D. Teacher initial interview protocol

(Semi-Structured)

- **Ethics & Purpose**
    - Explain consent form & permission to record, use of pseudonyms
    - Discuss the purpose, reciprocity, and first & next steps (just learning about your experiences and goals now, next I would like to observe your teaching)

- **Identity and Demographic Information**
    - Tell me a little about your teaching experience.
    - Tell me a little about yourself in regards to the language learning experiences you have had. Prompts: Where are you from? What areas have you lived and worked in? Did you study a foreign language in school or abroad?
    - What types, if any, of inter-cultural experiences have you had?

In this interview, dual language learner (DLL) refers to children who are exposed to more than one language on a daily basis.

- **Past & Current Teaching Experiences**
    - What teaching experiences have you had?
    - How would you describe your experiences teaching DLLs?
    - What sources have influenced the way you work with DLLs?
    - What professional development or coursework have you participated in that focuses on DLLs?
    - What practices do you believe best support DLLs' language and literacy development?
    - How do you assess your learners? How is this similar or different from the way you assess your DLLs?
    - What are some of your favorite things about teaching DLLs?
    - What are some challenges you face when working with DLLs?
    - Anything else?

Appendix E. Final Teacher Interview Questions

In this interview, Dual language learners (DLLs) refers to children being exposed to more than one language daily.

(The following are questions that could be used to guide and prompt conversation in this semi-structured interview:)

Additional question specific to my observations, which may include:
I noticed that you use… (e.g., print materials in other languages? Why do you use these materials?)
I noticed that the children do this in class…, is this right? Is my interpretation, right? Do I understand this correctly?

What do you believe are the major goals of preschool? What do you see as your role in supporting this goal?
How do you know that every child gets exactly what they need to be ready for kindergarten?

Specific areas to help teachers focus on the specifics of language and literacy learning (as needed):
How do you support your students' alphabet and letter knowledge?
How do you support your students' phonological awareness (sounds make up words)?
How do you support your students' print awareness?
I noticed you don't use the typical word card approach to teaching vocabulary. How do you support your students' vocabulary knowledge?
How do you support your students' discourse skills?
How do you support the social/emotional development of the DLLs in your class? How is that similar or different from the way you support the students whose home language is English?

Examples of questions asked:
I notice that you spend time carefully explaining to all children why a behavior was unacceptable or mean. Did I observe this correctly? Can you talk to me about that?
What happens when a child doesn't want to come to a math center or writing center, etc…?
Can you walk me through a typical time you spend planning for a day? For a project?
How do you feel about the shorter meeting times? Have you noticed any changes in your DLLs?

I've noticed that you ask your DLLs a lot of questions, even answering a question asked with another question. Is there a reason why?

Talk to me a little about co-teaching. In what ways do you collaborate (planning, implementation, assessing). Do you have certain roles or jobs?

How do you think this context that you teach in affects your teaching?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your teaching experiences of DLLs?

Appendix F. Parent Questionnaire

Teaching Practices Exemplary Pre-k Teachers Use that Support Language and Literacy Development
Family Questionnaire (Pre-K)

Part I: Personal Background Information

Today's Date:_____ Child's Teacher/Class _____

Mother's Country of origin:

_____

Father's Country of origin:

_____

Child's First Name: Last Name: Date of Birth: Month/Day/Year

_____

Child's place of birth: _____

Where has your child lived and when?

_____

Mother's Highest Level of Education: _____

Father's Highest Level of Education: _____

What is your child's race?
(Please check all that apply)
- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ Asian/Island Pacific
- ☐ American Indian/Native Alaskan
- ☐ White

What is your child's ethnicity?
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino

What language(s) does your child speak at home and/or at school? Please list all languages and the age he/she began learning the language.

Language	Where child uses language (home, school, community center, etc..)	Age she/he began learning the language

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