

Exemplary Practices For Teaching Young Dual Language Learners: Learning From Early Childhood Teachers

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Curriculum and Instruction

**EXEMPLARY PRACTICES FOR TEACHING
YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS:
LEARNING FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS**

Dissertation
by

MEGINA BAKER

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of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Exemplary Practices for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners: Learning from Early Childhood Teachers

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One third of young children in the United States are Dual Language Learners (DLLs), or children who are learning more than one language in their early years (Child Trends, 2014). An increase in the DLL population and a changing sociopolitical context in early childhood education, including an expansion of services for diverse families, has led to a critical need for early childhood educators to understand how to best serve DLL children and their families (McCabe et al., 2013). Previous research has identified promising practices for teaching young DLLs (e.g. Castro, Espinosa, & Pérez, 2011; Tabors, 2008), but additional investigations are needed to better understand and elaborate culturally and linguistically responsive approaches. In particular, more information is needed about how teachers support DLL children in English-dominant classroom contexts, and how practices may vary across different types of preschool programs. The present study investigated specific teaching practices for DLLs in six community-nominated exemplary preschool classrooms across three program types (Head Start, public Pre-K, and private university-affiliated preschool programs) in an urban area of Massachusetts. Grounded in theoretical orientations of *knowledge-of-practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and a *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* (Miller, Dalli & Urban, 2012), the aim of this qualitative multiple-case study was to learn from community-nominated exemplary teachers about their beliefs and practices for teaching young DLL children. Data collection sources included: interviews with teachers, program directors, and parents; classroom observations and videos; and classroom artifacts. Findings from the study demonstrate that exemplary teachers hold asset-oriented beliefs about bilingualism and diversity, viewing DLL children and families as knowledgeable resources to the community. With these beliefs as a foundation, teachers enact a wide repertoire of practices tailored for DLL children, including: fostering relationships and belonging through embedding home languages and cultural practices in the classroom; emphasizing guided play, co-constructed curriculum, and ongoing observational assessment; and focusing on scaffolding and teaching the English language. Implications for teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers are also discussed.

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Chapter 1

Bao, a Mandarin Chinese speaker who is learning English in preschool this year, enters the classroom with his father. As they come into the classroom, Leah, one of the teachers, greets them. In Leah's class of eighteen three-and-four-year olds, approximately one third of the children already speak more than one language or are beginning to learn English in school. The language diversity of the group is broad, with 9 different languages represented, including Mandarin Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, Korean, and Armenian. Leah is a monolingual herself, but describes making an effort to support the bilingual children in her group with specific supports such as setting up predictable daily routines, incorporating the children's home languages when possible, and providing picture cues to aid understanding.

"Zao shang hao! Good morning, Bao," Leah says, smiling. Both Bao and his father light up at the teacher's effort to speak a few words in their home language. After exchanging a few words with Bao's father in English, she asks Bao slowly, "Do you have a job today? Let's check the job chart." Motioning for him to come closer, the teachers references a wall chart, hung at the children's level. The chart contains photographs of the children, their written names, and photographs that represent different classroom jobs, such as feeding the class fish or watering the plants. Bao points excitedly to his picture, next to the "feed the fish" job, and exclaims, "Fish!" "Yes, you DO have a job today, Bao! Feed the fish - come right over." Bao waves goodbye to his father and eagerly traverses the room with his teacher to complete his morning job.

Introduction

The preschool classroom in the vignette above is alive with the challenging and inspiring work of teaching Dual Language Learners (DLLs), or young children who are learning more than one language in their early years from birth to age 8 (Castro, Garcia, & Markos, 2013; Office of Head Start, 2010). Attuned to the linguistic diversity of the group, the teacher in this vignette uses multiple teaching practices to support a particular DLL child who speaks Mandarin Chinese and is learning English at preschool. She welcomes and engages the child's father, making a gesture of using the family's home language to welcome them to school and ease the transition for the child between his two languages. And she uses visual scaffolds with predictable daily routines, for example the Job Chart and morning job routine, as structures that support a sense of belonging and facilitate language learning. The present study was designed to learn more about specific teaching practices for DLLs in preschool classrooms, like those illustrated in the vignette, and to investigate how these practices may vary across different types of preschool programs.

The classroom in the opening vignette is not unique in serving a combination of bilingual and monolingual children; across the United States most early childhood classrooms currently include both monolingual children and DLLs. Nationally, one third of all young children are DLLs (Child Trends, 2014a). In the state of Massachusetts, the site of the present study, 17.4% of the total population of three-to-five year old children are considered to be DLLs (Zacharian, Finlayson, Lisseck, & LoIacono, 2010). Given these statistics, it follows that in many areas of the United States a majority of early childhood teachers teach DLLs. But often this teaching takes place in English-language

classrooms, meaning that instruction and classroom experiences are conducted only in English, without a goal of also developing the child's first language (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). Understanding which teaching practices best support the learning and development of DLL children, particularly in English-language classrooms, is thus a matter of great importance for the field, and is the focus of the present study.

This chapter begins by outlining background information about preschool education in the United States, the population of DLL children, language policies impacting DLLs, and current knowledge about teaching practices for DLL children, uncovering gaps and issues evident in these areas of knowledge. Next, the purpose and research questions for the proposed study are presented, and potential study significance is discussed. The chapter concludes with a definition of key terms used in the study.

Background and Context

Early Childhood Education in the Spotlight

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the United States has been in the spotlight in recent years. Ever-increasing attention is being paid to issues such as expansion of access to programs, the content and nature of ECE curriculum and assessment, and the potential of preschool programs to set children, particularly those considered "at risk", on a trajectory towards greater life success (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010; Yoshikawa et al., 2013; Zigler & Gillam, 2011). Recent data indicate that 67% of all four-year-old children are enrolled in center-based childcare or preschool outside of the home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). This statistic has risen notably in recent years; between 2007 and 2012, total preschool enrollment increased by 6%,

with a particular rise in the number of Latino children attending center-based early childhood programs (Child Trends, 2014b). Although numbers are rising, Latino children continue to enroll in preschool programs at lower rates than any other ethnic group (Crosby, Mendez, Guzman, & López, 2016; Figueras-Daniel & Barnett, 2013). With current policy discourse and initiatives aimed at expansion of preschool more than ever before (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), it is likely that increased access to and enrollment in preschool programs will continue to rise in the coming years.

An Increase in the Population of DLLs

While this expansion of preschool programs has been underway, the population of DLLs has been increasing nationwide. In 2004, 20 million children lived in a household in which a language other than English was spoken; by 2013, this number had increased to 23 million (Child Trends, 2014b). In the Head Start program in particular, DLLs have been reported to make up over 30% of total enrollment in the program (Office of Head Start, 2016). Given the broad range of programs within both the public Pre-K and private models, statistics on DLL enrollment in these program types is also difficult to summarize concisely. Nonetheless, given the rise in children in the United States who speak a language other than English in the home, it is more essential than ever before to articulate strong teaching practices for DLL children.

A Variety of Preschool Program Types

In the United States at present, Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs are offered to families in a patchwork of models, some of which are subsidized by federal or local government, while others are private programs that charge tuition to families

(Barnett, Carolan, Squires, & Clarke Brown, 2013). Among the many types of preschool programs in the U.S., some of the most commonly available programs include Head Start, public Pre-K provided within local school systems, and private preschool. According to the most current State of Preschool report (Barnett et al., 2013), 10% of four-year-olds are enrolled in Head Start programs, and 28% in state-funded public preschool programs, with an additional 3% in federally-funded special education programs. Unfortunately, data on enrollment in private programs are not readily available at this time, due to the wide variety of program type, structure, and monitoring characteristic of private programs.

Each preschool program type has unique programmatic and policy structures, varied qualifications for staff, and different curricular and instructional philosophies and goals (Barnett et al., 2013). These structures and goals are most centralized and clearly articulated for the Head Start programs, as they operate under a common framework nationwide (Office of Head Start, 2010). In contrast, public Pre-K programs, by nature of their affiliation with the decentralized public education system of the United States, vary according to the state and local district policies within which the programs are housed. Programs within any given school district are therefore likely to be similar to each other, but may be vastly different from preschool programs in another, even neighboring, district. Private preschool programs are perhaps the most difficult to characterize, given that most policy and curricular decisions are made at the level of the school or childcare center. However, it is precisely this degree of independence and self-governance that sets private programs apart from other models of preschool programs.

According to Castro and colleagues (2013), this piecemeal preschool education system, which is largely separated from the K-12 educational system, results in a lack of continuity of experiences for young children during the early childhood years. The disjointedness of the system impacts DLLs in particular as states and localities vary in policies and practices that are enacted to serve DLL children, and these policies and practices vary from one type of early education program to another. At present, little research has compared preschools across program types. Furthermore, although it is likely that policy and programmatic differences across program types may be reflected in practices at the classroom level, no existing studies have examined how teaching practices for DLL children might vary across different types of programs. Clearly, additional research is needed to better understand these differences. The following section explores some of the known policies and regulations in the United States, and the state of Massachusetts in particular, that may affect each program type uniquely.

Language policies impacting DLLs. The education field is not in full agreement about the best means of educating young children who are DLLs. Most scholars who study bilingual development specifically in young children agree that support for a child's home language in the preschool setting is highly beneficial, as this support enhances a child's well-being and likelihood of developing as a bilingual (e.g. Espinosa, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013). However, policies in certain states discourage or even ban the use of home languages in the classroom. For example, in Massachusetts, Arizona, and California, English-only policies have been enacted that suppress bilingual educational programs for DLL children in public schools (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010).

In the state of Massachusetts, Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) has been legally mandated since 2002 to be the primary means of instruction for all DLLs in the state (Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008; Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71A, 2002). In the years since, English-only laws have been followed with regulations requiring most teacher candidates and in-service teachers to obtain an SEI endorsement through the RETELL initiative in order to be considered qualified to teach DLLs (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014, 2016; Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008). These policies have resulted in a strict limitation on bilingual programs in K-12 classrooms in public schools.

It is likely that this political climate impacts the choices preschool programs and teachers make regarding teaching practices for DLLs, particularly those practices related to providing home language supports. Public Pre-K classrooms, for example, are housed within the K-12 system, and so it is possible that the effects of English-only legislation impact teaching practices in these settings more directly than classrooms in other types of programs, even if the legislation does not formally pertain to Pre-K. Alternatively, Head Start programs have their own policy framework (Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2016; Office of Head Start, 2010) that includes an emphasis on home language support, and may thus be insulated from the impacts of broader political trends and more inclined to support children's home languages in the classroom.

It is currently unclear how policies such as the Chapter 71A law might impact private preschools, however, some scholars have theorized that the policy context surrounding this legislation is so pervasive that it could extend into the thinking of

individuals and institutions that are not directly held accountable to the English-only policy (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Thus, understanding how teaching practices and language of instruction are being implemented differently for DLLs depending on the type of program and policy context presents a significant gap in what is currently known about the teaching of DLLs, and will be considered an area of interest within the present study.

Research on Teaching Practices for DLLs

Despite the increase in the number of DLLs attending preschool programs in the United States, understanding of teaching practices that support DLLs' learning and development remain incomplete (Castro, Espinosa, & Pérez, 2011). Broad recommendations exist for teaching DLLs in preschool classrooms, and many practices acknowledged to benefit young children in general have been endorsed as appropriate for DLLs (Buysse, Peisner-Feinberg, Pérez, Hammer, & Knowles, 2014; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2014). However, suggestions for specific classroom practices have remained vague. For example, prominent scholars agree that teaching should be culturally and linguistically responsive to children's backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Lucas & Villegas, 2011), and many have recommended that teachers of young DLLs honor the home languages and cultures of the children in their classroom (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009; Espinosa, 2013; Office of Head Start, 2010), but what this looks like in practice is rarely articulated. As discussed above, in the English-language classroom and when teachers are monolingual or not proficient in the home languages spoken by the classroom community, teaching practices for DLL children may prove particularly elusive.

One possibility for expanding this body of knowledge is to study the practices of experienced and effective teachers of DLLs. However, despite some promising directions in recent years, the perspective that knowledge about teaching can be generated by or in collaboration with teachers remains in the margins of education research, as evidenced by the current trend privileging experimental design studies as a “gold standard” of education research (Erickson, 2005; Gutiérrez & Penuel, 2014; Lather & Moss, 2005; Rudolph, 2014). Perhaps for this reason, teacher knowledge about practices for teaching DLLs continues to remain untapped and only sporadically disseminated to the field. The present study seeks to fill this gap by learning about teaching practices directly from exemplary teachers of preschool-aged DLL children.

Problem Statement

Several challenges in the field of teaching young DLLs are evident in the background and contextual information presented above. First, more and more programs are likely to serve DLL children in preschool classrooms in the near future, given the current demographic trends that demonstrate a continued increase in the number of DLL children enrolled in preschool programs (Child Trends, 2014a), coupled with an ongoing expansion of universal Pre-K in many states within the U.S. already in progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Although a sizeable body of prior research on teaching and learning for young DLLs does exist, gaps in knowledge persist, especially in articulating specific teaching practices that teachers can use to apply the knowledge of bilingual child development (e.g. Buysse et al., 2014; Castro, 2014; Hammer et al., 2014). For example, Tabors (2008) offers valuable guidance regarding teaching practices for teaching DLLs who are sequential bilinguals, based on her ethnographic research

conducted in the 1990s. However, several limitations to Tabors' work, such as the small sample size of one classroom and the fact that her research was conducted nearly 20 years ago, present a need for additional and related studies.

Additionally, in light of the current sociopolitical context surrounding DLLs, which is influenced by variations across states in policies towards immigration and language use (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010), deeper understandings are needed about how early childhood practitioners adapt teaching for DLLs in particular types of programs (e.g. private preschool, Head Start, or public Pre-K). Some recommended practices might not be available to all teachers; for example, in public Pre-K classrooms operating in a state with an English-only policy, the practice of incorporating a child's home language might not be possible. In addition, due to programmatic structures, populations of children served, or pedagogical philosophies, different types of programs may employ or prioritize unique sets of teaching practices. A need thus exists to understand how teaching DLLs is enacted in a variety of program types.

Finally, teachers who have been identified by their local community as excelling in working with DLL children are well positioned to reflect on and contribute to deepening understandings about how to teach young DLLs in preschool classrooms, yet have been largely absent in the research on teaching DLL children. Failing to seek out the perspectives and knowledge of experienced and exceptional practitioners can lead to inauthentic research that neglects a wealth of knowledge from the classroom, at the same time perpetuating notions of ECE practitioners as unprofessional.

Therefore, I argue that additional research on teaching young DLLs, particularly research that draws upon the knowledge of skilled early childhood teachers across

program types, is necessary in order to address a present gap in understanding the particular practices that teachers may employ to respond in culturally and linguistically relevant ways to young DLL children.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The goals of the present study were threefold: to learn how communities in different types of preschool programs define exemplary teaching for DLLs; to deepen understandings of exemplary teachers of preschool-aged DLL children and their teaching practices; and to examine how contextual factors interplay with the practices teachers use for teaching DLLs, both within and across program types. In order to move forward toward addressing the present issues and gaps in research mentioned above, partnering with teachers who excel in their work with DLL children offers a promising opportunity.

Thus, the present study investigates the following interrelated questions:

- 1)** How do multiple educational stakeholders in early childhood programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs?
 - a.** Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type? If so, in what ways?
- 2)** What teaching practices (including planning, teaching, and assessing) do exemplary teachers employ when teaching DLLs?
 - a.** Do teaching practices vary by program type? If so, in what ways?
- 3)** What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom (such as school structures, staffing, language use laws, policies, and philosophies) influence these teachers and their teaching practices?

In order to investigate these questions, this qualitative multiple-case study (Yin, 2009) was designed to explore six exemplary preschool classrooms, spanning three different program types. Classrooms were selected through a community nomination process to represent the following program types: two public Pre-K classrooms, two Head Start classrooms, and two private, university-affiliated preschool classrooms. Data collection included multiple classroom observations and video recordings of each site, interviews with teachers, directors, and DLL family members, and an analysis of classroom artifacts and children's work. In order to learn from exemplary teachers, teachers were engaged in the data collection and analysis process, for example through the selection of targeted video recordings of teaching practices accompanied with debrief sessions with teachers to view and discuss video footage. The methodology utilized in the study is discussed at length in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Study Significance

Based on the findings from this study, several implications are possible for teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers. First, for teachers of young DLL children, the study can provide detailed examples of how exemplary teachers from a variety of contexts implement daily strategies to support DLL children and their families. Furthermore, by highlighting the work of expert early childhood teachers, the study can work against a persistent deprofessionalization of the preschool teaching profession, and contribute toward an elevated esteem for teachers of young children. Next, teacher educators can use findings from this study to inform the approaches that they recommend to pre-service teachers who anticipate working with DLL children in preschool classrooms. Finally, the study's focus on eliciting community definitions of exemplary

teaching for young DLLs, from a range of stakeholders across three different types of preschool programs, can offer insights to policymakers interested in crafting policies or structures for teaching DLLs at a programmatic level. Each of these implications will be expanded upon in the discussion (Chapter 5).

Definitions of Key Terms

Definitions of key terms used in the study are as follows (in alphabetical order):

- *Assistant teacher*: An educator teaching young children in a preschool program, but who is not full responsible for the curriculum or teaching in that program.
Also known as a *paraprofessional*.
- *Co-teacher*: An educator working in relatively equal and reciprocal collaboration with a colleague (or colleagues) to teach young children.
- *Dual Language Learner (DLL)*: A child who is learning more than one language during the early childhood period (birth through age 8). There are many other terms used to describe children who are DLLs, and it is difficult to select one term that is always and exclusively appropriate given the wide range of experiences and individual variations within this group. Many scholars use the term English Language Learner (ELL), and still others use the term *emergent bilingual* (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). In this proposal, I employ the term DLL, with the understanding that this term is one of many used in the field. I choose this term knowing that it is imperfect, but appreciating the inherent value it places on a child learning more than one language simultaneously, appropriate given the fact that throughout the preschool years, both bilingual and monolingual children continue to develop language abilities (Tabors, 2008).

- *Early childhood teacher*: An educator who teaches children in a preschool program. Also referred to in the literature as a *preschool teacher*, *early childhood educator*, and *Early Childhood Education (ECE) practitioner*. Credentials and training for preschool teachers may vary widely, depending on specific program requirements and individual factors.
- *English-language program*: A preschool program in which English is the primary and predominant language spoken. Home languages may still be incorporated through the targeted use of phrases, or the inclusion of materials in other languages in the classroom, for example in songs or books.
- *Exemplary teachers*: The term “exemplary” teachers is used throughout this study to describe practitioners who have been identified by members of their local communities as teachers who are particularly effective at teaching DLL children. In this study, particular definitions of “exemplary” teaching will be co-constructed through a community nomination process (Foster, 1991) and in consultation of the existing literature on teaching DLLs.
- *Exemplary classroom*: A classroom led by identified exemplary teachers, as defined above.
- *Home language (L1)*: Any language spoken in a child’s home. Also referred to as L1, or first language. A child who learns two languages simultaneously would be considered to have two L1s.
- *Preschool program*: A center-based program providing care and educational experiences for children two to five years of age. In this study, programs include private, Head Start, and public Pre-K settings.

- *Second language (L2)*: Children who are sequential bilinguals first learn their home language, or L1, and then later acquire a second language (Tabors, 2008). The second or other language a child learns, after beginning to learn their home language, is commonly referred to as their second language, or L2.
- *Teaching practice*: A component of teaching, including: planning and reflection; instructing or guiding experiences for children; preparing the classroom environment; collaborating with families; and assessing learning and development.
- *Teaching team*: A group of early childhood practitioners working together in one classroom. The teaching team may include preschool teachers as well as assistant teachers.
- *Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)*: As defined by the state of Massachusetts, SEI is an English language acquisition process for young children in which most classroom instruction, books, and instructional materials are in English. Teachers may use a minimal amount of the child's native language occasionally, but all formal instruction must be conducted in English (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71A, 2002).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The present study extends current understandings about practices for teaching young DLLs by learning from and collaborating with exemplary preschool teachers. Several areas of literature are relevant in framing such a study. This chapter begins with an examination of existing literature on the theoretical orientation of the study, which draws primarily on the *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* model developed by Miller, Dalli, and Urban (2012) and aligns with an epistemological stance that views teachers as knowledgeable experts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; 2009). Implications for applying this theoretical orientation to a study of exemplary teachers are also discussed. The second half of the chapter is devoted to investigating two core questions:

1. What is known about bilingual development in young DLLs?
2. What is known about exemplary teaching practices for young DLLs?

Throughout the review, both conceptual and empirical works are considered.

Theoretical Orientation

This proposal is underpinned by an epistemological orientation that views teachers as producers of knowledge for the education field, and draws upon the *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* (Miller et al., 2012) as a guiding theoretical framework. This section unpacks each of these perspectives, and illustrates how they may be viewed as foundational for the present study.

Teachers as Knowledgeable Experts

Longstanding advocates for valuing teachers as producers of knowledge, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999; 2009) have suggested that by adopting an *inquiry as stance* orientation towards teaching and professional learning, teachers are uniquely positioned to cultivate authentic knowledge of practice not only for application to their own classroom teaching but as contributors to the wider fields of teaching and teacher education. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) distinguish among three conceptions of teacher learning as represented by knowledge-practice relationships. In *knowledge-for-practice* relationships, knowledge about teaching is generated in the academy and then disseminated to teachers. *Knowledge-in-practice*, by contrast, sees knowledge about teaching as highly localized and constructed by teachers in the daily practice of teaching. This construction is consistent with a view of teaching as craft, and the objective of teachers working in this frame of knowledge is to make existing best practices more explicit. The third conception of knowledge, *knowledge-of-practice*, shares some assumptions with *knowledge-in-practice*, most prominently the idea that teachers should be seen as producers of knowledge. But within a construction of *knowledge-of-practice*, teachers are both consumers and producers of knowledge. Here, teachers generate understandings to share with the academy that go beyond articulating practical aspects of teaching, and are reciprocally interested in learning from work produced by university-based researchers. It is within this construction of knowledge about teaching that the *inquiry as stance* orientation is situated.

Adopting an inquiry stance means taking a critical view of the assumption that the academy should have sole rights to the production of knowledge about teaching that

should later be disseminated to teachers and applied to classroom practice. Rather, within an inquiry as stance orientation, teachers (or more broadly, practitioners) engage in and disseminate their own research, or might collaborate with university-based researchers or teacher educators in the process of inquiring into their own teaching practices, thereby deepening understandings about the teaching profession. For example, Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2010), a teacher educator and a preschool teacher, respectively, engaged in a practitioner/university collaboration to explore teaching practices in a culturally and linguistically diverse preschool classroom. Through journaling, examining classroom artifacts, and engaging in collaborative data analysis during regular meetings, Souto-Manning and Mitchell unpacked the ways in which Mitchell learned more about the children's backgrounds and interests and fostered dialogue among the children. In addition, the authors describe how Mitchell "blurred the roles of learner (student) and teacher" (p.274) as she emphasized a funds of knowledge approach to teaching (Moll, 1992), honoring the strengths that children and families brought to the classroom. In this way, knowledge was generated from the classroom, enhanced through collaboration with a university-based teacher educator, and disseminated to the early childhood profession through publication and presentations.

This study aligns with an *inquiry as stance* perspective, communicating well-deserved respect for teachers' knowledge. In order to situate this study within the *inquiry as stance* tradition, the work of Anderson and Herr (1999) is informative. Anderson and Herr describe a continuum of practitioner inquiry work, spanning from insider to outsider approaches. At the "insider" end of the continuum are teachers studying their own practice in their own classrooms, working independently. Along the middle of the

continuum are teachers collaborating with other insiders, and insiders (teachers) collaborating with outsiders (such as university partners). Souto-Manning and Mitchell's (2010) work falls along this section of the continuum. At the "outsider" end of the continuum, still considered to fall under the umbrella of *inquiry as stance*, outsiders study and learn from the work of insiders. In this type of research, university-based researchers collaborate with teachers to learn, from an insider's perspective, about teaching practices and experiences. The present study, initiated from a university-based outsider perspective, yet aiming to understand and draw upon knowledge generated by practitioners in classroom settings, is thus consistent with this "outsider" position in taking a *knowledge-of-practice* approach.

Critical Ecology of the Early Childhood Profession

Consistent with the epistemological stance discussed above, within the *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* framework (Miller et al., 2012), Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers are viewed as producers of knowledge. This framework presents a critical perspective that aims to counteract a persistent and pervasive undervaluing of ECE teachers as a group. ECE teachers struggle chronically with low pay and a lack of respect for their work (Barnett et al., 2013); the critical ecology framework, through explicitly positioning ECE teachers as knowledgeable professionals, works to counteract this trend by expecting practitioners to be reflective, open to growth in their teaching, and thus positioned to contribute to knowledge about teaching and learning. The critical ecology framework was developed internationally by a group of scholars within the European Early Childhood Research Association (EECERA). Group members conducted case studies in collaboration with ECE

practitioners in their respective countries to inform creation of the framework. This process embodies an emphasis on ECE practitioners as producers of knowledge, thus consistent with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) work.

The critical ecology framework builds upon and adapts Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, situating teaching and learning as occurring within nested contexts. Bronfenbrenner's model explains learning and development as occurring within concentric layers of environmental contexts and relationships – the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, mediated by a chronosystem that accounts for changes over time. The critical ecology framework can be useful to describe the complexities of ECE teaching contexts, placing the teacher at the center of the model (see Figure 1, below) within nested contextual systems. This study employs the critical ecology framework as a means of honoring and utilizing the deep knowledge of teaching practice held by professional ECE teachers while investigating the influence of the multiple contexts within which teachers conduct their practice.

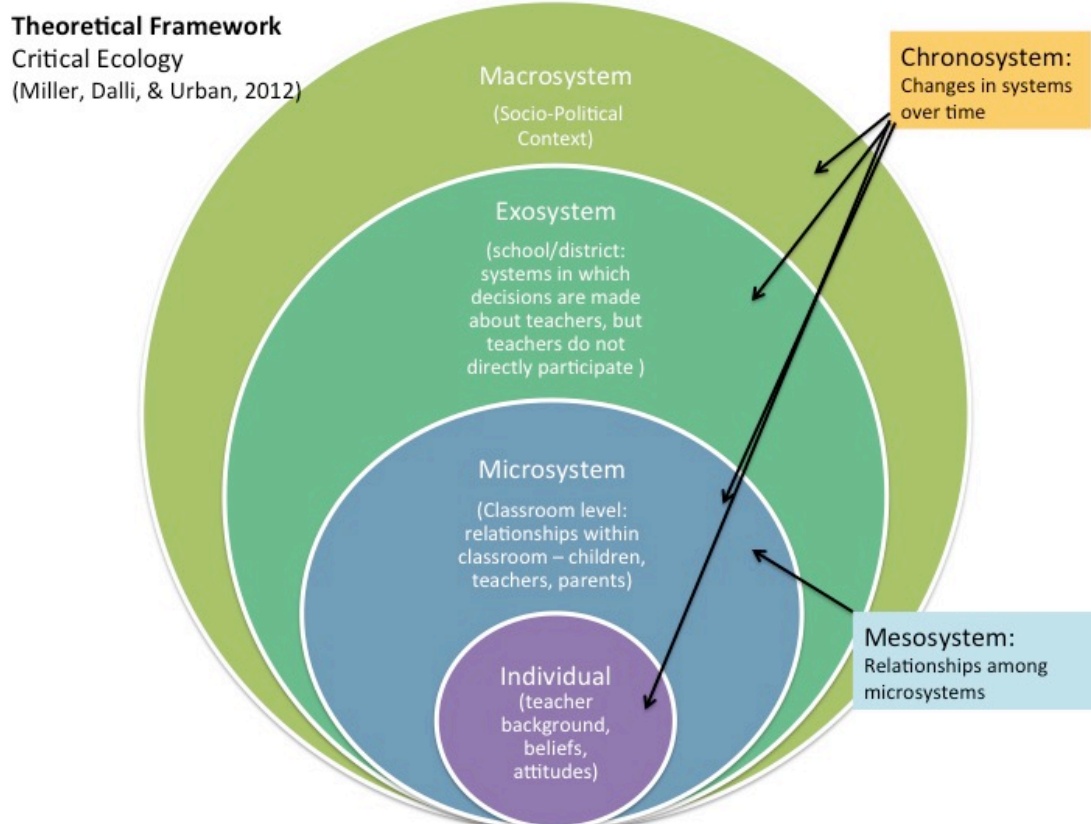


Figure 1: Graphic Representation of Critical Ecology Framework

Empirical studies employing a critical ecology framework. Searches for studies employing a critical ecology framework yielded few results (Harwood & Tukonic, 2016; Peterson et al., 2016; Sheridan, Williams, Sandberg, & Vuorinen, 2011). Most relevant is a study of Swedish preschool teachers' perceived teaching competencies (Sheridan et al., 2011) in which the authors applied critical ecology framework together with interactionist perspectives on learning. In this qualitative study of 30 preschool teachers from across Sweden, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with each teacher in order to explore their beliefs about which teaching competencies were needed to be an excellent preschool teacher. Yet the authors' discussion of how the critical ecology framework was applied is brief, with layers of the framework (microsystem,

macrosystem) mentioned only in the conclusion of the paper. In this application of the theory, Sheridan and her colleagues chose to interpret the ecological system of the Swedish preschool teacher broadly and collectively, interpreting the teachers' experiences as occurring within a shared macrosystem and with similarly shared impacts on their individual microsystems. This approach differs from the original work by Miller et al. (2012), in which individual teachers' nested contexts were discussed more specifically, but does provide a valuable example of how a shared analysis might be conducted, at least at the level of the macrosystem, to explain how sociopolitical and policy factors can interplay with local contexts. Two additional studies (Harwood & Tukonic, 2016; Peterson et al., 2016) drew upon the critical ecology framework in international studies of teacher and administrators' views of ECE professionalism. As with the Sheridan et al. (2011) study, these two studies utilized the critical ecology framework conceptually, but did not systematically apply the framework as a tool for data analysis.

The lack of more empirical research employing a critical ecology model may be due to the fact that the framework has only recently emerged in the literature, and remains in somewhat of an exploratory phase. In their writing on the critical ecology framework, Miller et al (2012) frame their work in the future tense, for example, “in a critical ecology of the early childhood profession, the early childhood community *would be* characterized by critical thinking about ‘practices at every layer of the early childhood professional system’” (p.7, emphasis added). The present study could add to this emerging field by using the critical ecology model as an underlying framework for

understanding how contextual factors impact teachers of young DLL children in a variety of preschool program types.

Employing a Critical Ecology Approach to Study Exemplary Teachers

The present study applies the critical ecology framework to focus on exemplary teachers of young DLLs in preschool classrooms. A number of scholars have written conceptually about the notion of exemplary teaching practices, expressing an assumption that expert teachers possess certain qualities or skills that differentiate them from novice or average teachers (Berliner, 1994; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Shulman, 1987). However, only a handful of researchers have examined exemplary teaching in studies of cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms (Clayton, 2013; Irizarry & Raible, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995b).

An example of especially influential empirical work investigating the teaching practices of exemplary teachers is that of Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Following a community nomination process (Foster, 1991), Ladson-Billings engaged in an outsider/insider partnership with eight exemplary African-American elementary school teachers, eventually developing a framework based on this study known as Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The study involved interviews with the teachers, classroom observations, and videotaping of the teachers, and eventually collaboration among the teachers to view the video clips in order to analyze and discuss their practices. As evidenced by ongoing discourse about CRT over time, it is clear that this work has had a deep and lasting impact on the field of education, especially for practitioners interested in a focus on inquiring into practice for diverse student populations.

Honoring the many strengths of Ladson-Billings' (1995) research, this study is nonetheless representative of a gap in the literature pertaining to young, preschool-aged DLL children. Most studies of exemplary teachers have focused on K-12 populations rather than early childhood teachers, and they have not specifically looked at teaching DLLs (e.g. Ankrum, Genest, & Belcastro, 2014; Clayton, 2013). Although there have been studies of effective practices for young DLL children (e.g. Tabors, 2008), very few studies have specifically investigated the teaching practices of exemplary preschool teachers or focused on young DLL children. The most relevant work in this area comes from the doctoral dissertations of emergent scholars who examined teaching practices for preschool-aged DLLs, but did not attempt to look at exemplary teachers specifically (Bezdicek, 2008; Bryant, 2012). Given the powerful impact that studies of exemplary teachers have had in the past, as in the case of Ladson-Billings (1995) work, the time seems ripe to engage this strategy for a study of teaching young DLL children.

Further, given the lack of research utilizing a critical ecology approach in general, it follows that no study to date has used the critical ecology framework to study exemplary teaching practices. Yet numerous scholars have pointed out how deeply context matters in understanding teaching and learning, and critiqued studies of teaching that fail to attend to the role of contextual factors (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Urban, 2012). In particular, Urban (2012) calls for engaging practitioners in the production of knowledge for the early childhood field as a means of offering localized and authentic perspectives on teaching that attend to the particulars of place and time impacting teaching in a particular setting. The critical

ecology approach offers a valuable opportunity to deeply examine how contextual factors shape teaching and learning.

Studying exemplary teachers of young DLL children, especially when situated in a critical ecology frame, can thus offer powerful and new understandings to the field, for three reasons. First, utilizing the critical ecology approach means making explicit how both local and distal (e.g. microsystem and macrosystem) factors shape the daily experience of teachers in preschool classrooms, impacting their teaching practices and approaches. Second, a critical ecology approach enables a local designation of exemplary teaching to be recognized, rather than assuming that one blanket approach is necessarily best for *all* young DLLs regardless of context. Thus, differences across program types can be authentically explored and understood. Finally, from a critical ecology perspective, preschool teachers are viewed as knowledgeable experts, a framing consistent with the *knowledge-of-practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) discussed previously. For these reasons, in light of the current dearth of literature studying teaching practices for DLLs by focusing on exemplary teachers, and the even greater dearth of literature employing a critical ecology framework to this end, the present study is uniquely positioned to contribute to the literature on teaching DLLs.

Bilingual Development in Young DLL Children

Despite the relatively small network of scholars focused specifically on researching and making policy and practice recommendations for teaching preschool-aged DLL children, recent years have seen a burgeoning of new research that targets this specific group of children. One major direction for recent scholarship in this area was the creation of the Center for Early Care and Education Research – Dual Language Learners

(CECER-DLL), which has been responsible for reviewing and synthesizing current knowledge on teaching DLLs through a series of recent reviews, published in a special issue of the Early Childhood Research Quarterly journal (i.e. Castro, 2014). These reviews present a current and comprehensive summary of the present conceptual and empirical understandings about how DLLs learn and develop from birth to age five. The large body of literature on bilingual development in multiple developmental domains (linguistic, social and emotional, and cognitive) provides strong evidence that the DLL population is different in significant ways from the monolingual population, and teaching practices should therefore be tailored for DLLs.

The following sections follow the CECER-DLL strategy of discussing bilingual development in young children by developmental domain. Discussion of each domain begins by presenting the relevant CECER-DLL review, then continues by examining specific studies from the reviews that hold relevance for my present work because of their focus on preschool or pre-kindergarten center-based programs. In some cases, additional and related work that did not meet the selection criteria of these reviews is also considered, such as more recently published studies and additional qualitative work.

Social and Emotional Development

The young children grouped within the broad umbrella category of DLLs are quite diverse (Winsler et al., 2014). Young DLLs span a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, vary in terms of their family histories and current family situations, how long they have lived in the United States, and with regards to their patterns of exposure to languages. Literature about DLLs consistently describes processes through which individual and contextual factors interact in a complex interplay to determine whether

and to what degree a DLL child develops as a bilingual (Brisk, 2006; Castro et al., 2013; McCabe et al., 2013; Tabors, 2008). For example, Castro and her colleagues (2013) have developed a comprehensive conceptual framework for learning and development in DLL children. This framework is centered on the notion that all development, including social and emotional, occurs within particular contexts and is colored and shaped by these contexts. Factors within the framework include: the extent of exposure to each language, status of the languages, sociopolitical climates related to bilingualism and language learning, and individual personality traits and learning styles. A separate but related framework on individual and contextual factors impacting bilingual development (Brisk, 2006) also shows how factors related to bilingualism interact in unique ways for each individual. And as García (2012) notes, depending on how these factors interact, some young DLLs are at an increased risk for poor social and emotional outcomes, especially for those DLL children whose families also experience economic hardship.

Halle et al. (2014) conducted a targeted review of empirical studies on the social-emotional development of DLLs between 2000-2011. The inclusion criteria for the review required that studies include direct or standardized assessment of social-emotional outcomes; this narrowed the scope of the review to 13 peer-reviewed articles. Despite the small number of studies in this review, several findings have relevance to understanding that the social and emotional development of DLLs might differ from that of monolinguals. First, findings indicate that depending on individual circumstances, some DLLs attain social-emotional outcomes in self-regulation, social competence, and social cognition equal or better to those of monolinguals, while others are likely to struggle with self-regulation and social competence more than monolingual peers.

Again, this indicates a wide range of experiences for DLL children. Next, studies in the review found that, similar to prior findings on monolingual children, warm and supportive teacher-child relationships consistently and positively impacted social-emotional outcomes for DLLs (Downer et al., 2012). Yet other work (Luchtel, Hughes, Luze, Bruna, & Peterson, 2010b) indicates that teachers, especially monolingual teachers, may struggle to form strong relationships with DLL children, thus exposing a potential challenge for DLL children. Finally, the review found that the incorporation of children's home languages in the preschool classroom can have positive effects on social competence for DLLs. However, few studies examined the possible detriments of a lack of home language support in the classroom, although prior work by Wong Fillmore (1991) suggests that this situation is quite common.

Wong Fillmore (1991) conducted a national survey of 690 language-minority families with preschool-aged children enrolled or formerly enrolled in English-language preschool programs (the main sample), comparing language use in these families to a group of 311 families whose children attended home-language programs (primarily Spanish). She found that over 50% of families in the main sample reported a reduction in the amount of their home languages spoken at home during and following participation in the English-language program. Thus, although children were learning English in preschool, it appeared to frequently have a negative impact on home language maintenance. This is a critical finding that indicates the potential fragility of minority-language maintenance in an English-dominant society. As Halle et al. (2014) discuss, loss of the home language can alienate children from their extended families and cultural roots, which can result in social and emotional challenges far beyond the early childhood

years. Additional research is needed in this area, however, present findings suggest that particular consideration should be given to understanding the potential for DLL children to develop fully as bilinguals, rather than losing one of their languages in place of another over time.

Language and Literacy Development

Numerous scholars have noted that the language and literacy development of children who are DLLs differs from the development of monolingual children (Castro et al., 2013; McCabe et al., 2013; Tabors, 2008). Hammer et al. (2014) conducted an exhaustive review of the literature in this area, including both U.S. and international studies and a wide range of research methodologies that drew upon quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. In sum, the review examined 92 U.S.-based studies and 90 international studies. The reviewers note several prominent findings; each is discussed below along with additional and related literature.

Two language systems. Evidence suggests that DLLs develop two separate language systems early in life, that these systems interact with each other, and that DLLs are not negatively impacted by exposure to more than one language in the early childhood years. A recent policy report endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (McCabe et al., 2013) echoes this sentiment, asserting that rich exposure to language is critical for DLLs, and encouraging families of DLL children to speak their native languages at home in order to provide a linguistic environment that will benefit children's development in both their home language and their second language.

Trajectories of development. Hammer and her colleagues (2014) found that the trajectory of language and literacy development for DLLs may occur along a different

path than for monolingual speakers, for example, in the progression of conceptual vocabulary acquisition. Tabors (2008) documented a progression of second language acquisition for sequential bilingual learners, or children exposed to English for the first time in the preschool classroom after learning their first language from birth in the home. First, children continue to use their first language, then enter a non-verbal period during which they may not speak in either language. Next, they progress to productively using individual words and phrases in their new language, often formulaic and predictable, and finally begin to communicate with flexibly constructed phrases and sentences. Tabors' work thus illustrates how bilingual oral language development may differ from that of monolinguals. This trajectory has been affirmed and elaborated upon by additional research; for example, a recent ethnographic case study of three young DLLs (Bligh & Drury, 2015) further explored the non-verbal period, offering additional perspectives on the child's agency and learning during this phase of bilingual development.

Oral language and vocabulary development. The areas of oral language development, and vocabulary in particular, have been identified as key areas of concern for young DLLs (Castro, 2014; Garcia, 2012; Hammer et al., 2014; Páez, Bock, & Pizzo, 2011). Bilingual children are more likely to have slower vocabulary development within a single language than monolinguals, and in many cases DLLs struggle to achieve vocabulary knowledge in English comparable to their monolingual peers (Hoff et al., 2012; Páez et al., 2011). This is understandable given that bilingual children are learning two vocabularies in two different languages; conceptually, their range of vocabulary may be similar to monolinguals if both languages are considered (Core, Hoff, Rumiche, & Señor, 2013). In fact, the Hammer et al. (2014) review highlights a number of studies

that have examined code switching, or the process of switching between languages, as a common strategy used by DLLs to draw upon their knowledge of one language when lacking a key term in their other language. Code switching is seen as a natural part of the process of becoming a bilingual, and should not be viewed as cause for concern. Recent research by Singh and Quam (2016) found that children shift in their control over code switching, becoming more competent and switching as they develop from 3-5 years of age. Nonetheless, these findings together stress the need to focus on oral language development, and specific vocabulary instruction, for DLL children.

In addition, a foundational study by Bohman and his colleagues (2010) examined a sample of 750 Spanish/English bilingual DLLs in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. Using parent interviews and language assessment data in both Spanish and English, the researchers explored the relationship between language experience and language outcomes through regression modeling. Findings from the study demonstrate the powerful influence of both language input and language output: when children engaged in more production of a language, they were statistically significantly more likely to develop proficiency in that language. This research is related to Krashen's (1982) notion of comprehensible input and Swain & Lapkin's (1995) concept of comprehensible output.

Transfer. Finally, the ways in which language abilities may transfer across languages have shown that for language pairs that share structural characteristics (such as a similar alphabetic system), children have a potential to draw upon their understandings of language and literacy in one language and apply these concepts to the other language (Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005; Goodrich, Lonigan, & Farver, 2013; Hammer et al., 2014; Pérez et al., 2011). Although focused on first-graders rather than preschoolers,

Bialystok and her colleagues (2005) found that children were able to transfer literacy skills across languages, but only when the languages shared an alphabetic system. A more recent experimental design study of 92 Spanish-speaking preschool-aged DLLs (Goodrich et al., 2013) found that certain literacy skills, such as phonological awareness, transferred across languages, but other skills, such as blending phonemes, did not. Together, these findings indicate that knowledge of a young DLL's two (or more) language systems and their similarities is critical for teachers who wish to encourage and support potential transfer across languages. Furthermore, additional research (Kieffer, 2012) indicates that focusing on oral language development can foster vocabulary associations across languages for young DLLs.

Cognitive Development

Historically, questions have existed about whether exposure to multiple languages might have negative impacts on cognitive development, particularly in largely monolingual countries (Myers-Scotton, 2006). To the contrary, recent research on the impacts of becoming a bilingual has demonstrated multiple cognitive and social benefits. In their review of the literature on this topic, Barac, Bialystok, Castro, and Sanchez (2014) debunk prior deficit perspectives towards DLLs and bilingualism. Synthesizing 102 peer-reviewed articles on DLLs birth through five years of age, the authors conclude that bilinguals surpass monolinguals in many executive-functioning tasks, including problem-solving abilities, flexible thinking, inhibitory control, and working memory. This critical understanding about bilingual development works in tandem with findings that exposure to multiple languages in the early childhood years does not harm or hinder development (Espinosa, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013).

As an example of work in this area, Carlson and Meltzoff (2008) studied 50 kindergarten-aged children, comparing simultaneous bilinguals in the group (those who had been learning English and Spanish from birth) with English monolinguals and with English monolinguals participating in a dual-language immersion program in Spanish. Results on a battery of executive-functioning measures showed that the bilingual children outperformed the other groups on the battery, and especially on tasks that required managing conflicting attention demands. Barac et al. (2014) explain that findings such as these “demonstrate a robust bilingual advantage in executive control that is apparent as early as the first year of life, holds across various language pairs, and is distinct from the effects of culture, immigration history, and language of instruction” (p.704). Additional research on bilingual brain development and neurology is ongoing; for example, one recent study found that children who are learn more than one language in early childhood develop more streamlined synaptic connections in language-processing areas of the brain (Kaiser et al., 2015). As a whole, findings from this body of work thus demonstrate, with increasingly robust evidence, the multiple cognitive benefits that may be gained from developing as a bilingual from a young age.

Summary

The body of literature on the development of young DLL children highlights a number of ways in which bilingual and multilingual children may differ developmentally from their monolingual peers. First, existing literature suggests that particular attention should be paid to social and emotional development of young DLLs. This attention should be individualized, as teachers and caregivers must thoroughly understand the complex interplay of individual and contextual factors that impact a child’s development.

Next, considering language and literacy, it is clear that children's two languages can be an asset to their development, as in the case of potential transfer of knowledge across languages, yet it must be understood that children are likely to progress more slowly in areas such as vocabulary development in each language as they work to master two languages. Finally, in the realm of cognitive development, an advantage for bilingual children has now been well-documented, demonstrating that DLL children show executive functioning skills that frequently surpass their monolingual peers. In sum, these findings paint a complex picture of development in young DLL children, and distinguish young DLL children as a particular group with unique developmental characteristics. Yet as a critical caveat, scholars such as Brisk (2006) and Winsler et al. (2014) remind us of the broad diversity found within the DLL population, thus cautioning against generalizing findings blindly to *all* DLL children and necessitating an individualized approach to teaching young DLLs.

The field of research on bilingual development in young children is lively and active; the breadth and scope of the studies reviewed above indicate a wide range of research traditions and offer numerous insights about the development of young DLL children. However, as acknowledged by Castro (2014), the valuable reviews compiled by the CECER-DLL group share some significant methodological limitations. Most importantly, definitions about who is considered a DLL vary widely. When different studies define DLL status in different ways, pooling understandings across the literature may be problematic. Similarly, despite the literature on the immense variability within the group of DLLs, not all studies gather in-depth information about DLL families, their language practices, and cultural factors, which have been shown to impact DLL

children's development. Finally, few studies examine language development in a child's home language; most focus on English language development. Clearly, more research is needed to address these kinds of concerns.

Despite these methodological limitations, current understandings of the young DLL population do suggest strongly that teaching practices for DLLs should be tailored to the unique developmental, linguistic, and cultural strengths and needs of this particular group, with consideration for individual characteristics of each DLL child. First, one implication of the diversity found within the DLL population is a need for educators to engage in practices that open a dialogue with families about their linguistic and cultural practices, so that teachers may draw upon the funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) that children and families bring to the classroom community. Next, when considering implications related to social and emotional development, Luchtel's (2010b) findings on building relationships between teachers and DLLs suggest that particular strategies may need to be employed to ensure that DLLs are in fact forming strong relationships with their teachers and caregivers. Regarding the findings on language and literacy development, scholars such as Wong Fillmore (1991) and Bohman et al. (2010) make a strong case for support of both or all of a child's developing languages, in order to avoid language loss and cultural alienation if a child's home language is not supported at home as they acquire English in school. Barac and her colleagues (2014) further emphasize the many cognitive benefits that may be reaped from supporting a child's potential to develop bilingually. Finally, research on the potential for linguistic transfer (Bialystok et al., 2005; Goodrich et al., 2013) suggests that teaching practices that enable children to draw upon all of their linguistic resources may facilitate language learning.

In sum, knowledge about the unique features of DLL children’s development has significant implications for teaching DLLs in preschool classrooms. The publication of a joint policy statement on DLLs in early childhood programs issued by the U.S. Federal government (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016) is one prominent embodiment of this message. The policy statement summarizes current research on DLL development and educational trends and makes recommendations to states and programs regarding best practices for young DLLs in early childhood programs. These recommendations are broad but consistent with the literature base described above, emphasizing the benefits of bilingualism and the need to support young DLLs in ways that honor and support their home languages and cultures. The following section continues this thread, exploring the literature on exemplary teaching practices for young DLLs.

Exemplary Practices for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners

Having explored what is known about the social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive development of young DLL children, what is currently known about exemplary teaching practices for young DLLs? This section begins with a discussion of the Developmentally Appropriate Practices framework, which serves as a broad and widely accepted foundation for exemplary teaching for young children. The remainder of this section highlights the most prominent and relevant literature specifically focused on teaching preschool-aged DLLs in center-based classrooms, including public pre-k classrooms, Head Start, and private settings.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice and DLLs

The Developmentally Appropriate Practice framework. Although preschool programs vary greatly in terms of philosophy and structure, an increasing number of them aspire to align with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) framework for teaching and learning, called Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The DAP framework, grounded in the socio-cultural theories of Jean Piaget (1968) and Lev Vygotsky (1978), is a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. According to DAP, young children are viewed as active learners who construct knowledge through interaction with people and materials in their environment, by engaging in multi-sensory exploration and inquiry. Within a constructivist framework, DAP adopts a “whole child” approach (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) in which learning and development across domains (physical, cognitive, social/emotional) are viewed as intertwined. Teaching practices within the DAP framework include five broad domains: creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance learning and development, planning curriculum to achieve important goals, assessing children’s development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families. In a DAP-oriented classroom, learning through play and hands-on exploration is central, and children have ample opportunities to make choices about play activities throughout the day. Whole-group and small-group activities are also offered daily, which include authentic and embedded language and literacy instruction through reading aloud, rhyme and song, and purposeful reading and writing activities.

NAEYC currently accredits preschool programs based on their adherence to the DAP framework, a rigorous process that can take a program several years to complete.

According to recent reports, 6,932 programs nationwide are currently accredited (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2015). Obtaining accreditation carries prestige for the program and may be used as a signal of quality for parents seeking a high-quality program for their child (Fliess, 2013). Adoption of DAP standards is thus an indicator of high-quality practice for early childhood programs nationwide. Due to the breadth of the NAEYC influence on early childhood education in the United States, the DAP framework has been widely accepted by both scholars and practitioners in the field of ECE both in the United States and internationally (File, Mueller, & Wisneski, 2012). Some scholars argue that the DAP framework can and should be taken as a foundational model of strong teaching practices for teaching all young children.

Critiques of DAP. Despite its widespread acceptance, DAP has been critiqued for doing too little to address the particular needs of diverse learners, including children with special rights, generally referred to as children with special needs (Mallory & New, 1994) and DLL children (Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011). The current iteration of the DAP framework is the third edition, revised twice through a collaborative process that has taken place over three decades (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). During the 1990s, critique of the framework was lively and varied. Some critics argued that the foundation of DAP, fashioned as it is on Piagetian and Vygotskian theories, privileges knowledge constructed within Western upper and middle class circles, and may thus prove inadequate for valuing a range of child-rearing and learning styles outside of that particular culture of power (Cannella & Viruru, 2002). New and Mallory (1994), editing a volume dedicated exclusively to critiquing the initial version of DAP, voiced concern

that the adoption of “culturally specific indicators of normal development...hinders our ability to consider alternative pathways to development” (p. 8). Others rebutted that children from a range of backgrounds and learning styles had been shown to thrive in DAP-oriented classrooms (e.g. Charlesworth, 1998).

By its third edition, Copple and Bredekamp (2009) had made significant changes to the DAP framework and handbook, taking into account these critiques. The current version of DAP includes numerous references to the need for teachers to cultivate reciprocal relationships with families, learn about children’s cultures and backgrounds, and adapt teaching to respond to the diversity of the children in their particular classroom. Although debates have tapered noticeably in recent years, many of the aforementioned concerns about the shortcomings of DAP to address the strengths and needs of DLL children remain (File et al., 2012). Thus, the DAP framework includes many of the teaching practices considered by the ECE field to be most appropriate and beneficial to young children as a broad group, yet continues to lack specific direction regarding teaching practices for young DLLs. In particular, Tabors (2008) and Castro et al. (2011) have argued that exemplary teaching for young DLLs should go beyond the provisions of the DAP framework and have moved this conversation further, as discussed in the section below.

Elements of Exemplary Teaching Practices for DLLs

Beyond DAP, a growing body of literature exists that considers teaching practices beneficial for DLL children. This review of exemplary practices highlights two especially prominent contributions to the literature (Tabors, 2008; Castro et al., 2011), both of which present broad frameworks for teaching DLL children.

Tabors (2008) offers some of the most specific guidance for practitioners seeking to tailor their teaching practices to benefit DLLs. Over the course of two years, Tabors conducted an ethnographic study of one English-language university-affiliated private preschool classroom serving a diverse group of DLLs and monolingual children. Of the 23 children who participated in the study, 15 were DLLs, and 8 different home languages were represented in the classroom. Data sources included field notes, interviews, and classroom artifacts.

Based on this study, Tabors developed a framework for understanding the progression through which a sequential bilingual child acquires the English language (previously discussed in this chapter) and also described a number of teaching practices that had been demonstrated to be especially beneficial to the DLLs in the group. These include curricular practices (such as including a mix of teacher-directed and child-directed play-based activities that foster rich language use), communication strategies (such as repetition, talking about the here and now, and using objects and other visuals), classroom organizational structures (such as having predictable routines and using music during transitions), strategies for engaging families (such as fostering reciprocal communication about language) and assessment practices (including authentic assessment in both of a child's languages). For example, Tabors suggests that teachers should get to know a few phrases in a child's first language when the child first enters the program, then incorporate these phrases to scaffold the child's transition to school and to honor the family's language. Tabors' findings have been adapted as a widely read book for teachers, offering additional examples and guidance of how one might enact the

recommendations in practice, and thus represent one of the most comprehensive sources of recommended practices for DLLs currently available.

In a related and equally prominent conceptual piece, Castro et al. (2011) reviewed the literature on high-quality early childhood for DLLs. The authors conducted a selective review of studies in three areas: curriculum and instructional practices, program and teacher characteristics, and family engagement. Based on the results of this review, the authors identified fourteen “features of quality ECE practices” (p.270) that could be considered foundational for teaching young DLL children in early childhood settings. Clustering these fourteen features, five thematic groups of teaching practices are evident: affirming culture and language, supporting language development, fostering relationships with and among children, forming partnerships with families, and using appropriate, multi-dimensional assessments. Castro et al.’s synthesis thus offers broad understandings about practices that may benefit young DLLs in preschool classrooms. It should be noted that these features of high-quality practices were also echoed in the “First 5 LA” study on child outcomes in the Los Angeles public preschool system (Atkins-Burnett, Xue, Kopack, Induni, & Moiduddin, 2010), which involved a rigorous and multi-modal assessment of 72 center based programs in which, on average, 45% of the children were considered DLLs . The authors of this study identified five effective practices for teaching four-year-old DLLs, all of which are consistent with Castro et al.’s (2011) findings.

This section is organized in accordance with the five clusters of practices articulated in Castro et al.’s (2011) work: affirming culture and language; supporting language development; fostering relationships with and among children; forming

partnerships with families; and using appropriate, multi-dimensional assessments. In each sub-section, major findings from Castro and her colleagues' work are unpacked, then additional empirical studies are presented related to each area that are of particular relevance to preschool-aged DLL children in classroom-based settings. Studies reviewed below were included if they featured research conducted in U.S. English-language preschool classrooms focused specifically on teaching practices for DLL children, as this literature most closely relates to the scope and aims of the present study.

Affirming culture and language. Nieto and Bode (2011) use the term “affirming diversity” to discuss the benefits of multicultural education. In Castro et al.'s (2011) work, a number of findings reflect this sentiment to affirm the cultures and languages of the children and families in the preschool community. Castro and her colleagues suggest that classrooms should: reflect the cultures and languages of the children through the integration of books, pictures, and other materials that represent the children in the group; include staff who are knowledgeable of children's cultures and fluent in their home languages; and offer opportunities for both second language (L2) acquisition as well as first language (L1) maintenance. Tabors (2008) echoes these recommendations, suggesting, for example, that teachers might invite parents into the classroom to share a tradition or skill, thus bringing authentic and relevant encounters with families' cultures into the classroom.

Several examples from the qualitative literature are especially relevant and supportive of these recommendations. First, Soltero-Gonzalez (2009), in a case study of one preschool classroom, examined what happened when children were invited to use their home language (Spanish) while working in small groups in learning centers. The

classroom teacher was a European-American, bilingual in English and Spanish. The author found that children's engagement in conversation and in classroom activities changed when allowed to use Spanish, and that the children made more connections between their own lives and English-language read aloud texts when speaking in Spanish. Thus, in this example, affirming the children's knowledge of both of their languages, and providing the freedom for them to use each in the classroom, promoted richer connections among the children and with the curriculum.

In a related study, Kurkjian and her colleagues (2001) learned from Cheryl, a preschool teacher in an urban Head Start classroom. Taking a descriptive case study approach using interviews, 50 hours of classroom observations, videos, and field notes, as well as the standardized Measures of Knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (MKDAP) interview that aligns with NAEYC's DAP guidelines, the researchers noted that an emergent approach to curriculum planning allowed Cheryl to observe and incorporate the children's interests, drawing upon their cultural backgrounds when developmentally appropriate. Like the teacher in Soltero-Gonzalez's (2001) study, Cheryl encouraged the use of the children's home languages in the classroom, and although she was a monolingual herself, began learning Spanish, (the dominant language of the children she taught) and was open with the children about her own language-learning process, which offered modeling of metacognitive awareness related to learning a language. Both the curriculum and classroom climate were thus supportive of multiple cultures and languages.

Gillanders (2007) conducted a qualitative case study of Sarah, also a Caucasian, monolingual English speaker who had been identified as an exemplary teacher of DLLs.

Like Cheryl in Kurkjian et al.'s (2001) study, Sarah also took it upon herself to begin learning Spanish, the L1 of many of the DLLs in her class. According to the study findings, strong relationships between Sarah and the children, and also among the children themselves, fostered a supportive atmosphere in which children could escape the "double bind" (Tabors, 2008) of language learning, becoming accepted into the peer group so that they could engage in purposeful play with peers and cultivate their English language skills through social interaction. In addition, classroom organizational structures were predictable and fostered DLL children's ability to function in the group as they learned the language of the classroom. The authors note that this is consistent with Tabors (2008)'s recommendations for teaching DLLs. Adding to this research, de Oliveira, Klassen, and Gilmetdinova (2014) conducted an in-depth case study of Ruby Li, an experienced kindergarten teacher working with a group of monolingual and DLL children. They found that Ruby built her teaching practices around the children's funds of knowledge, intentionally making connections between their home lives and school experiences, fostering group and collaboration, and inviting families to become involved in the classroom community.

Finally, in contrast to the four studies described above, a study by Heng (2011) offers a cautionary tale. In an ethnographic case study of one U.S. ECE center with both large Chinese-American and Latino populations over seven months, Heng found that the school made many efforts to be culturally responsive, for example by providing written materials in both Spanish and Mandarin to families, and hiring staff of both ethnicities. Yet when parents were interviewed about the school's practices, the author found that Chinese children's home cultures were less integrated into classroom life than the

practices of Latino families. For example, the school frequently served more Latino foods than Chinese in the school menu, and failed to provide chopsticks for Chinese children to use at mealtimes. Despite these cultural misalignments, Chinese parents remained publicly silent about their concerns and needs, although they expressed concern in their interviews that their children were becoming more distanced from their families' cultures as a result of their school experiences.

This collection of studies echoes the literature on bilingual development in suggesting that supporting both of a child's languages is most beneficial to avoid a situation of language loss (Atkins-Burnett et al., 2010; Fillmore, 1991; McCabe et al., 2013). In addition, these studies were also consistent with Moll's (1992) concept of drawing upon a child and family's *funds of knowledge* in order to both affirm culture and language as well as learn from the cultural resources of the entire school community. In both the Kurkjian et al. (2001) and Gillanders (2007) studies, teachers took it upon themselves to learn more about the languages and cultures of the children in the group, a stance consistent with suggestions by Castro et al. (2011) that educators should work to become "fluent in the children's primary languages and familiar with the family cultural beliefs, practices, and values" (p.270).

Supporting language development. A recent study by Sawyer and colleagues (2016) found that preschool teachers, even those who were bilingual themselves and held positive beliefs about bilingualism, used few strategies to support the language and literacy development of young DLLs. Yet according to Castro et al. (2011), the field does have some knowledge about practices that support language development. They suggest that teachers in a high-quality ECE program for DLLs would: understand the

process of first and second language development; be knowledgeable about how to scaffold language learning, for example through using props and gestures and structuring predictable classroom organization and routines; provide multiple opportunities for language-rich interaction, such as play activities and storybook reading; and ideally support the development of both languages in the classroom. Given the context of the present study and the focus on English-language classrooms, the focus here is on reviewing empirical literature that delves deeper into teaching practices for supporting language development for DLLs primarily in English, while acknowledging that support for both languages would, in most instances, be preferable (McCabe et al., 2013).

Knowledge of language development. Literature that examines the impact of increasing preschool teachers' knowledge of language development on classroom practices is currently limited. A recent exhaustive review (Buysse et al., 2014) of intervention studies focused on the effects of ECE programs on DLL children published between 2000-2011, found only two studies that aimed to enhance teachers' knowledge of language development. In both cases, teachers improved their instructional practices for DLLs following the professional development workshops. However, Buysse and colleagues caution that the small number of studies in this area means that no firm conclusions can be drawn about the impact of teacher knowledge of language development on teaching and learning.

Scaffolding language learning. In another section of the Buysse et al. (2014) review, ten studies examined interventions specifically focused on language or literacy development, including storybook reading and explicit vocabulary instruction. Evidence from these studies show gains in language and literacy development as measured on

standardized assessments following participation in the interventions, although the review found a wide range of different intervention programs employed and was thus unable to identify particular approaches that seemed to be most beneficial. In some cases language scaffolding occurred only in English and subsequently had the greatest impact on English language development, but in studies where instruction took place in both languages children experienced bilingual gains.

Additional studies have taken a descriptive approach to understand the nature of teaching practices for scaffolding language learning (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Gillanders, 2007; Tabors, 2008). For example, Facella and her colleagues (2005) conducted open-ended interviews with 20 early childhood teachers in the Boston area of Massachusetts in order to identify teaching strategies used to support DLL children. They found that the strategies teachers most commonly referred to as scaffolding language learning included: repetition; use of gestures, objects, and visual cues; use of predictable routines; incorporation of music and movement; and breaking down directions step-by-step.

Providing opportunities for language-rich interaction. Another cluster of studies demonstrate the value of providing for multiple opportunities for rich language interactions within the daily routine. The findings of Bohman et al.'s (2010) study of language input and output is relevant here, suggesting that engaging children in oral interaction is essential in the preschool classroom. However, it was beyond the scope of that particular study to suggest how teachers might best provide time for rich language input as well as output. Additional research, however, has begun to examine teaching strategies that encourage language output.

For example, in an ethnographic case study of one Head Start program in the Midwest, Piker (2013) spent over 50 days in the classroom observing DLL children's play interactions. She noticed that when DLL children engaged with monolingual peers in play, they were most likely to engage in production of English, talking more and thus engaging in a higher level of language output as Bohman et al.'s (2010) study suggests is more beneficial for language acquisition. In addition, numerous examples within practitioner-oriented literature have also emphasized the benefits of engaging young DLLs in active, hands-on investigations as a means of increasing engagement and language production, for example through the use of integrated projects stemming from children's interests (Jones & Shue, 2013; Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa, & Matera, 2013; Pate, 2009, Facella et al., 2005). These examples speak to the power of playful, authentic learning for DLL children in preschool classrooms.

Fostering relationships with and among children. Castro et al. (2011) note several features of high-quality ECE practices for young DLLs pertaining to the cultivation of relationships between teachers and children as well as among children. According to the findings of their review, positive teacher-child relationships are necessary to support social-emotional development for DLLs. This finding is consistent with the developmental literature on teacher-child relationships (Downer et al., 2012; Luchtel et al., 2010b). In addition, Castro et al. (2011) note the benefits of encouraging and supporting peer interactions, for example by structuring small groups for some learning activities. Tabors (2008) and Piker (2013), writing for a practitioner audience, echo this idea, describing how purposeful grouping of DLLs and monolingual children can provide a context in which peer relationships can be deepened, and children may

participate in richer language interactions than in a whole-group setting. Both empirical and practitioner-oriented literature has thus explored the nature and impacts of interpersonal relationships in the early childhood classroom.

Several of the qualitative studies previously discussed (e.g. Gillanders, 2007; Kurkjian et al., 2001; Facella et al., 2005) mention supportive teacher-child interactions as one teaching practice that seemed beneficial to DLL children. Two large-scale studies further explore this idea. First, in a mixed-methods study of 90 four- and five-year-old Spanish-English bilingual children, primarily from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, Jung et al. (2011) used the CLASS classroom assessment, parent and teacher interviews, classroom observations, and child assessments to examine how teacher-child relationships affected development of early language and literacy skills. They found that when relationships between teachers and children were conflicted, this resulted in negative impacts on language and literacy development, implying that the quality of the relationship has the potential to affect children's developmental and learning outcomes.

In the second study, Sanders and Downer (2012) conducted a secondary analysis of data from the National Center for Early Development and Learning's (NCEDL) Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten (Multi-State Study) and the NCEDL-NIEER State-Wide Early Education Programs Study (SWEEP), which included data from a randomized, stratified sample from 692 classrooms across the United States. The aim of the study was to learn if process features of quality, teacher and classroom characteristics might predict scores on the "acceptance of diversity" (A.D.) construct of the Early Childhood and Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), a widely used measure of ECE classroom quality. Through a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, they found the

process quality feature of *emotional climate*, representative of teacher-child relationships, to be a significant predictor of acceptance of diversity, but did not see significant links between *instructional climate* and A.D. The finding about emotional climate lends further evidence to the results in many of the qualitative studies discussed previously (e.g. Gillanders, 2007) that suggest teacher-child relationships both support children and may motivate a teacher's desire to create a culturally and linguistically responsive classroom.

Findings related to child-child relationships are less prominent in the empirical literature, yet some compelling examples do exist. First, Tabors (2008) found that talking to the whole classroom community about DLL children's development in English and skills in their L1 was helpful for both DLLs and their monolingual peers. In addition, Tabors suggests engaging monolinguals as peer models and mentors to DLLs, while at the same time inviting DLLs to share their L1 expertise with their peers. Echoing this suggestion, the aforementioned evaluation of public Pre-K programs in Los Angeles (Atkins-Burnett et al., 2010) identified the strategy of purposefully grouping DLLs with more English-proficient peers as an *effective practice* that supports English-language development and peer relationships.

Some practitioner-oriented work also elaborates on these finding. For example, Alanis (2013) describes a practice of grouping DLLs heterogeneously so that children can support each other in cooperative learning activities. She recommends turn-and-talks during whole group time, think-pair-share activities to engage children in short topic-related conversations connected to a text or project, and also thoughtful grouping of children in learning centers and play activities. Alanis suggests that these practitioner-

generated strategies can result in more verbal language production in English and thus facilitate both social interactions as well as language learning. In sum, studies that examine the impacts of relationships on DLLs' development are small in number, but do indicate that both adult-child and child-to-child relationships can play a significant role in social-emotional as well as language development.

Forming partnerships with families. Castro et al. (2011) conclude, based on their review of the literature, that high-quality ECE programs should engage in “linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach to, and engagement of, families” (p.270). Tabors (2008) recommends inviting families into the classroom, to help out with classroom tasks and routines, or to share a skill or cultural celebration. In addition, she suggests reaching out to parents to discuss the benefits of home language maintenance and to encourage and support families, and to identify L1 resources and schools within their community. The practice of establishing reciprocal partnerships with families, also included as a focus within the DAP guidelines (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), is widely considered to be of key importance for teaching all young children, with particular benefits for DLLs because of the potential to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps between home and school (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark, & Moodie, 2009).

Halgunseth et al. (2009), building on prior work by Epstein (2001) and several others, conducted a review of both empirical and practitioner-oriented literature on family engagement in early childhood programs. Based on the results of the review, the authors summarize reciprocal program-family relationships by defining eight resources that programs can employ to engage families, and five resources that families can offer to engage with their children's programs. Strategies that can be employed by programs

include: creating a welcoming environment; learning about families' languages and cultures; conducting home visits; providing written communications in families' home languages and inviting parents to respond; sharing decision-making with families; offering adult education programs; providing after-hours childcare and transportation support; and providing educational resources such as books or games for families to extend learning in the home. From the families' side, families can engage with programs by: communicating knowledge about their children, languages, and cultures; reinforcing learning at home; volunteering in the program; acting as a parent liaison; and/or serving on the program's advisory board. This extensive list of strategies suggests that a fair amount of work has already been produced in the area of engaging diverse families.

Beyond the scope of Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) review, Douglass (2011) adds another perspective to the conversation about family partnerships by exploring organizational-level factors that aid or hinder family engagement. Douglass conducted an observational study of four preschool programs, two of which had been reported to have high levels of family engagement and two with low levels of engagement. Data sources included semi-structured interviews with 60 staff members, 20 hours of observation per program, and a document review. Results of the study revealed that in the programs with high levels of family engagement, administrators "modeled the use of respectful, democratic relations based on shared power and shared expertise," (p. 7) while the two programs with low engagement exhibited a traditionally bureaucratic profile with little shared power. This study thus suggests that shared decision-making and power structures within a preschool organization may in turn be reflected in stronger and more reciprocal relationships with families as well.

Using appropriate, multi-dimensional assessments. The final set of recommendations provided by Castro et al. (2011) pertains to the area of assessment. According to the authors, assessments for young DLLs should be appropriate for young children, and draw upon multiple strategies and sources of data including: observations, direct child assessments, and reports provided by families. In addition, assessment should be an ongoing and frequent process, and be conducted in both the home language(s) and English. Tabors (2008) agrees with these recommendations, and adds that assessment should begin by considering what needs to be understood about each particular child, and then ensuring that assessments are not only linguistically appropriate for the child's language development in each language, but culturally relevant as well. In addition, Tabors encourages the use of parallel assessment in both languages, so that teachers and families can understand L1 and L2 acquisition in tandem.

Several issues exist in being able to meet these recommendations for assessment. First, in order to conduct assessments in both (or all) of a child's languages, teachers and/or program staff need to be fluent in these languages. This may be more feasible in some settings than in others, and extremely challenging in programs that include children from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. In addition, while observational assessment strategies such as anecdotal note-taking, writing running records, or engaging in Work Sampling are accessible and adaptable to all children regardless of language, more formal assessments that are tailored to DLLs remain in short supply (Espinosa, 2013; Garcia & Frede, 2010). Most standardized assessment tools are not validated for DLL populations, usually gather information only on English language development and not in the home language, and may not be culturally aligned to DLL children's experiences. The recent

policy statement on young DLLs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016) echoes these findings, and recommends that programs use caution when interpreting the results of standardized assessments for young DLLs.

As Espinosa (2013) explains, “there is an urgent need for better designed and linguistically appropriate assessment instruments for DLLs” (p.17). Although few in number, some new assessments for DLLs are on the horizon. For example, Hardin, Scott-Little, and Mereoiu (2013) developed a tool called the Family Bilingual Information and Observation (BIO) questionnaire designed to be used by Spanish-English bilingual families. The development of the BIO responds to the problems of DLLs being overrepresented in special education; the research team hypothesized that obtaining information about linguistic development directly from families could help educators better understand a child’s abilities and needs, thus leading to more appropriate referrals to special education and fewer instances of overrepresentation. The tool, available in English and Spanish, was developed by gathering data from existing literature, convening parent focus groups who provided feedback on drafts of the questionnaire, a pilot test of the instrument, and a face validity review conducted by three experts in the field. The development of this measure represents a powerful potential to draw upon parents’ knowledge of their emergent bilingual children and make this information accessible to the ECE community, but is still in initial phases of use. Another example of an initial step towards DLL-specific assessment can be seen in the Teaching Strategies GOLD™ assessment tool, which contains two items on English language development for DLL children (Berke, Heroman, Tabors, Bickart, & Burts,

2011). However, this small gesture towards examining DLL language development does not account for development in the child's home language, nor does it make other attempts to adapt for cultural or linguistic relevance. Most importantly, the present literature suggests that assessments tailored for young DLLs are currently very limited.

Summary

Built on the foundational work of Castro et al. (2011) and highlighting the prominent work of Tabors (2008), this literature review has attempted to capture what is currently known about effective practices for teaching young DLL children. This body of work is notably less robust than the research on bilingual development. Of the empirical work available on this topic, nearly all of the studies were qualitative in nature, primarily using case study or ethnographic methodologies to understand teaching practices in classrooms. This is not meant to imply that such research is not valuable; on the contrary, given the topic at hand, which requires an in-depth approach to thoroughly understand the practices employed by teachers in preschool classrooms, qualitative methodologies are appropriate and useful in offering detail about teaching practices (Erickson, 2005; Lather & Moss, 2005). Yet in many cases, only a handful of such studies exist on a particular topic, where, given the contextual specificity of the case study approach, additional examples would be warranted in order to generalize findings more broadly.

Nonetheless, organizing this collection of studies along categories identified from the Castro et al. (2011) conceptual framework has proven useful, and does allow for some patterns to be noted across studies. For example, in the section on language development, multiple sources overlap to suggest that exemplary classrooms for DLLs

must include ample time for play, conversation, and peer-to-peer interactions, in order for DLL children to experience rich language input as well as have varied opportunities for speaking and verbal exchange. A pattern is also evident in the work focused on reciprocal relationships with families. Several studies (Douglass, 2011; Halgunseth et al., 2009; Heng, 2011) provide examples of how engaging families in dialogue about preschool experiences, and learning from families about their languages, cultures, and desires for their children, are powerful practices that support DLL children's growth and learning.

The section on assessment of young DLLs reveals perhaps the greatest current gap in the research, as it identifies a dearth of appropriate assessments for DLL populations, especially in the realm of standardized assessment. Based on the limited body of work discussed in this section, it seems that authentic assessment practices, such as anecdotal note-taking, portfolio assessment, or the creation of running records (Cohen, Stern, Balaban, & Gropper, 2008) may be the most accessible and appropriate strategies for assessing DLLs' learning and development. Additional research is needed, however, in order to better understand assessments that are most appropriate for DLLs.

Having considered the trends and patterns across studies above, the following section considers the limitations of the current field of knowledge on teaching young DLLs, and discusses how the present study could fill some of these gaps in the research.

Conclusions and Implications for the Present Study

Some evidence has emerged in recent years that demonstrates the ways in which DLLs can benefit from participation in preschool programs such as Head Start or public Pre-K that use the DAP framework as a foundational model for teaching (Buysse et al.,

2014). Yet despite the fact that DLLs have demonstrated developmental gains due to participation in early childhood programs, the literature on specific practices that benefit DLLs' development, especially in English-language contexts, remains limited. The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates a stronger understanding of bilingual children's development in early childhood than of practices for teaching young DLLs. In order to augment and better understand patterns evident in the research reviewed here, three significant areas are in need of further study.

First, the bulk of the research on teaching practices for DLLs has been highly focused in scope, often studying 1-3 classrooms in-depth. Therefore, additional studies, capturing practice in other contexts, are needed in order to bolster this body of knowledge. Few of the studies reviewed examine differences across types of preschool programs, but rather, most look at one or two classrooms of a particular type. Tabors's (2008) study, arguably the most prominent empirical work on the topic, reflects this trend, drawing conclusions about practice for DLLs from a sample of one private, university-affiliated preschool classroom. Although Tabors's study indeed provides valuable insight about teaching young DLLs, additional work is nonetheless needed that explores whether and how Tabors (and others') definitions of exemplary practices hold true in other classrooms and other types of programs, such as Head Start or public Pre-K.

The second primary gap in the research on teaching practices for DLLs has to do specifically with the challenges of affirming and incorporating children's home languages into the classroom. Although there is clear consistency in the literature about the benefits of supporting the development of both of a child's languages during the preschool years, this approach may not be accessible in all contexts. Programs that enroll children from

numerous different language groups, for example, may have only one or two children in the class who speak a particular language. In such settings, it is both impossible and impractical in such programs for staff to systematically use the children's home languages in the preschool setting. Another situation that might prevent the incorporation of children's home languages is in public Pre-K systems in which non-English instruction is discouraged or banned because of state or district language policies, as is the case in the states of Massachusetts, Arizona, and California (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Regardless of the controversy that continues to exist around such policies, a present reality exists in which teachers need strategies for teaching DLLs in English-only contexts. Yet the scope of currently available research on teaching DLLs offers few examples of how teachers can honor and value children's home languages in English-only classrooms.

A final limitation of the current body of literature is a dearth of studies of exemplary teaching practices for young DLLs. Many of the studies reviewed in this chapter share the strength of looking deeply at classroom practices and rightly view teachers as primary sources of knowledge. Yet, as has been acknowledged in the literature on teaching DLLs in general, teachers do not all hold similar levels of understanding about bilingualism or educating DLL children, and therefore, some teachers are likely to be more skilled than others in this realm (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Careful selection of exemplary classrooms could allow for more focused research on practices that have been honed over time by skilled teachers, practices that could then be described and disseminated to the field.

Therefore, the present study has taken into account these gaps in the literature, and has been designed to add to the existing knowledge base about teaching young DLLs. As a qualitative multiple-case study spanning public Pre-K, Head Start, and private preschool classrooms, the present study looks deeply into teaching practices within multilingual classrooms, while also considering similarities and differences in these practices within and across contexts. Employing the critical ecology framework (Miller et al., 2012) is important to this end, as it enables the practices of community-nominated exemplary teachers to be made visible, while also attending closely to the role of contextual factors that may impact practices in a particular setting. Looking both within and across contexts can allow for new and deeper understandings of how teaching practices for young DLL children might be similar or different across different settings. For example, the socioeconomic demographics of the children enrolled in classrooms varied across the three program types, with the Head Start and public Pre-K classrooms being made up exclusively of low-SES families, while the private university-affiliated programs enrolled predominantly middle-SES families. The critical ecology framework offers an approach to unpack contextual nuances such as this in order to better understand teaching practice.

In addition, several features of the present study open opportunities to learn more about practices for supporting DLLs in English-language settings. First, given that the present study is situated in the state of Massachusetts, one of the states impacted by English-only policies at the state level, public Pre-K classrooms might be sites of practice that reveal strategies used in English-only settings. In addition, studying private, university-affiliated programs that provide English-language environments, often due to

the linguistic diversity among their populations of children and families, can offer additional insights into English-language practices within another program type.

Finally, in the present study, exemplary classrooms for DLLs were selected through a community nomination process. In doing so, skilled early childhood educators were identified in order to learn about the practices they employ to support DLL children, thus respecting teachers as knowledgeable experts, as consistent with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) concept of *knowledge-of-practice*. In these ways, the present study is well positioned to contribute further to the existing knowledge base on teaching young DLL children, especially in English-language contexts, and across different program types. The following chapter describes, at length, the methodology of the present study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

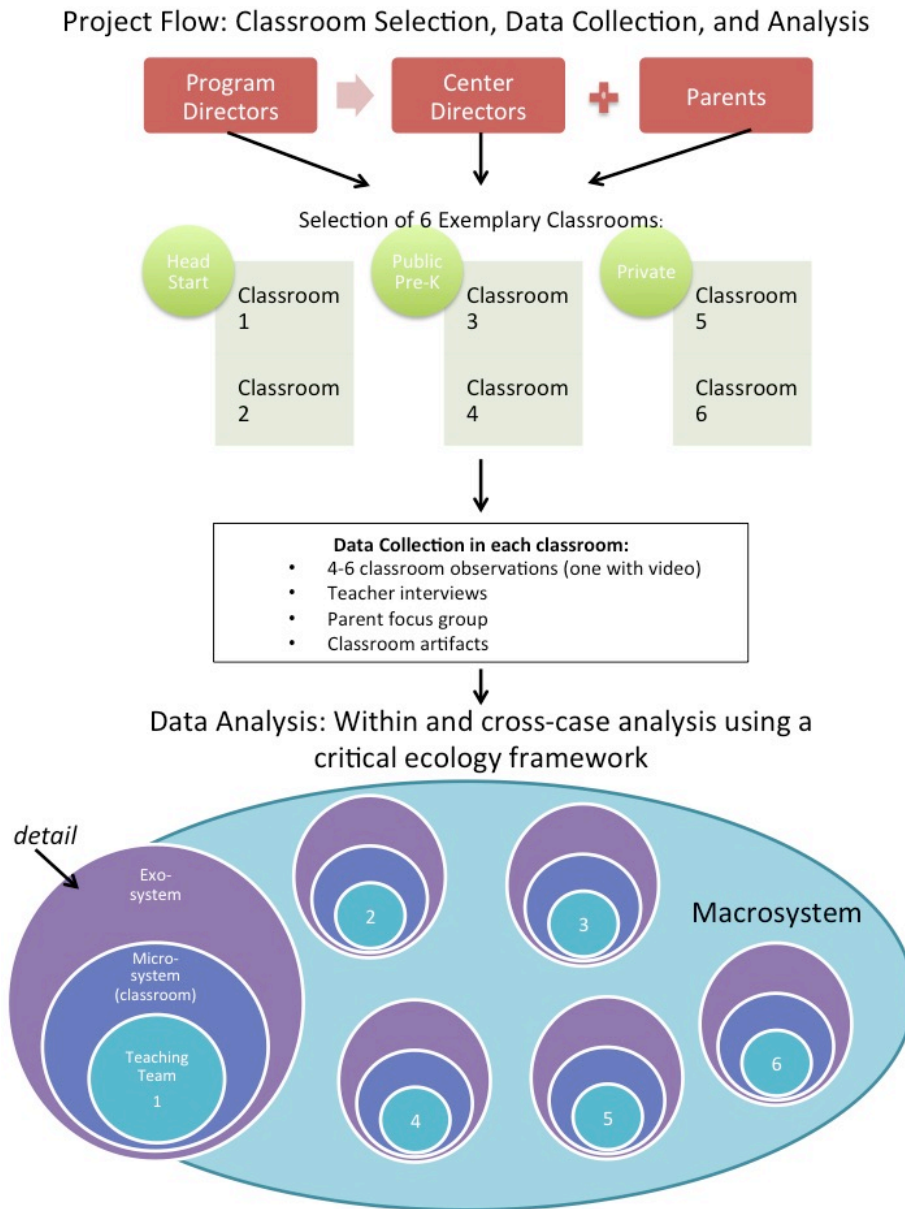
The first two chapters argue that additional research on teaching young Dual Language Learners (DLLs) is necessary in order to better understand the particular practices that preschool teachers employ for teaching DLL children. The present study contributes new understandings to this gap in knowledge by identifying exemplary classrooms for young DLL children and collaborating with teachers in these classrooms to better understand their teaching practices. As mentioned previously, the present study investigated the following interrelated questions:

1. How do multiple educational stakeholders in early childhood programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs?
 - a. Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type? If so, in what ways?
2. What teaching practices (including planning, teaching, and assessing) do exemplary teachers employ when teaching DLLs?
 - a. Do teaching practices vary by program type? If so, in what ways?
3. What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom (such as school structures, staffing, language use laws, policies, and philosophies) influence these teachers and their teaching practices?

In this chapter, the study is first situated paradigmatically and methodologically, and the research context is described. Next, the study participants and selection procedures are discussed in detail, as well as data collection and analysis strategies. Finally, issues of researcher positionality and trustworthiness are considered. Below is a

graphic representation of the progression of the study (see Figure 2), which may serve as a useful reference throughout this chapter.

Figure 2: Graphic overview of exemplary DLL practices study



Rationale for Research Approach

As described in Chapter 2, the theoretical orientation guiding this study rests on an underlying assumption that practitioner-generated knowledge is crucial to gaining deeper understandings about teaching practices. Within such a framework, it is imperative to collaborate with practitioners in order to draw upon their knowledge of teaching young DLLs. Consideration of both the critical ecology framework (Miller et al., 2012) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) framework of knowledge-practice relationships were instrumental in planning the design and analytical strategies utilized in this study.

In order to learn from and deeply understand the experiences of early childhood practitioners, a qualitative or interpretive study design was used. According to Rossman and Rallis (2011), qualitative approaches to study design are appropriate for research questions that seek to deeply understand facets of the social world through direct inquiry conducted in natural settings. I employed a qualitative, multiple-case study design (Yin, 2009) with purposive selection of participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), to allow for the exploration of exemplary teaching practices for DLLs both within and across contexts, thus enabling investigation into the sub-questions for research across program types as stated above.

Research Context

The proposed study is nested within a larger research project led by Dr. Mariela Páez at Boston College. The research questions and foci of Dr. Páez's project overlap with my own yet are also distinct. In this dissertation, I first examine definitions of exemplary teaching across different contexts, then focus my analysis at the level of the

teacher or teaching team, in order to understand how contextual factors impact teaching practices within and across program types. Dr. Páez's work focuses on connections between exemplary teaching for DLLs and the Developmentally Appropriate Practices framework (as discussed in Chapter 2), as well as policy implications that may be related to these connections. These distinct yet overlapping foci have complemented each other and offered opportunities for both an independent analysis of aspects of the data for this dissertation, as well as further opportunities for Dr. Páez and me to collaborate on other aspects of data analysis.

Given the focus of the research questions guiding my portion of the study, the unit of analysis was the classroom. According to staffing and child-to-teacher ratio regulations in Massachusetts early childhood programs (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010b) all classrooms in the study involved teaching teams of at least two adults working with a group of 12-24 children. A purposive sample of six classrooms was selected: two in public schools, two in Head Start programs, and two in university-affiliated private preschool programs. This sample size enabled both within-context comparisons (e.g. public school with public school), as well as cross-context comparisons (e.g. public school with Head Start), as discussed further in the analytic plan below. The contexts and demographics of each of these six classrooms are further discussed later in this chapter.

Early Childhood Programs in the Boston Area

The target population of this study includes early childhood practitioners in preschool classrooms. The accessible population encompasses early childhood practitioners in the Boston area, including classrooms in the Boston Public Schools

(BPS), Head Start classrooms, and private preschool classrooms. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Boston area provides an especially interesting setting for the present study for two main reasons. First, the current English-only policies in place for public schools in Massachusetts require that instruction in most public K-12 classrooms be conducted in English, yet it is poorly understood how these policies impact pre-k classrooms, particularly in the public school context. The diverse contexts included in this study (public Pre-K, Head Start, and private programs) allowed for unique comparisons within a single district of programs that may be impacted by English-only policies in a variety of ways. Second, classrooms in the city of Boston are likely to have high percentages of DLL children compared to classrooms situated in surrounding communities; according to current BPS statistics, over 40% of children in the BPS system speak a language other than English at home (Boston Public Schools, 2014). This concentration of DLLs makes the research questions of the study particularly relevant to the local community, and also ensures a wide range of classrooms teaching DLLs from which to select study participants.

Participants

This study utilized a multiple-case study design. A small sample of six classrooms was selected, to allow for rigorous investigation into particular practices for teaching DLLs, while also allowing for within-and-between-program-type comparisons. This sample size is consistent with recommendations by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) to, “work with small samples of people, nested in their contexts and studied in-depth” (p. 31). Table 1, below, illustrates the total number of participants, by participant

group and program type. The section below describes how a community-nomination process was used to identify exemplary classrooms.

Table 1: Number of study participants by program type

	Public Pre-K	Head Start	Private Preschool	<i>Total</i>
Directors	6	9	2	17
Teachers	4	4	6	14
Family Members	15	27	8	50
Children	42	36	33	111

Selection of Participants

Classrooms (each including one teacher or teaching team) were purposively selected to reflect exemplary practices, a construct informed by multiple perspectives from a range of stakeholders and the literature. Due to the varied nature of programmatic structures, as well as variations in program size and scope across programs, unique sampling procedures were used for the different types of classrooms (public Pre-K, Head Start, and private programs). The nomination criteria were articulated by each community as interviews were conducted across program types, and the results from these interviews informed the selection of classrooms within that community. The selection of classrooms in each program type occurred simultaneously.

Public Pre-K. The district of focus in this study was the Boston Public Schools, given the high percentage of DLLs enrolled in this district. In this context, classrooms for study were selected through a community-nomination process (Foster, 1991). Administrators at the district and school levels, teachers, and parents were included in the nomination process through a series of interviews and focus groups. In these nomination interviews, participants were asked to describe how they define exemplary practices for

teaching preschool-aged DLLs, and then to identify 1-2 classrooms or schools in their purview that embodied this definition of excellence.

The nomination process occurred in phases. The first interviews were conducted with the director of the Early Childhood department, members of the district's Office of English Language Learners, and mentors and coaches who were familiar with a large number of preschool classrooms across the district. This round of interviews served to identify particular schools with exemplary classrooms for DLL children. Next, school principals and teachers were interviewed, and families were invited to complete surveys, in order to gain their perspectives on exemplary teaching. For example, DLL families were asked questions such as, "How would you describe a good teacher for your child?" in order to elicit their conceptions of exemplary teaching. Copies of these interview and survey protocols can be found in Appendices D and E. Responses from all participant groups were considered, and two teachers named repeatedly by the participants were invited to participate in the study. Both accepted.

One of the public Pre-K classrooms was located in the Brooks¹ school, a large school serving approximately 600 preschoolers through middle-schoolers, located in a central area of Boston. The early childhood program at the school was accredited by the NAEYC. The classroom selected for the study was a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Pre-K class of 16 children, nearly all of whom spoke Spanish at home and whose families were primarily from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Two thirds of the students at the Brooks school were DLLs, and 75% of the students qualified for free lunch. The classroom teaching team included a white female lead teacher whose first

¹ Pseudonyms have been used for all schools and classrooms in this study.

language was English but was also proficient in Spanish, and a Latina paraprofessional who spoke Spanish and English.

The second classroom was located at the Emerson School, situated in a diverse neighborhood in the southern part of Boston. The school served 450 students grades K-5; 62% of the school population is Latinx and 26% designated as English Language Learners, and 60% qualified for free or reduced lunch. Again, the early childhood programs at the school were accredited by the NAEYC. The classroom nominated for the study was also an SEI Pre-K classroom of 17 children, nearly all of whom spoke Spanish at home. The teaching team included two Latina women, a lead teacher who was an English speaker with proficiency in Spanish, and a paraprofessional who was a Spanish/English bilingual. English was the primary language of instruction in both classrooms, as per the SEI model, but the paraprofessionals in both classes spoke primarily Spanish with the children, and children frequently spoke Spanish with each other during play.

Head Start. Boston ABCD Head Start and Children's Services, the largest Head Start grantee in the Boston Area, was comprised of over 37 early childhood centers in Boston and the surrounding communities at the time of this study (Drew, Rodriguez, Hyman, & Hall, 2012). A parallel but separate community-nomination process was used to select Head Start classrooms for study from within the whole ABCD program network. Initially, a group of four directors from the Head Start organization participated in a focus group conversation, in which they nominated three Head Start centers as having exemplary programs for DLL children. Center directors, teachers, and parents from each of these centers were then interviewed, using the same interview protocols as described

above (see Appendices A and E), in order to nominate particular classrooms for study. Again, classrooms nominated by multiple stakeholders were considered for the study. In this program type, three classrooms were nominated through this process. Purposive selection of two classrooms was then made after initial full-day observations in each of the three classrooms, based on the definitions of exemplary teaching provided by the Head Start community as well as recommendations of best practices for teaching DLLs from the extant literature.

The two Head Start classrooms selected for the study, Hillside Head Start and Riverview Head Start, were both located in diverse neighborhoods in the southern part of Boston. Each class was comprised of 16-18 children from a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds; languages spoken in the classroom communities included Arabic, Spanish, Armenian, Haitian-Creole, and Portuguese, among others. Over 80% of the children in each class were DLLs. Each class had a lead teacher (one an Arabic/English bilingual, the other an Armenian/English bilingual), who had been former Head Start parents themselves. Each class also had an assistant teacher (one English monolingual, one Arabic/English bilingual). In these two classrooms, English was the primary language of instruction, but children's home languages, especially Arabic, Spanish, and Armenian, were used regularly in interactions among teachers, children, and families.

Private preschools. In both the public schools and Head Start programs, organizational structures, policies, and regulations offered a connected group of classrooms from which to sample. In the private sphere, however, variation among classrooms was so broad so as to render such approaches inappropriate (e.g. Barnett,

2013). Rather, this study focused the inclusion of private classrooms specifically on those private preschool programs in the Boston area that were university-affiliated. Despite the respect such programs hold within the higher education community, such programs have historically been understudied and undervalued in the research on teaching young children. Such programs tend to be dismissed as not being typical examples of practice, but are rather viewed as exemplary or model settings for teaching and learning. It is for precisely this reason that two such classrooms were sampled for the present study, drawing from a small pool of university-affiliated ECE programs in the Boston area. The close relationships between theory, research, and practice cultivated in such programs could offer a valuable window into exemplary practices for teaching DLLs (Harms & Tracy, 2006).

For the private preschool programs, definitions of exemplary programs as articulated in the theoretical and research literature (e.g. Castro et al., 2011) and interviews with preschool program directors informed the sample selection. Program directors at university-affiliated preschool programs in Boston and surrounding communities were interviewed using the same protocol used with the public school and Head Start program directors, and two classrooms in two separate centers were selected. In order to involve families in the study as in the other contexts, family feedback on practices observed in these classrooms were elicited through family focus groups as the study progressed.

The first private preschool classroom was located at the College Children's Center, a small childcare center situated on a college campus in a suburb of Boston and affiliated with the college. The center served approximately 55 children, approximately

20% of whom are DLLs. The DLL children in the classroom nominated for the study spoke Portuguese, Japanese, Norwegian, and Spanish at home, often in addition to English. The two classroom co-teachers were both English monolinguals.

The second private preschool program selected for the study was the Early Learning Center, a small one-classroom laboratory preschool situated on a university campus in downtown Boston. The school served 22 children age 2-5 from an ethnically and linguistically diverse group of families. Approximately 30% of the children in the group were DLLs, with language backgrounds that included Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Gujarati. The program served as a practicum site for students in the Early Childhood teacher education program at the university, thus the teaching staff of two lead teachers was augmented with a Student Teacher mentor and Program Director who both worked closely with the teaching team and spent time in the classroom interacting with children each day. One of the classroom lead teachers was an English speaker with proficiency in Spanish; the other three adults in the classroom were English monolinguals.

All teaching teams in the study included at least one experienced professional with an early childhood degree and many years of classroom teaching experience. All lead teachers described participating in coursework or professional development offerings specifically related to teaching DLL children. Table 1, below, illustrates the total number of director, teacher, parent, and child participants involved in the study, by program type.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

Data collection for each site included multiple data sources gathered over the course of several months (February through June) for each classroom site. This section details the methods and procedures used for data collection, and describes tools and instruments used in the process. Data collection tools are provided in Appendices A-F.

Director Interviews

Interviews with the director/principal of each program in which a study classroom was housed, part of the community-nomination process described previously, were a primary source of data collected in this study. In addition to aiding in the classroom selection process, interviews with directors offered programmatic and contextual information about each early childhood setting. A semi-structured, open, and depth-probing approach to interviewing was employed. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix A. As suggested by Glesne (2010), this approach begins with the formulation of questions and probes, but anticipates that questions may change or be added as the course of the interview progresses, based on feedback from the interviewee and new ideas that arise for the researcher during the process. Topics pursued in the director interviews included: background information about the director, school, children and the teachers; policies for supporting DLLs in the school; relationships with families; and beliefs about exemplary teaching for DLL children. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for future data analysis.

Classroom Observations

Five observations were conducted per classroom, resulting in a total of 30 observations across the study. Field notes and selected video recordings provided the

primary means of data collection during observations (Glesne, 2010). Initially, an immersion observation, capturing a full day of classroom activities, was conducted in each classroom, followed by four additional focused observations (1-3 hours in length) at each site over the following months. Focused observations included the following: focus on a particular DLL child; focus on a language and literacy event (e.g. a read aloud lesson); focus on a small group activity including DLL children; and a focus on teacher-child and child-child interactions during classroom activities. During the observations, detailed field notes were taken, guided by a set of open-ended observation guidelines informed by the literature base on practices for teaching DLLs, as discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2). See Appendix B for a copy of the observation guidelines.

After conducting 2-3 classroom observations, teachers in each classroom were asked to suggest a particular learning experience to be videotaped as an additional observational data source. In classrooms with co-teaching models, teachers decided which teacher would lead this experience. For the video, teachers were asked to identify a learning experience that best captured their teaching of DLL children, which could be a whole group, small group, or child-directed activity. Asking teachers to suggest learning experiences for video recording provided a specific opportunity to draw on their knowledge as experts and teaching professionals, consistent with a knowledge-of-practice approach (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and the critical ecology framework (Miller et al., 2012). Drawing upon suggestions from Walsh et al. (2013), footage was shot as unobtrusively as possible, so as to avoid distracting the children from the activity at hand, and focused on the teacher as the main subject in the frame. Video recordings lasted 15-

30 minutes, depending on the natural duration of the learning experience, and were debriefed with teachers during the second teacher interview (see below).

Teacher Interviews

Each teacher was interviewed once after the first or second observation, and again following the video recording session. As with the director interviews, a semi-structured interview protocol was used (Glesne, 2010). The purposes of the interviews was to learn more about teachers' backgrounds and training for teaching DLL children, to explore their teaching philosophy and approaches, and to discuss particular practices that they used in teaching DLL children. The concept of *practices* was defined broadly, to include not only interactions with children in the classroom, but also curricular planning activities, collaboration with colleagues, and partnerships with families. A copy of the semi-structured interview protocol for the initial teacher interview is included in Appendix C. The second interview was conducted during or after the teacher has viewed the videotape of their selected lesson, and was led by the teacher's discussion of teaching practices and beliefs enacted in the learning experience observed. This process was seen as an opportunity for shared analysis of the video data between the teachers and researcher, inspired by Ladson-Billings (1995) work with exemplary teachers of African-American students. All teacher interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The protocol used during the second interview is also included in Appendix C.

Family Coffee Hours, Focus Groups and Surveys

Families were included in the study through coffee hours, focus groups, and surveys. A combination of these approaches was used, tailoring the approach to the specific needs of each context. At least one source of data from families was collected

for each classroom, including five focus groups, two family coffee hours, and two sets of family surveys. For Head Start and private preschool families, the school communities deemed coffee hours and focus groups most appropriate. During coffee hours, DLL family members met as a large group (10-25 participants) to learn about the study and provide their perspectives about exemplary teaching for their children. Focus groups, consisting of smaller groups of parents or family members of DLL children from each classroom, were another format for gaining parent perspectives on teaching practices. One focus group was offered for parents/guardians from each classroom.

In the coffee hours and focus groups, families were asked about their perspectives on the teaching practices employed by their child's teacher, and their conceptions of exemplary practices for young DLL children more broadly. For example, families were asked: *What do you think is a good classroom for your bilingual child? How would you describe a good teacher for your child?* Coffee hour and focus group conversations were audio recorded and transcribed. Semi-structured protocols were used for both coffee hours and focus groups, and copies of these data collection tools are included in Appendix E.

In the public Pre-K classrooms, some families were able to attend focus group conversations, but the majority of parents were unable to attend a focus group due to work commitments or other conflicts (despite efforts to accommodate parents' schedules and needs). In this case, surveys were sent home to families to elicit their input. Surveys were provided to all 32 families from the public Pre-K classrooms; 12 families returned completed surveys. A copy of the survey is also included in Appendix E.

Classroom Artifacts

Throughout the data collection period, artifacts from classroom activities were utilized as an additional data source to shed light on classroom practices. Artifacts included child work samples, communications with families such as child intake forms or classroom newsletters, written anecdotes or observations recorded by teachers, teacher curricular planning materials, and photographs of the classroom environment, displays and materials. These artifacts provided examples of teaching practices as enacted through classroom activities.

Informed Consent

In adherence with requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Boston College², all participants were informed about the purposes and scope of the study prior to agreeing to participate, and were asked to sign a written consent form in order to participate. All participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. No participants chose to leave the study.

Prior to observing in the classrooms, consent was sought from all teachers and families of children in the classroom. Part of the purpose of the consent form was to request permission to view children's progress reports, work samples, and/or other measures of development and learning (e.g. screening results, vocabulary measures, English language measures, etc.) that had already been collected by the program or teacher. Some families did decline participation in the study, so care was taken not to record any information about these particular children during observations.

² All data collection tools and procedures were reviewed by the IRB at Boston College as well as the Boston Public Schools research office and the Head Start Advisory council, and found to be compliant with research regulations.

Upon first meeting the children in the classroom, Dr. Páez and I introduced ourselves and obtained assent from the children for participation in the study. The child assent procedure is outlined in Appendix F. Ongoing assent was also sought from children when observing specific child-directed activities, such as dramatic play. As appropriate, we asked the child(ren) involved if it was okay to watch and take some notes about what they are doing. Children generally provided verbal assent; in the rare cases in which they did not we shifted our observation focus to another area of the classroom.

Data Analysis Approach

Analyses were ongoing and cyclical during and following the data collection process. Data were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through an iterative process that included three cycles of analysis: (1) establishing codes, (2) ordering codes, and (3) identifying themes and gathering examples from data. These processes are consistent with Miles et al.'s (2014) description of qualitative data analysis as involving three “concurrent flows of activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification” (p.12). The qualitative research strategies of iterative coding, memoing, and creating data matrices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles et al., 2014) were applied to each phase of the analysis. The sections below provide an overview of the data analysis approach used to answer each research question, as well as details of the processes used within each cycle of analysis.

Overview of Data Analysis Approach

Throughout the coding and memoing processes, triangulation of data sources provided a means of seeking patterns across different types of data in order to confirm developing understandings. Numerous qualitative researchers have discussed the value of

triangulation as a strategy for establishing validity of findings (Glesne, 2010; Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, Miles and his colleagues (2014) propose that in the data analysis process, considering multiple sources of data can be a powerful way to confirm or disconfirm connections and themes as they begin to arise in the data. Applying this process to the present study, the practice of inviting family members into the classroom to read books in their home languages was described by Head Start teachers during the interviews, observed during classroom observations, evident in classroom artifacts such as weekly planning documents, and mentioned by families during focus groups. Table 2 (below) provides a summary of data sources, illustrates how multiple data sources were consulted in order to answer each of the research questions, and provides an overview of the analytic plan for each component of the study.

Table 2: Research questions, triangulation of data sources, and analytic approach

Research Question	Data Sources (X = primary data source; x=secondary data source)					Analytic Approach
	9 Director interviews	24 Classroom observations	19 Teacher interviews	9 Family coffee hours, focus groups, sets of surveys	6 Sets of classroom artifacts	
1. How do multiple educational stakeholders in early childhood programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs? a) Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program	X	x	X	X	x	Cyclical coding process: (1) establishing codes (2) ordering codes (3) identifying themes <i>interspersed with analytic memoing</i> Data consolidation using data matrix

type?						
2. What teaching practices (including planning, teaching, and assessing) do exemplary teachers employ when teaching DLLs? a) Do teaching practices vary by program type? If so, in what ways?	x	X	X	X	X	Cyclical coding process: (1) establishing codes (2) ordering codes (3) identifying themes <i>interspersed with analytic memoing</i> Data consolidation using data matrix
3. What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom (such as school structures, staffing, language laws, policies, and philosophies) influence these teachers and their teaching practices?	X	X	X	X	X	Multi-level analysis following critical ecology framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual factors: teacher interviews • Microsystem: classroom observations, teacher interviews, parent focus groups, classroom artifacts • Exosystem: director interviews, teacher interviews • Macrosystem: director interviews • Mesosystem: teacher interviews • Chronosystem: teacher interviews

The HyperRESEARCH qualitative research software program (Researchware, 2014) was used as a tool for coding and organizing data during this study. Use of this software enabled systematic documentation and application of codes applied to the data throughout analysis, as well as a thorough method for comparing and compiling data with

shared codes.

In the sections below, the analytic processes of establishing codes, ordering codes, writing analytic memos, and identifying themes are described in detail. These processes were utilized in answering each of the three research questions in the study. However, given the distinct analytic approach required to address the study's third research question, that analysis is described further at the end of this chapter.

Establishing Codes

During initial cycles of coding, all data sources (interviews, classroom observation notes, video recordings, family data sources, and classroom artifacts) were coded using both descriptive and *in vivo* coding approaches. According to Saldaña (2013), descriptive coding is appropriate for exploring a data set with multiple types of data sources, and *in vivo* codes are appropriate when seeking to capture “participant-generated words from members of a particular culture, subculture, or microculture” (p. 74). In this study, the coding process began with an initial set of descriptive codes, based on an existing framework for understanding practices: the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice guidelines (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

As noted in the literature review of this manuscript, DAP puts forward guidelines for teaching young children based on research on how young children learn and theories of child development. The DAP guidelines are organized into five categories: *Creating a caring community of learners*; *Teaching to enhance development and learning*; *Planning curriculum to achieve important goals*; *Assessing children's development and learning*; and *Establishing reciprocal relationships with families*. This framework includes structural and policy-level practices as well as classroom practices, due to the

focus on different program types in this study. Thus, the definitions of exemplary practices were coded into five categories:

- *Structural and Policy-Level Factors* included descriptions of language background of staff, demographics of children and families, NAEYC and other definitions of exemplary programs that are above the level of classroom practice.
- *Creating Community* contained references to supporting connections among children, fostering a safe and caring classroom environment, and other aspects of the social and emotional climate within the classroom.
- *Teaching and Planning Curriculum* was a category created by collapsing two categories from DAP (*Teaching to enhance development and learning; Planning curriculum to achieve important goals*) and included references to planning and implementing curriculum, teaching moves and strategies, and design and planning of the classroom environment.
- *Assessing Children's Development and Learning* included all references to assessments and how these assessments may be used by teachers, parents or administrators.
- *Engaging Families* contained descriptions of communication, partnership, programming, and collaboration for and with families.

Along with the use of these descriptive categories to code teaching practices and participants' definitions of exemplary teaching, wherever possible, *in vivo* codes were used to capture the participants' language to describe practices in more detail within each of the descriptive categories. This coding strategy enabled community-generated

definitions of exemplary teaching, and enacted classroom practices, to be coded with terms used by participants themselves.

The same codes were applied to all data sources: interviews (8 director interviews; 19 teacher interviews); classroom observations (4 observations per program; 24 observations in total); family data sources (2 coffee hours, 4 focus groups, and 2 sets of surveys); video clips of teacher-selected exemplary practices for DLLs (one per program; 6 in total); and classroom artifacts (one set from each classroom; 6 in total). However, different data sources were prioritized for answering each of the research questions. For the first research question investigating community definitions of exemplary practice, primary data sources included interviews with directors and teachers, as well as family data sources. In order to answer the second research question, focused on enacted classroom practices, teacher interviews served as a primary source, with classroom observations, videos, and visual data serving as sources for data triangulation. Visual data included child work samples, assessments, portfolios, and photographs of classroom environments and materials from each program. Drawing on Saldaña (2013), memos were created to synthesize and catalogue the content and meaning of the visual data. These memos were then coded using the same codebook of exemplary practices used for interviews and observations.

Coding of all data sources was cyclical. Additional codes were added to the code book as they arose; however, fewer and fewer codes were added as the process continued, indicating that the codes were indeed appropriate to apply across different classrooms and program types. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe this as “saturation” in qualitative coding (p. 136). As new practice codes arose through the exploration of a new data

source, previous data sources were re-examined for instances of the new code. For example, a Head Start lead teacher spoke about “*establishing a sense of belonging*” for DLLs in her classroom, which sparked the creation of a new “sense of belonging” code and a revisiting of data from several other sites to check for similar instances. So as not to become biased toward a particular program type during the creation of codes, sources from different program types were alternated.

Once all data sources had been coded during this initial cycle, HyperResearch was used to create reports of all source data relevant to a particular research question. For example, to answer the first research question, a report was created containing all data segments that had been coded “definition of exemplary”. These reports were instrumental in ordering data and codes during the second cycle of analysis.

Ordering Codes

The process of ordering codes and creating data matrices was conducted differently for each research question.

Definitions of exemplary teaching. In order to answer the first research question, *How do multiple educational stakeholders in ECE programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs?* and sub-question, *Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type?*, data were organized to create partially-ordered displays (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) that clustered the exemplary definitions by program type (Head Start, Private, Public) and participant type (directors, teachers, families). This was done in order to explore commonalities and differences in definitions of exemplary practice across participant groups and across program types. A detailed table of the data condensation process can be found in Appendix G. Clustering data by participant group (directors,

teachers, and families) was useful to track whether specific similarities and/or differences were evident by participant group within or across program types. An example of this matrix is included in Table 3 (below), and a detailed version is included in Appendix H.

Table 3: Matrix of exemplary practice definitions by program type and participant group

Community Definitions of Exemplary Practices for DLLs			
	Head Start	Public Pre-K	Private Preschool
Directors			
Teachers			
Families			

Exemplary practices. The second research question asked, *What teaching practices (including planning, teaching, and assessing) do exemplary teachers employ when teaching DLLs?* with a sub-question asking *Do teaching practices vary by program type? If so, in what ways?* For this analysis, codes were ordered and organized according to the Developmentally Appropriate Practices framework, as described above. Table 4 (below) illustrates how codes pertaining to exemplary practices were organized according to this framework. Within this structure, reports were created in HyperResearch for each DAP category that clustered source data for each code, sorted by case and program. These reports, coupled with analytic memos, were then used in the development and write-up of themes.

Table 4: Codes for exemplary practices

DAP framework category	Exemplary Practices Codes
Assessing Children's Development and Learning	assessing in L1 documentation narrative report observation-based assessment

	portfolio progress report standardized assessment teacher-developed assessment
Creating Community	anti-bias approach “bilingualism as an asset” child-child communication “children share language and culture” “DLLs as citizens” encouraging collaboration and respect “knowing the child” “sense of belonging” social-emotional focus
Engaging Families	“connecting families to each other” beliefs about working with families education for families events for families family participation L1 supports for families reciprocal communication with families other services
Teaching and Planning Curriculum	one-on-one teacher-child interactions “birthday banner” classroom environment curriculum (subcodes: Creative Curriculum, emergent, inquiry, OWL and Building Blocks, multimodal) focus on language individual whole group supports tailoring teaching to the child L1 use modeling music and rhyme play and playful learning predictable routines reflecting on teaching repetition small groups “Storytelling/Story Acting” whole group

Writing Analytic Memos

Analytic memoing was used throughout the data collection and analysis process as a strategy for understanding the data more deeply. Following each data collection

activity (interviews, classroom observations, focus groups) I reviewed the data and wrote an analytic memo. During data analysis, I wrote regular memos after each coding or analytic work session. As Saldaña (2012) suggests, these memos served multiple purposes. Through memoing, I reflected on data that to facilitate understandings of the study research questions, consider factors related to the ongoing research process, and identify emergent patterns in the data. For example, memoing served as a technique to document and reflect on observed and discussed teaching practices, such as the practice of Storytelling/Story Acting used in the public Pre-K programs. Analytic memoing was also used periodically (approximately bi-weekly) to reflect across data collection activities to consider developing connections within, and across, classrooms and program types. These memos played a key role in the identification of study themes, as described below.

Identifying Themes

With all data coded and organized, cycles of theme coding were conducted. For the analysis of definitions of exemplary practice, themes were established by using the data matrices to look for trends within and then across program types. After further reflection and discussion with my chair, findings and themes were revisited and data examples selected for inclusion in the write-up of findings (Chapter 4).

For the analysis of exemplary practices used in the six classrooms in the study, the identification of themes was aided by using the “code mapping” feature in HyperResearch. An example of a code map can be found in Appendix I. During the code mapping process, different constellations of code groupings were explored, in a process consistent with the approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Note that in

many cases, teaching practices spanned across categories of the DAP framework, affirming the presentation of findings thematically rather than case-by-case. For example, a teaching practice related to engaging parents in contributing to curriculum or bringing in materials for the classroom would relate both to *Engaging Families* and to *Teaching and Planning Curriculum*. For this reason, many data points were coded with two or more codes that fell in separate categories of the DAP framework.

Throughout the identification of themes, thematic mapping and work with matrices was interspersed with analytic memoing about emerging themes and patterns in the data. After several iterations, a set of themes was identified that best described the nature of the data in response to each research question.

Contextual Analysis

The third and final research question required a distinct analytic approach, and is thus treated separately here. The question reads, *What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom (such as school structures, staffing, language laws, policies, and philosophies) influence these teachers and their teaching practices?* This question was addressed by conducting a preliminary ecological systems analysis based on the critical ecology of the early childhood profession framework (Miller et al., 2012). As noted in the literature review, the critical ecology framework places teachers at the center of a series of nested contexts (e.g. the microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), each of which are understood to influence classroom teaching practices. Given that the topic of contextual influences will be more fully answered in a forthcoming paper written in collaboration with Dr. Mariela Páez, it was not within the scope of the present dissertation to conduct an exhaustive analysis with

regard to the role of context in influencing teaching practices for young DLLs. Rather, the analytic approach for this aspect of the dissertation was to present an example of how an analysis based on the critical ecology framework could be conducted.

First, a specific teaching practice was selected to serve as the example for analysis using the layers of the critical ecology model. In this process, findings related to enacted teaching practices in exemplary classrooms, and to the teacher and director interviews, we revisited, as they were primary sources that included rich information about school and community contexts. Drawing on these sources, analytic memos were written about the role of context in influencing teaching practices. After reviewing the memos, a practice that warranted further analysis was purposively selected, due to the fact that it differed significantly across program types and contexts (language use patterns in classroom interactions). The data matrix below (Table 4) was used to organize data excerpts and map how this particular teaching practice may have been influenced by the various contextual layers of the model. Analytic memos and data sources (primarily interviews) were revisited iteratively in the process of populating the matrix. Finally, a narrative was constructed to illustrate the application of the critical ecology model as related to this particular data example. In future work with Dr. Páez, additional teaching practices, in relation to program types, policies, and structures, will be presented in a similar fashion.

Table 5: Examples of early childhood practices influenced by layers of the critical ecology framework

	Head Start	Public Pre-K	Private Preschool
Example of teaching practice			
Influenced by...			
Individual Factors (teacher's background, beliefs, attitudes)			
Microsystem (Classroom level; relationships among teachers, children, and families)			
Mesosystem (relationships among microsystems, e.g. home-school)			
Exosystem (school/district level: systems in which decisions are made about teachers, but teachers do not directly participate)			
Macrosystem (socio-political context – common across programs)	<i>Common across program types</i>		
Chronosystem (changes in systems over time)			

Researcher Positionality

In a qualitative study such as this, it is essential to acknowledge my own position as a researcher and to consider how this stance might have influenced my work on the project. I am a Caucasian, native English speaker born in the United States, but became a sequential Swedish-English bilingual while residing in Sweden for several years as a young adult. Prior to entering the doctoral program, I was an early childhood teacher for 10 years, and a teacher mentor for three. In my professional practice, I use and am drawn towards constructivist learning as a powerful process through which young children learn and interact with the world. I have a strong understanding of and am generally supportive of the DAP framework and its application to ECE programs. However, I have

also been strongly influenced and inspired by the work of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, the nature of which pushes back against the structures and foundations of DAP, and which have been influential in the development of the critical ecology framework utilized in this study. This tension around DAP has offered an element of complexity to this project, but I do not see the perspectives as mutually exclusive; while I accept the DAP framework broadly, I have also at times brought a critical lens to examining the framework and practices that it espouses.

Additionally, I have personal and professional connections with two of the ECE contexts to be explored in this study. I have worked with the Boston Public Schools as a curriculum developer and teacher mentor in kindergarten classrooms, and have previously taught at two university-affiliated preschool programs in the Boston area. I therefore hold deeper knowledge of these programs than to the Head Start programs, and am either currently or formerly an “insider” in these communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). At one of the university-affiliated programs, for example, I participated in practitioner inquiry projects and cultivated a deep respect for the power of knowledge construction by teachers themselves. This insider stance has enhanced the study in those particular contexts, as I entered the study with a foundational and in some cases intimate understanding of these settings. By acknowledging these insider/outsider perspectives and taking measures to enhance study trustworthiness (outlined below), I have aimed to provide transparency about the ways in which my background and assumptions about teaching and learning may have shaped and influenced the research process.

Study Trustworthiness

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), I drew upon the strategies of memoing, member checks, and triangulation during the data collection and analysis process.

Analytic Memoing

As mentioned above, after each data collection activity, I wrote analytic memos to keep track of my impressions and reactions, providing a record to review later on as a means of checking my own biases as they may play out as a researcher. This strategy offered an ongoing chance for reflection throughout the study (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009). Through the memoing process, I became aware of specific ways in which my insider knowledge of certain research sites expanded my understandings of those particular settings. For example, early in the process of selecting data examples to illustrate themes in the write up of study findings, I found that at times I would favor examples from the two settings with which I had an insider affiliation. Regular analytic memoing, in combination with discussion with my chair, enabled me to see this bias and take measures to ensure a balanced treatment of the data.

Triangulation of Data Sources

Throughout the study, triangulation of data sources enabled a systematic process of seeking confirming/disconfirming evidence from multiple types of data to inform emerging understandings. As illustrated in Table 2, multiple sources of data were utilized in the analysis of each research question. For example, when a Head Start teacher described a teaching practice of using hands-on materials to support vocabulary development during the teacher interview, several classroom observations provided

additional evidence of this practice, and classroom artifacts (photographs of the classroom environment and actual classroom materials) further elaborated upon and illustrated the use of this strategy. In this way, several data sources were used to deeply understand each of the teaching practices presented in the study findings.

Member Checking

Member checking (Glesne, 2010; Yin, 2009) was used in the later stages of data collection and during the data analysis process, in order to provide participants with opportunities to offer feedback on developing findings. Member checks were conducted through individual or group conversations with participants, either in-person or online, depending on participant preferences and schedules. Each lead teacher participated in some form of member checking to review draft findings from the study during the data analysis process (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I shared full drafts of sections of findings, and asked teachers to respond with feedback and critique.

Overall, all teachers agreed with the themes of the study and said that they saw their teaching practices clearly reflected in the study findings. However, several points were raised in this process that resulted in revisions to the findings themselves. For example, in conversation with two Head Start teachers, they suggested that the role of family engagement should be made more prominent as a teaching practice unique to the Head Start programs. I concurred that the data supported this suggestion, and revised accordingly. In another instance, a public Pre-K teacher recommended that further elaboration about the concept of *guided play* be provided, for readers who may not be familiar with this term. Again, the findings were revised accordingly. Thus, the member

checking process invited participants to engage in discourse regarding the findings of the study, and to affirm or suggest alternate interpretations to data analysis.

Conclusion

This was a lengthy qualitative study, yielding a large and robust data set that required analysis over many months. In hindsight, any one of the three research questions might have been adequate as the basis for a full study. Yet the richness of the data set and the interconnectedness of the questions was well worth pursuing in concert. In the following chapter, findings from the study are presented, organized by research question.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, findings are presented by research question. The first section describes findings related how participants in each program type (Head Start, private preschool, and public Pre-K) defined exemplary practices for teaching young DLLs. The second section includes findings about the actual teaching practices enacted in the six exemplary classrooms included in the study. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how contexts within and beyond the school influence teaching practices for young DLL children.

Definitions of Exemplary Teaching for DLLs

The first set of findings pertains to the first research question in this study: *How do multiple educational stakeholders in ECE programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs?* And sub-question: *Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type?* The majority of these findings, which are based on interviews, focus groups and surveys with multiple stakeholders from each program, demonstrate similarities in definitions across program types. In other words, participants in Head Start, public, and private programs each described similar elements of ideal classrooms. Yet some interesting features unique to individual program types were also found and are discussed at the end of this section.

Prior to presenting thematic findings to describe the participants' definitions of exemplary teaching for DLL children, two overarching findings are worth noting. First, participants across the three program types describe aspects of exemplary programs in ways that align closely with the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) framework as described above and in the literature review. The choice of this framework

to organize the definitions was made prior to exploring the data fully; yet when the data was sorted into categories, participant responses addressed all aspects of the DAP framework. This finding affirms the use of the DAP framework in this study as a means of organizing the data, and also validates the programs' alignment with a set of professional standards widely accepted in the field of Early Childhood Education. Second, participants frequently referred to aspects of their own classroom when describing an ideal classroom for young DLLs. In other words, participants identified many aspects of their current programs as meeting their vision of an exemplary classroom for DLL children. This alignment will be further explored in the discussion (Chapter 5).

Seven themes are presented below which capture the key elements of exemplary teaching as defined across program types and participant groups. These thematic findings span across categories of the DAP framework, and all categories of the framework are represented in the themes. The definitions of exemplary classrooms for young DLLs revealed in these findings are complex and multifaceted. There was no simple answer or definition as the exemplary teacher for DLL children is seen as a professional educator with deep knowledge of children, curriculum, assessment, and working with families.

“Happy teachers, happy children”: Safe and Respectful Communities

The quote above is credited to one of the directors in a Head Start program, who spoke at length about the need for emotional well-being to be at the heart of any exemplary program for young DLLs. As articulated by families, teachers, and directors, a positive emotional climate can be created through structures and practices working in tandem. For example, schools can set up classroom ratios so that teachers have the time

to form close relationships with each child, and utilize intake procedures that establish trust with families from the start and set the tone of a reciprocal home-school relationship. For example, many participants in Head Start and public school programs spoke of home visiting processes as fostering this initial relationship-building process. In addition to establishing these initial relationships, teachers also spoke about creating a safe and welcoming environment, stressing that, *“families should feel welcome”* and *“DLLs should be a really essential and vibrant part of the classroom community”* (private program teacher interviews). In the classrooms, teachers can establish predictable routines that make children feel safe. One public school principal described these routines as, *“strong procedures and routines that are respectful”* (public Pre-K director interview). Some teachers also described the use of music as a way to make transitions predictable and safe for children who are learning English.

Participants viewed the work of creating a safe and respectful environment as ongoing, with teachers modeling kindness and caring, and scaffolding children to treat each other with respect. Family members, in particular, spoke at length about the importance of this classroom climate. For example, one Head Start parent said, *“A good teacher... is teaching children compassion, a sense of community, and team work”* (Head Start parent coffee hour). And a parent from one of the private programs described his child’s current program as exemplary, explaining, *“Not only the teachers but actually the kids are very kind to each other... even though he doesn’t understand English, kids are helping each other”* (private preschool parent focus group). This theme sets the foundation for other characteristics of exemplary classrooms for DLLs as described by participants.

Knowing the Child and “Culturally Responsive” Differentiation

“Well, first you have to really know that particular child.”

(Private preschool teacher interview)

Participants across programs and groups repeatedly described exemplary teachers as having deep knowledge of individual children. Truly exemplary teaching, participants believed, involves a deep understanding of who the child is, and tailoring teaching and scaffolding to the individual child. This knowledge is built through ongoing, careful listening to and observing children and their families, and includes understanding the child’s culture, language, development, personality, and interests. For example, as one of the private directors said, *“I think what [exemplary] teachers are trying to do is understand what the child knows, and what she or he is capable of doing”* (private preschool director interview). And a Head Start parent added that an excellent teacher would be, *“Someone who has patience with my child and takes the time to notice his strengths and weaknesses”* (Head Start parent coffee hour).

With knowledge of the child as a foundation, teachers in ideal classrooms for DLLs would then be positioned to tailor their teaching in *“culturally responsive”* ways (quote from a public Pre-K teacher interview). There was agreement between teachers, directors, and parents that if teachers come from the communities of the children, and speak – even poorly – the languages of the children, that this cultural responsiveness is strengthened, and both children and parents would form closer and more trusting relationships with teachers and with the school. For example, one public school director explained that in an exemplary classroom, *“people can support kids in their own*

language” (Public Pre-K director interview). Participants also agreed that teaching based on deep knowledge of individual children necessitates an approach that includes multiple ways of engaging in classroom activities and curricula, such that children with different interests, strengths, cultures, and language backgrounds would be able to engage in the life of the classroom. As one public school director explained, *“All children are unique so you can’t do like a one size fits all...in the classroom I envision, the classroom teacher knows how to work with all those different levels and how to really bring out the best in students”* (Public Pre-K director interview). A private preschool teacher echoed this idea, saying:

Well, I think children learn best by experience, and not only experience, but repeated experience because they’re building knowledge over time and they’re really actively constructing their understanding because I think being exposed to something in just one context, one time, doesn’t necessarily mean that they’ve learned it. So offering ways of understanding something through different pathways or in different ways I think is really important. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Varied Channels for Family Engagement

Although teachers and directors mentioned working with families, parents, in particular, spoke about family engagement as a crucial feature of exemplary classrooms. One parent from a private program, describing his child’s program as exemplary, explained, *“There’s different ways to get involved... allowing us to pick a channel that works means we’re involved in the community without pressure”* (private preschool parent focus group). This theme of having multiple “channels” for family involvement was echoed throughout the data. The styles of engagement preferred by parents varied by program type. For example, several public school parents wanted a teacher who would text them as a means of communication, private parents liked the idea of having weekly newsletters and photos sent home, and Head Start parents reported that they valued just

being able to talk to a staff member who spoke their home language. The key is that participants felt teachers and programs should offer multiple ways to get involved and to communicate reciprocally so that families can engage in ways that work for them.

“Even as they are playing, they are learning”: Playful Learning as Integral Practice

The quote above, from a parent in one of the public school programs, illustrates a sentiment that was shared across program and participant groups when describing exemplary classrooms for DLL children. When thinking about the ideal classroom, all participants mentioned play as an integral part of the learning experience, and all groups (directors, teachers, parents) described play as a vehicle for fostering learning. Many participants talked about play as enacted through open-ended exploration in classroom learning centers. For example, one public school director emphasized the potential for play to support oral language and vocabulary development in the preschool classroom:

I feel that there should be a lot of teacher-student engagement as far as oral questioning.... It's important to have learning centers, dramatic play... the language that they're using during rug time should be integrated into center time. (Public Pre-K director interview)

A teacher from one of the private programs echoed this vision for play as a central part of the ideal classroom:

I think that there would be a lot of different ways for the children to connect with other children and not just in a verbal way, but to really engage in play with other children without necessarily having the language skills to be able to do it verbally. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Here, play is seen as a means of supporting social and emotional development, by encouraging children to build relationships through their playful interactions. When talking about play in this way, teachers also described the high level of planning and

intentionality needed by teachers in order to support the children's playful learning experiences.

Families also mentioned play as an essential element in the exemplary preschool classroom for their DLL children. Some saw play as an important element of the ideal classroom, as a critical component of the children's daily experiences in preschool. Other parents described play as learning in a manner similar to the teachers and directors, describing play as, "*interactive learning*" (Head Start parent focus group) or saying, "*Even as they are playing, they are learning. The child is always doing something interesting. They don't have time to get bored.*" (public Pre-K parent focus group). A parent from one of the private centers described play as, "*very well-packaged learning experiences.*" Another Head Start parent, describing her child's program as exemplary, explained:

I think it's great that in this learning program they can write, learn the numbers, but they can play and feel so free. That is the perfect program. It's not like a K1 or K. It's too early for the four-year-olds to have a lot of homework. (Head Start parent focus group)

In each of these examples from directors, teachers, and parents, play is viewed as an intentional element of the learning experience, in which children learn and deepen understandings about academic concepts (e.g. vocabulary) as well as social-emotional learning (e.g. forming relationships with peers).

Ongoing, Observation-Based Assessments

Directors and teachers in each program type named particular assessment processes as part of their definitions of exemplary teaching for young DLLs, while parents mentioned assessment less frequently. The most prominent finding in this theme

is an emphasis on observation-based assessment that guides teaching in an ongoing, formative way. For example, as one principal from a public program explained:

I feel that taking anecdotal notes [is] very important because it tells you how their vocabulary is growing, it actually tells you how they're communicating with their peers... You're assessing all the time. You're writing down what you're seeing, what you're hearing. (Public Pre-K principal interview)

There were some differences in how participant groups describe exemplary assessment practices. First, directors in both public and Head Start settings mentioned assessment more than other groups, and used the term “data” in a way that is different from teachers and parents. One public school director described exemplary programs as being proven successful through “*strong academic data*” (Public Pre-K director interview). Second, parents rarely mentioned assessment practices, but some Head Start parents did suggest that teachers should “observe the children socialize” and spoke about wanting their children to “make good progress”. Third, teachers in the private settings were the only group to mention the importance of assessing in the child’s L1 when describing features of exemplary classrooms. Yet other data from the study (see findings for research question 2, below) indicate assessment in the child’s L1 is a practice employed by the Head Start programs in this study, although participants did not mention that point specifically when asked to describe an exemplary program. Despite these variations among participant and program groups, most participants who mentioned assessment emphasized the importance of ongoing, observation-based assessment as being more critical for DLL children than standardized assessment measures.

Language-Rich Classrooms that Value Bilingualism

All participants described exemplary classrooms for DLLs as language-rich environments, full of opportunities for dialogue, oral language, and rich vocabulary. “*Talk to them all the time,*” suggested one Head Start parent (Head Start parent focus group). Directors, parents, and teachers across program types talked about the use of multi-media language supports to engage and scaffold language learning and communication in the classroom. These supports included descriptions of visual scaffolds (such as charts and images), gesturing, demonstrating with real objects, and authentic, embedded vocabulary instruction. For example, one public school director imagined,

Well, there’d be a lot of visuals. The directions would be multi-step directions with visual supports. There would be labeling. There would be a lot of scaffolding, anchor charts and things up around the room. Tiered vocabulary...Exemplars of student work being shown. (Public Pre-K director interview)

In the exemplary language-rich classroom, participants envisioned that teachers would engage in thoughtful listening and authentic conversation with the children in their classroom. For example, a Head Start parent said, “*A good teacher is one who listens to the children when talking and addressing what the child is asking*” (Head Start parent focus group). A teacher from a private program agreed, saying that an exemplary teacher has a mindset that, “*I’m ready and I’m going to listen and hear and make sure that when you call out in a group I hear you too*” (Private preschool teacher interview). These examples highlight the value that participants placed on listening to the DLL child and responding thoughtfully to the child’s ideas.

Preferences for language of instruction (English-only or bilingual) in an ideal classroom for DLLs varied within program types and across participant groups (families, directors, teachers). One Head Start director said, “*A perfect classroom for me would be that there would be a teacher there that spoke the home language, for every child in that room*” (Head Start director interview). Similarly, all public school parents in the study envisioned a bilingual program as ideal for their child. But in contrast, several Head Start and many of the parents from private programs preferred an English-only approach in school, for example, “*I would prefer one language – English – because the second language can be taught at home where they use most of their time*” (Head Start parent focus group). Many different reasons were voiced for these variations. Teachers and directors tended to stay true to the model used in their programs, with Head Start teachers emphasizing a greater desire for L1 supports and use in the classroom. Teachers and directors in the private settings defended the English-only approach, explaining that they felt parents were committed to supporting their child’s home language in the home, and that the school was a place where parents wanted their children to be exposed to English.

Despite these differences in views about language of instruction, a common theme among program types was that all participants felt it was essential for an exemplary program to view bilingualism as something to be valued and celebrated. One private school director eloquently described this as, “*fostering a disposition that it is really wonderful to know languages*” (Private preschool director interview). A teacher from the same program echoed this sentiment, saying, “*[Children] should really want to share their home language and home culture with the rest of the group*” (Private preschool teacher interview). These quotes illustrate a stance of viewing bilingualism as an asset,

even in situations where the participants did not think that bilingual instruction in the preschool classroom was essential.

Focus on Culture: “Expanding Horizons about the World”

The quote in the title above, from a family member in one of the public programs, illustrates an emphasis on representing and honoring the diverse cultures of the community in exemplary classrooms for young DLL children. Families, teachers, and directors across the three program types all imagined the ideal classroom to provide a rich cultural exchange, which they saw as a way to encourage children to feel pride in their unique family cultures, and respect the cultural variety in their community. Families, in particular, wanted to see a classroom that is diverse (many different cultures and languages represented) and where their family’s cultures are brought into the classroom, understood, and respected. One Head Start parent desired, *“Un salón que además de desarrollar las destrezas académicas y sociales de mi hija, entienda, respete su cultura como igual y no como subordinaria.”* (A classroom that in addition to developing academic and social skills of my daughter, teaches her to respect her culture as an equal not as subordinate. – Head Start parent focus group).

Teachers and directors agreed, saying, for example, *“It’s important for the teacher to be...culturally competent. Like really understand the culture, the beliefs, religious beliefs, anything really that these students bring with them... the cultures that they bring with them to the table is something that you can use”* (Public Pre-K director interview). Interestingly, the majority of participants spoke of this cultural exchange as being something happening all the time through small activities and interactions, rather

than structured events such as “multicultural night” at a school. One parent from a private program described this point clearly:

Yeah, I think small things, like sharing a few words in different languages, or sharing some story from your own country, that few things make a huge difference. I think you don't need to create a huge story or a huge activity. I think that small things opened [my daughter's] mind, in order to expand her horizons about what's going on outside the world. (Private preschool parent focus group)

Thus, learning about each other's cultures through everyday exchanges is seen as an important element in the exemplary classroom for young DLL children. Participants felt that such experiences have the potential to support bicultural identity development for young DLLs, as well as a worldview in which cultural variations are acknowledged and appreciated.

Features Unique to Particular Program Types

The sub-question related to this set of findings reads: *Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type?* Although the majority of findings presented here were shared across program types, a few features of participants' definitions of exemplary classrooms for young DLL children were unique to a specific program type. These unique features are described below.

Private preschools: Inquiry approach to curriculum. A defining feature of exemplary practices as described by participants in the private settings was an emphasis on taking an inquiry approach to curriculum. Teachers and directors in the private settings had a clear narrative about how play was connected to learning objectives and presented through an inquiry-based curriculum. In this approach, teachers observe and listen to children to understand their curiosities and interests, and then plan investigations into topics designed to build on the children's interests. A topic of inquiry, pursued over

several weeks to several months, can then become an integrated learning experience, though which children gain both content knowledge about a particular topic of interest as well as cultivate academic and social skills across learning domains.

During interviews with teachers and directors in the private programs, these participants described exemplary programs as fully embracing this inquiry approach. They envisioned that exemplary teachers would plan curriculum around children's interests and questions, taking an ongoing attention to bringing forth children's ideas and understandings.

Head Start: Families at the heart of the program. As described earlier, participants across all program types described family engagement and communication as an important feature of an exemplary classroom for DLLs. In the Head Start programs, though, this finding was especially strong. Parents described how much they wanted to be included in the life of the classroom as regular volunteers, and both parents and teachers described a vision of family participation in the planning and implementation of curricular activities. This goes beyond parent involvement as described by the public and private program groups, because parents are present daily in the classroom. In the Head Start vision of an ideal classroom, families would not only be involved, they would be at the heart of the program. In addition, the Head Start participants felt that an exemplary program should support families in ways that go beyond educating and caring for their children; for example by providing opportunities for parents to learn English while their children are in school and offering connections with other services such as healthcare, housing, and employment assistance. For example, a Head Start director described an aspect of their existing program that she viewed as exemplary: offering opportunities for

parents to use classroom volunteering as a way to increase their exposure to the English language:

We really encourage them to volunteer, not only so that their children can feel even better about their school, but also because it helps with the parents hearing more English and using English. It's so important; they don't have the same exposure to English that their children have....so as many opportunities as they have for real communication, authentic communication in English, they benefit from that. (Head Start director interview)

Public: NAEYC accreditation. Only in the public programs did participants mentioned NAEYC accreditation in defining an exemplary classroom for DLLs. NAEYC accreditation was mentioned by all directors interviewed, although not by parents or teachers. Accreditation was described as a process used in the Boston Public Schools early childhood programs as a lever for improving quality in preschool classrooms. When asked to describe exemplary teaching for DLLs, one of the program directors explained that NAEYC accreditation would be a baseline indicator of quality. Other directors also spoke highly of the accreditation process, explaining that it elevated quality in the public programs, in part because the process is so thoughtfully conducted with coaching, mentoring, and significant time and resources devoted to attaining accreditation. It should be noted that accreditation is not something tailored to teaching DLL children in particular, but is intended to enhance the preschool program for all children.

From Exemplary Definitions to Exemplary Practices

The sections above have outlined study findings related to participants' definitions of exemplary classrooms for young DLLs. These definitions were largely similar across participant groups and program types, with the exception of the three

unique features described above that were unique to a particular program type's definition. Key features of these definitions included: teachers who deeply know the DLL children they teach, including knowing their languages and cultures; classrooms that value bilingualism yet support English language acquisition; learning through play coupled with observation-based assessment; and deep family engagement. These definitions were used in the community nomination process to ensure that the classrooms selected for participation in the study were indeed exemplary by the community's own definitions. The following presentation of findings details the enacted practices utilized in each of these six exemplary classrooms for teaching young DLL children.

Exemplary Teaching Practices

This section addresses the analysis for the second research question, *What teaching practices (including planning, teaching, and assessing) do exemplary teachers employ when teaching DLLs?* and sub-question, *Do teaching practices vary by program type? If so, in what ways?* As described in the methods chapter (Chapter 3), multiple data sources from each of the six classrooms in the study were collected and triangulated in order to answer this research question. In the analysis below, teacher interviews served as a primary data source, with classroom observations, video-taped lessons, and classroom artifacts serving as sources for data triangulation.

Across all six exemplary classrooms in this study, teachers engaged in a multitude of practices for teaching young children who are Dual Language Learners. Study data captured practices that spanned across all categories of the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) framework: *Assessing Development and Learning, Creating Community, Engaging Families, Teaching, and Planning Curriculum*. This alignment with the DAP

framework demonstrates that the framework was indeed useful as an organizational tool and conceptual frame for understanding exemplary practices for teaching young DLLs. In addition, the practices described in the findings below aligned with the findings from Research Question 1, as enacted practices were related to teachers' knowledge and beliefs about young DLLs. These connections will be further elaborated in the discussion (Chapter 5).

The exemplary practices can be conceptualized in two tiers: in the first tier are general early childhood practices widely accepted in the field as effective and demonstrative of high-quality early childhood education (e.g. Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). These practices are not targeted for DLL children specifically, but may carry great benefits for DLLs nonetheless. They include, for example, the design and organization of the physical classroom environment in a way that promotes playful, hands-on learning, and the establishment of predictable daily routines. The second tier is comprised of a set of practices that were found to be specifically employed for children who are DLLs. Table 6 (below) provides an overview of the themes and practices within each theme, and are discussed in detail in the sections below.

Table 6: Tiers, themes, and exemplary early childhood practices

Tiers	Theme	Practices
Tier 1: General early childhood practices	Safe, respectful, playful classrooms for all young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom environment and routines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ play-oriented physical environment (centers, rich play materials) ○ predictable routines with music, rhyme, and ritual • Curricular approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ whole child approach ○ learning through play • Social/emotional climate:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ creating a sense of belonging ○ encouraging collaboration and respect ○ taking an anti-bias approach ○ child choice • Multiple assessment practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ongoing observation-based assessment ○ documentation ○ formal screenings and summative assessments ○ portfolios and narrative reports
Tier 2: Practices for young children who are DLLs	Bilingualism as an asset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using children's home languages in classroom routines, interactions, and assessment practices • inviting children to share their languages and cultures
	Families as resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging in reciprocal communication with families • inviting families into the classroom • connecting DLL families within the community • providing L1 supports and other resources to families
	DLL children as citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing the child • co-constructing curriculum with children • sharing power with children
	Focus on language: tailored English language supports for DLLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring opportunities for authentic talk • engaging with questions • teaching vocabulary all the time • using music and rhyme • scaffolding language with a broad repertoire of strategies • supporting individual DLLs during whole group times • Storytelling / Story Acting

General Early Childhood Practices

As discussed in the methods section (Chapter 3), each of the classrooms in this study had been identified, through a community nomination process, as an exemplary

classroom for DLL children. It is notable that each of the six classrooms, regardless of program type, exhibited similar foundational features commonly associated with developmentally appropriate and effective practices for teaching young children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). In each of the six classrooms, teachers utilized an array of teaching practices that might be viewed as *foundational* to being considered an exemplary classroom. These practices were not implemented specifically with DLL children in mind, but were rather intended to benefit all children in the group. Given that the focus of this study is on children who are DLLs, these Tier 1 practices are presented generally, with greater emphasis being given to the Tier 2 practices presented later in this section. The Tier 1 practices include: organization of the classroom environment and routines, curricular approaches, attention to social and emotional dimensions of classroom life, and the use of multiple assessment practices.

Classroom environment and routines. Each of the six classrooms was organized in learning centers stocked with rich materials for playful learning. All classrooms had a Block Area, Writing Center, Sensory Area or sensory table, Dramatic Play Area, Art Center, Library or Book Area, and a Science Center. Environmental print, such as labels, signs for centers, and displays with text and photographs were present on the walls of all classrooms. In each center, materials were placed on low shelves at child-level, often with photo labels for materials so that children could easily access the materials they needed without adult support. Books, both fiction and informational, were available in multiple areas of the classrooms, easily accessible to children on low shelves or in baskets. Materials were frequently realistic or natural; for example, during an inquiry about tools in one of the private preschool classrooms, a real workbench was set

up and stocked with child-sized working tools, safety goggles, and fasteners. During an interview, one of the teachers from that classroom described the intentionality behind preparing the environment in such a way for all children, and how special considerations may be taken for children who are DLLs:

With the environment, something to think about is accessibility to the children. So we want things to be physically accessible so that it's at their height, also organized so that they can access things and are able to do it themselves. So they develop competence around that. We want things to look pleasing to the eye too, so we try not to have things that are really tattered and we try to set things up in like an inviting way, an intriguing way. But when we're thinking about ELLs specifically, for instance we have step cards for watercolor paints, so we have the pictures of the steps to go along with the words.
(Private preschool teacher interview)

Each of the classrooms followed a predictable daily routine, and nearly all classrooms had a photographic schedule (with photographs of the actual children in the class engaging in daily activities) posted at child-level for children to easily follow the flow of the day. Transitions in all classrooms were facilitated through music and rhyme. For example, in the Brooks classroom, the teachers played a “clean up song” on the stereo to signal the start of cleanup, and by the song’s end children would gather on the rug in the meeting area for their next activity.

Curricular approaches. All classrooms communicated a “whole child” approach to curriculum, supporting and assessing children’s development across multiple domains, including physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and creative. Although the particular curricula implemented varied by classroom, each of the classrooms in the study employed guided play or learning through play approaches as a core aspect to the curriculum. A large portion of the day, in all six of the classrooms, was dedicated to “Center Time” or “Activity Time,” a sustained guided play session during which children

chose activities freely around the room, moving from one center to another as they choose, while teachers facilitated small groups and scaffolded children's learning in centers. This central period of the day dedicated to play was consistent with what Hirsh-Pasek and colleagues (2008) describe as "guided play", in which teachers carefully prepare the environment to foster learning through play, and actively scaffold learning as children engage with peers and materials. This finding will be further explained in the discussion (Chapter 5).

Social emotional climate. In addition to the foundational aspects of the physical classroom discussed above, the six classrooms each created a supportive and nurturing classroom climate. Findings show that all classrooms strove to create a sense of belonging for all children, accomplishing this through several practices. Teachers encouraged collaboration and respect among classroom community members, using conflicts, for example, as an opportunity for teaching empathy and skills for collaboration. They adopted anti-bias approaches, discussing topics of gender, race, and linguistic and cultural difference openly with children both individually and as a community. And they provided plentiful opportunities for child choice within the classroom structure and curriculum, by supporting children to choose their own activities daily and by using children's ideas for developing curriculum.

Multiple assessment practices. Findings show that teachers demonstrated nuanced understandings about particular children in their classrooms, and they obtained these understanding in large part by engaging in rigorous and varied practices to assess and document children's learning and development. These practices were observed during classroom observations, documented through classroom artifacts, and described

by teachers during interviews. The majority of these assessment practices were not specific to DLL children in the group, but were rather assessment practices employed universally for all children in the class. For DLL children, teachers also described some assessment using the child's home language, which is discussed later in this chapter. Here, three primary assessment practices are discussed that were employed by all classrooms: ongoing, observation-based assessment; pedagogical documentation; formal screenings and summative assessments; and portfolios or narrative reports.

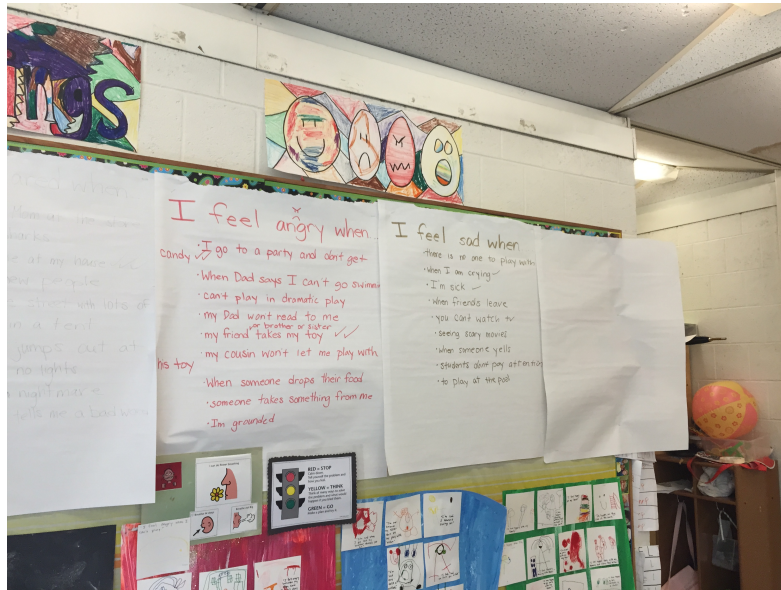
First, all teachers in the study prioritized ongoing, observation-based assessment as the primary strategy to understand and evaluate children's development across domains. They used a range of systems for compiling anecdotal or observation-based data of children's learning and development; several classrooms used the Teaching Strategies GOLD observation-based assessment (Berke et al., 2011), while others used self-developed observational assessment systems. In all cases, teachers documented learning across domains, taking a whole child approach to their evaluation practice. As one private preschool teacher explained, while talking about how she came to understand a particular DLL child's development:

When it comes to concepts, you can see she demonstrates it in her play. We do a lot of naturalistic observation. You know, we'll have specific activities that may have an embedded goal, something we're looking for....so a lot of it is just naturalistic observation. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Second, all classrooms used pedagogical documentation, as inspired by the early childhood centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy (Rinaldi, 2006) to capture learning through multi-media approaches. For example, in one of the public Pre-K classrooms, children's

quotes about feelings from a prior curriculum unit were hung on the walls, along with drawings illustrated by the children about feelings (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Example of classroom documentation



Another example of documentation observed in one of the private programs was a documentation panel titled “Sunflower Harvesting” with photographs, text, children’s work samples, and quotes from children during a learning experience growing and harvesting sunflowers (private preschool classroom artifact). These examples of documentation focused on capturing group learning processes, and did not necessarily focus on individual learners in the classroom. Documentation was described by teachers as an extension of their daily, ongoing work of observing and capturing children’s words and actions, in order to capture children’s work and play.

Third, many classrooms used screening tools and/or summative assessments for all or some children in the class. Standardized screenings, such as the Ages and Stages questionnaire (Squires & Bricker, 2009) were used at program entry for new children in the Head Start and public Pre-K programs. Aside from these screenings, however,

standardized assessments were not used by any of the programs. Summative assessments were used in both of the public Pre-K classrooms to evaluate emergent literacy and math skills, such as letter identification or early arithmetic skills, although this type of assessment was not used in the private or Head Start programs.

Finally, in order to share assessment information with children and families, teachers in all programs created some form of portfolio for each child in the class, containing work samples, documentation, and observations to be shared with the family during conferences. In addition, all teachers prepared narrative written reports of children's learning and development to share with families at least once per year, and often more frequently.

Teachers described these multiple assessments as complimentary of each other, and necessary in order to deeply understand the children in their classrooms.

Practices for Young Children who are DLLs

Beyond the basic classroom practices described above, which may benefit DLL children but are not tailored to DLLs specifically, numerous practices were identified in each of the six classrooms that were designed especially with DLLs in mind. Analysis of the interviews revealed that teachers' practices were grounded on a set of four core beliefs about teaching DLL children. These beliefs were related to the ideal definitions reported in the findings from the first research question, although more specific in that they were related directly to teachers' practices. These four core beliefs are: 1) that bilingualism is an asset; 2) that bilingual families are resources; 3) that DLL children should be seen as citizens in the classroom; and 4) that young DLL children deserve focused and tailored support for learning the English language. Each of these four core

beliefs for teaching young DLLs is elaborated upon below, along with the set of teaching practices that arise from holding such beliefs.

Bilingualism as an asset. Across all classrooms in the study, teacher interviews provided data that illuminated exemplary teachers' beliefs about young DLLs. All teacher participants described being bilingual as beneficial and valuable. For example, one public Pre-K teacher explained:

Every once in a while you get somebody that doesn't want to speak Spanish anymore, and I always try to impress upon everybody from the very beginning, and to the families, too, who when they bring their kids to school they are so apologetic that they don't speak English, but I impress upon them how awesome that is that they have these two languages, how special they are that they can do that because some people can't do that. And that's an amazing thing that they can talk to all these different people. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

Similarly, one of the private preschool teachers described her beliefs about including home languages in the classroom:

I think that it's important to include the children's home languages in the classroom. I think that incorporating languages into your daily routine like we do the morning message and the greetings really helps, well it helps everybody to understand the fact that there are many different ways to communicate. (Private preschool teacher interview)

These quotes illustrate how the teachers in this study regard bilingualism as something to be understood and valued.

Building on these beliefs about bilingualism as an asset, teachers employed numerous practices that made languages and bilingualism a visible and valued part of classroom life. These practices included: inviting and encouraging children to share their languages and cultures with each other; and using the children's home languages in classroom routines, interactions, and assessment practices.

Children sharing language and cultures. In each of the six classrooms, children were encouraged to share their home languages and cultures with the classroom community. This could be elicited by one child asking another, for example “*How do you say ‘flower’ in Korean?*” (private preschool observation) or could happen spontaneously as children share knowledge about language or culture during play. One teacher explained this during an interview:

Something that happens sometimes in our classroom is a child who speaks another language will tell somebody else how to say something in the language that they speak. The child who speaks Armenian, over time, has more and more been telling us about the language that she speaks and how to count and how to sing songs. So I think that they should feel comfortable with everybody know that they speak other languages and that they should really want to share their home language and their home culture with the rest of the group. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Children also shared their cultural knowledge and practices freely in the classrooms. When a public Pre-K teacher read a book to the class about Puerto Rico, she began by asking the children to share their knowledge about the country, familiar to a number of children in the class. And during a Head Start observation, when one teacher led a discussion about different types of house structures, she expanded on a child’s comment about her family’s home in Brazil and invited that child to share her knowledge with the group. Artifacts gathered from this activity also illustrated how children made connections between their cultural knowledge and the activity, constructing house structures and describing them in relation to their families’ homes. In this same classroom, the teachers created a display of children’s family photos and the flags from their countries (see Figure 4) that encouraged children and families to make connections about their countries of origin and the languages spoken in their homes. These examples

illustrate how opportunities for children to share their expertise were both spontaneous and planned.

Figure 4: Image of flags and homes from Head Start classroom



Use of children's home languages. Although the classrooms in this study were English-medium classrooms, teachers and children used the children's home languages daily in all classrooms in a variety of ways. The degree to which home languages were used varied considerably, however, according to the type of program. In all programs, home languages were used in classroom center signs, and were incorporated into daily routines, rituals, and songs. For example, children arriving in the classroom for the day would first read a "morning message" in which the greeting was written in a language spoken within the community. In one of the private preschool classrooms, a greeting routine involved first counting in a language used in the community to start the good morning song, then passing a "talking stick" around the group. The child holding the stick chose a language in which to greet the child next to them. This transcript captures a

portion of the routine in which Linus, a DLL child in the group, is co-leading the greeting routine with his teacher Marina. Linus has just chosen a card from the “language bag” that says “Marathi” on the front in large print.

Marina: Linus chose the language called Marathi. Linus, would you like to count to 3 or 4? (Linus holds up 4 fingers) Ok. I'm going to look at the back [of the card] because there is some information about how to count in Marathi.

Marina models counting in Marathi: ek do teen char, then counts together with Linus. Linus holds up fingers to lead group. Marina leads the group in singing Oh here we are together, good morning to you. Linus passes the talking stick and each child greets each other in turn, while holding the stick.

Marina: Let's hear what language JB uses to greet FK!

JB: Bonjour

Marina: Oh, JB chose French!

EK: Barev!

Marina: Oh, EK chose to say good morning in Armenian. She said *barev*.

Marina: Let's hear what EC says.

EC: Hola, FG!

FG: Hola!

(Private preschool classroom observation)

In this example, the children chose whether to use their own home languages or other languages spoken in the community, and although few words are spoken in any given language, an awareness of rich language knowledge within the community is being fostered. Teachers also discussed the value of the talking stick practice in the interviews.

Other practices for using home languages were unique to particular program types. In the public Pre-K classrooms, both of which were designated as Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms, the teaching staff was proficient or fluent in Spanish, the predominant home language of the children in these classrooms. Assistant teachers in both classrooms spoke Spanish most of the time with the children, and children spontaneously used both Spanish and English with each other in play. One of the teachers explained that she and her assistant teacher made fluid choices about using Spanish or English depending on the situation and purpose of the interaction:

If I'm teaching English and my particular intent at that moment was to teach English then I'm probably going to use English... If you're dealing with a social emotional issue, well right now my intent is not to teach English. We're trying to help two kids figure out a problem and if the comfort is higher in Spanish then we might use Spanish. So really, just knowing what your goal at that moment, and sometimes Spanish may be better suited for that goal, or sometimes English might be. (Public Pre-K Teacher)

In the Head Start classrooms, children were also welcome to speak their home languages with each other during play, and teachers freely used words and phrases in children's home languages to communicate and support children, in particular those who were just beginning to learn English. During one observation, for example, two children played together at the water table using funnels, cups, and plastic aquatic animals, speaking Arabic to each other during play. When their teacher, not an Arabic speaker herself, joined their play to facilitate and engage with the children, she asked her colleague, who was fluent in Arabic, to translate a word that she wished to communicate to the children, then used the word to ask the children a question about their play. The use of children's home languages differed from classroom to classroom, in relation to the linguistic diversity of the group. Home languages were used most frequently in the public Pre-K classrooms, in which children and teachers shared the common language of Spanish, and were least prevalent in the private preschool programs. These differences will be further explored later in this chapter.

Assessing in the child's L1. All teachers in the study acknowledged the potential benefit of assessing in a DLL child's home language, as well as in English, in order to better understand a child's development by drawing upon his or her knowledge in both languages. L1 assessment practices, however, were not widely used in all classrooms in this study. In some cases, such as in one of the private preschool classrooms, assessing

children using their home language was viewed as a challenge, due to inability of school personnel to speak the languages of the children. In these classrooms, teachers did use anecdotal observations of a child speaking her home language as evidence of language development over time, provided the teacher understood enough of that language to record an accurate anecdote. Teachers also asked parents to describe their children's home language development, for example by asking the family to describe the child's vocabulary knowledge and language use at home, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the child's full linguistic development in both languages.

In the Head Start and public Pre-K classrooms, in which screening assessments were used for all children, assessing using a child's L1 was common practice, with teachers using their own language expertise or employing other staff members to assist when needed. As one of the Head Start teachers explained while talking about administering the *Ages and Stages* screening during home visits:

If they come with no English, you know if they speak Albanian I will ask them in Albanian. A.L. [assistant teacher] speaks Arabic and she will ask them in Arabic. And she will take the observations as well. If I don't speak the language, I get the information from the parents, and sometimes we use another staff that will speak their language. We have a very diverse staff. (Head Start teacher interview)

These L1 assessment practices were evident in the study, but were not the most commonly observed practices related to the belief that bilingualism is an asset. Overall, however, teachers did relate their assessment practices to their underlying beliefs that DLL children's bilingualism can be seen as an asset and a way to better understand development.

Families as resources. The findings in this section are based primarily on the teacher interviews in the study, supplemented with classroom observations and artifacts.

Due to the timing and nature of the observations for this study, parent-teacher interactions were not frequently observed but were described at length by teachers during the interviews.

When teachers in the study described their work with families of children who are DLLs, they shared a multitude of practices for communicating, partnering, and supporting these families. No two classrooms had identical practices for establishing relationships with families, yet spanning this wide variety of individual practices were shared beliefs about respecting and partnering with DLL families. Data from all teacher interviews illustrated how the teachers genuinely value families as partners and were eager to share reciprocal information and resources between home and school. In particular, as in the findings related to definitions of exemplary teaching for DLLs, findings from the Head Start programs revealed a particularly strong emphasis on deep and reciprocal relationships between family and school. As one Head Start teacher explained when describing her approach to teaching DLL children in particular:

You need to let them [families] know that you're there for their child and you respect and embrace, accept them, and they belong in that classroom... It starts from the time you meet that parent and then you just keep going from greeting, from smiling, from making them feel they belong over here, inviting them to come to the classroom, telling them how the day was for the child, what did they learn. (Head Start teacher interview)

A similar perspective was shared by a public Pre-K paraprofessional:

Es importante trabajar conjuntamente con la familia. Mi relación con la familia para mí es primordial. Tenemos que tener un buen trato con las familias, amable, con respeto. Comunicarles de los niños, mantenerlos en constante comunicación. De cómo está el niño evolucionando en la escuela. Como digo, siempre saludar, tratarlos bien a ellos a los padres....Es que pienso también que los papás forman parte importante en la educación de los niños, por eso digo que si nos mantenemos en comunicación constante con ellos pues ellos tienen una manera mejor de como apoyar a sus hijos en la casa.

English translation: It is important to work together with the family. For me the relationship with the family is paramount. We have to treat families with kindness, with respect. Communicate news to them about the children, keep them constantly informed about how the child is developing at school. As I said, always greet the parents, treat them well...I also think that the parents are an important part in the children's education, that is why I say that if we keep constant communication with them then they have a better understanding of how to support their children at home. (Public Pre-K paraprofessional interview)

These examples illustrate exemplary teachers' commitment to building and sustaining relationships and open communication with families of children who are DLLs. In addition, teachers also expressed beliefs that parents should be seen as contributors to classroom life, and they believed that they should invite and welcome parents to share time, skills, knowledge, and resources with the classroom community. These beliefs manifested in a diverse range of specific practices that differed from classroom to classroom in the study. Clusters of practices for communicating reciprocally with families, inviting families into the classroom, connecting families with the school community, and providing supports and resources to families are discussed in the sections below.

Engaging in reciprocal communication with families. In all classrooms, teachers viewed communication with families as a reciprocal process that involved sharing and receiving information about child development and learning, curriculum, and other topics relevant to school life. For example, one Head Start teacher described the way she begins getting to know new DLL families at the start of the school year:

After I get a list of who is going to be in my classroom, I set up home visits. So there I meet the families and the children. Besides social and emotional that is very important that I am not going to be a stranger to them. I just meet the children and especially for the children that do not speak English at all, so when they come to the classroom they know my face, they've seen in their house, they've seen me talking to the parent. So then I learn a little bit about their

culture, their traditions and learn about the child and learn about the families. So I think it's a good start in building a relationship with the families, which not a lot of programs do that but that's one thing that I think is very important. (Head Start teacher interview)

This example captures how the teachers in this study viewed communication with families as both giving and receiving information about children, language, culture, and more. This belief was consistent across programs; however, the specific pathways for communication used varied widely and were tailored to meet the needs and desires of the families in each program. The table in Appendix J provides an overview of the main communication practices evident in data from teacher interviews, observations, and classroom artifacts.

Inviting families into the classroom. All teachers actively invited parents into the classroom in a variety of ways. This was most salient in the Head Start classrooms, where parents are expected to volunteer in the classroom as part of their commitment to the program. During all classroom observations in both Head Start classrooms, family members were present in the classroom: supporting the children during breakfast, preparing snack and lunch, and supporting teachers during planned activities. Families also spent time daily in the private preschool classrooms during arrival and pick-up times. In the public Pre-K programs this was less common, given that most children were bussed to school, but in these classrooms too teachers mentioned inviting family members to volunteer and spend time in the classroom. As one of the public Pre-K teachers explained: *“They [families] are always welcome, I let them know - The door is open to see your children. If you ever want to come in you don’t need to do anything. You just let the office know that you are coming down”* (Public Pre-K teacher interview).

In many of the classrooms, teachers also described inviting parents to visit as guest readers, in several cases to read books in their home languages, or to share a cultural tradition or celebration with the group. In one of the private preschool classrooms, teachers invited parents to participate in creating a class recording in which the parents counted from one to ten in their home language. The result was an audio file containing counting examples in all of the home languages spoken in the classroom community, which children and their families could access during arrival each morning. This both involved parents in creating a curriculum resource for the classroom and also sparked conversation among children and families about the linguistic diversity of the group, and about similarities and differences among the languages spoken.

In some cases, families were also invited to participate in curriculum planning, or contribute skills and knowledge to ongoing curriculum explorations in the classrooms. For example, two of the Head Start teachers described inviting parents to join them for curriculum planning on a regular basis, during which parents could suggest ideas for activities:

We make the lesson plan after the children leave, we sit together and we plan what we going to do next. Parents, we invite them sometimes to just come and give ideas... They do that. I have parents that are involved. And we send home some, because we have like a partner lesson plan that they do like home, not homework but it's like activities they can take home and do. (Head Start teacher interview)

The teachers also explained that inviting parents to collaborate in planning curriculum was a way to diversify the ideas percolating during planning sessions, and they valued the fact that family members would come to the table with different reference points from their own experiences in school outside of the United States. In both of the private

preschool classrooms, teachers described reaching out to families to provide expertise for curricular explorations; for example, a parent who was a musician came to the class to show his instrument to the group.

Connecting DLL families within the school community. Teachers described an array of practices aimed at connecting DLL families with each other and with other families in the community, in particular those who shared common cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Through these practices, teachers aspired for DLL families to feel supported and connected within the school community, and to feel that they were welcome in the school. As one private preschool teacher said:

Engaging the families? Yes, we really try. As it turns out we've been very fortunate this way... either connecting them with other families here that we know also speak the language that they speak or connecting them with families that used to be in our school who speak that language. So with the one Korean family we connected them with a family that spoke Korean that used to come to our school. So in that case the family, the parents of the children who used to come to the school, actually came to the school and observed the other family's children with that parent and then they could speak in Korean about the school. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Practices for connecting families were both formal (structured events for families) and informal (casual interactions as in the example above). Formal events for families differed from program to program, and included events such as multicultural nights, community meetings, curriculum nights, family game nights, parent orientations, and a “Family Feast” potluck dinner. At these events, teachers provided time for families to share stories and mingle with each other. Some events, such as curriculum or back-to-school nights, had a primarily educational purpose. One of the Head Start teachers, for example, described giving a presentation to families about the importance of learning through play and the parent’s role in scaffolding play. Yet alongside this parent-education

purpose, teachers articulated a desire for the events to provide a chance for families to build a sense of community with each other.

In the private preschool programs, teachers also shared family directories and photographs of the families in the classroom with all families, so that they might more easily recognize each other and be able to contact each other outside of school. The teachers in one of the private preschool programs explained that this could help family members who were less confident in the dominant language of the community to reach out to each other and form deeper connections beyond the classroom.

Providing L1 supports and other resources for families. Teachers in the study strove to offer communication with families in their home language whenever possible. Although this was not always feasible, since some teachers were monolingual themselves and others taught a linguistically diverse group of children, all teachers described keeping a respectful awareness of family members' proficiency in English present when engaging in verbal or written interactions with families. In the predominantly Spanish-speaking public Pre-K classrooms, one of the paraprofessionals discussed how inviting parents to speak Spanish with the teachers led to deeper understandings:

Yo vengo de la República Dominicana. Si los papás mayormente se acercan a mí. Si tienen dudas. Por ejemplo un día una mamá trae a la niña, ella le da la comida y todo eso. Miss A le dice, usted no puede ayudarla, ella necesita hacerlo sola. Al día siguiente la mamá se ha expresado conmigo, me ha dicho ay que no le gustó, que esto, que por qué, que ella es su hija. Y yo le dije, no es que no queremos que usted ayude, es que nosotros estamos acá para ayudar a que sus niños sean independientes, que pueda hacer las cosas solitas, para que aprendan. Ni usted como mamá, ni nosotros como maestras vamos a estar ahí siempre dándoles la comida.

English translation: *I come from the Dominican Republic. Yes, the parents mainly approach me if they have doubts. For example, one day a mother brought her daughter, and she fed her daughter and so on [during breakfast]. Miss A says to her, you don't need to help her, she needs to do it by herself. The next day the mother talked to me, she told me, well, that she did not like this, because her*

daughter is her daughter. And I told her, it is not that we do not want you to help, is that we are here to help your children become independent, that they can do things by themselves, so they can learn. Neither you as mother, nor we as teachers are always going to be there, feeding them. (Public Pre-K paraprofessional interview)

In this case, the shared language of Spanish made communication in the family's L1 possible. When teachers did not share the same language as the families, other strategies were described – such as intentionally avoiding the use of idioms during parent-teacher conferences, and tailoring the complexity of language in written reports to respond to the comfort level of the family members in reading English. One of the Head Start teachers mentioned taking extra time to talk through the written report in person when appropriate:

If I know this family really having a hard time understanding, usually I don't give it [the report] to the parents, I go over it with the parents. I know some words are really hard for them to understand. So I try to make it as simple as I can and give a summary about how the child's social interaction skills, math skills, what the child needs to work on, and what group activities we're going to do at home and in school to support that child. (Head Start teacher interview)

These teachers also mentioned offering translation services for parent conferences when needed, by seeking out a native speaker within the community. Additionally, teachers in both the Head Start and public Pre-K programs mentioned how the schools offered supports and services available to families of DLL children. These ranged from English classes for families, to health services for children, to tax assistance, and connecting families with resources for food, housing, and clothing when needed.

The quantity and diversity of practices described in this section provide a robust picture of how exemplary preschool classrooms for DLL children attend not only to the children in the group, but maintain a clear commitment to making DLL families feel

welcome in the school, engaging families to share their knowledge and resources with the classroom community, and also supporting families who may benefit from additional services on an as-needed basis. Across these practices, it is clear that teachers do not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to working with DLL families, but rather view each family as unique and go out of their way to get to know how to best form a reciprocal relationship with the family.

DLL children as citizens. In this study, across all classrooms, teachers spoke about DLL children with respect, warmth, and wonder. They believed that DLL children should be seen as equal participants and citizens in their classrooms, and were eager to understand their strengths and interests in order to both learn from them and teach them³. As one Head Start teacher explained during an interview, *“I think it’s important that you make the child know that he or she comes from some place important and to feel accepted”* (Head Start teacher interview).

Because teachers held this belief, they respected children and their ideas, and extended great effort to get to know DLL children deeply. They co-constructed curriculum with the children, and shared power with children within classroom routines and structures. Each of these practices is discussed below. Although these practices benefited all children in the class, the section below focuses on how these practices support DLL children in particular as discussed by the teachers and observed in the classroom practices.

³ During the member checking process, one of the private preschool teachers pointed out that this is true of all children in her class – all children are seen as citizens. Indeed, this is implied in this finding. However, the theme of DLL children as citizens is emphasized here given the nature of the research focus of this particular study.

Knowing the child. Data from interviews and observations in each of the classrooms demonstrate how teachers used deep knowledge about each DLL child in their class to inform curriculum and teaching. The following example, in which two co-teachers discuss planning a read aloud with a particular DLL child in mind, illustrates this theme.

In one of the private preschool classrooms, co-teachers Melissa and Grace selected a whole class read aloud as the activity to videotape for the study. They designed this particular read aloud around their knowledge about a particular DLL child, Juanita. Juanita had recently moved with her family to Boston from Columbia. She spoke fluent Spanish and was beginning to learn English at preschool. As we reviewed the video from the model lesson, the teachers explained how their knowledge of the child had informed their teaching:

Melissa: *Well, first of all, we're trying this book in hand strategy. So one of the reasons behind choosing this book was that we have multiple copies, so we were able to look at it with Juanita. I think she also took it home the day before to look at. And other reason we selected this specific book though was because she has an interest in animals and counting too. And you'll see on some of the pages, there's a whole line-up of people and animals. So that's something to engage with her when she's looking at the book.*

Grace: *Well, and also music is one of the main themes in the story and she was the one who introduced the drumming interest to our class.*

Melissa: *She built one.*

Grace: *She built a drum and now we have a very large collection of drums the children have built, inspired by her. So that was another reason that we thought that this would be an engaging story for her – the fact that it has music and people playing musical instruments and she had just built a musical instrument. (Private preschool video observation and debrief interview)*

In this example, the teachers referenced their extensive knowledge about Juanita. They tailored curriculum to build on her expertise with music and interest in animals, implementing a “book in hand” strategy to support her English language development.

They held deep knowledge about Juanita because they had closely observed her playing in the classroom, played and interacted with her daily, talked at length with her family, and discussed her development during team teaching meetings.

This level of knowledge about individual children was not unique to the private preschool programs; similar examples were repeatedly present in the data from all six classrooms in the study. Teachers referenced detailed and nuanced understandings about DLL children at length during all of the teacher interviews. During classroom observations and videotaped activities, teachers were seen closely observing children, documenting their observations in writing and/or with digital media, and tailoring their interactions to meet the needs of particular children, and often explained why they had made a particular teaching move with a particular child. For example, after an observation in one of the public Pre-K classrooms, the teacher explained how the earthworm exploration activity that morning had been specifically planned because she had previously learned that one of the DLLs in the class was fascinated with earthworms, and wanted to build on that interest to foster his engagement in the activity. Teachers also mentioned talking with parents to learn about their children. For example, as one Head Start teacher mentioned during an interview:

I learn about the culture when I talk with the family. I ask them for a family picture that I post in the classroom, so that when children arrive in the classroom they're going to see their family pictures hanging up. They're going to see the welcoming in their language. So it's like, it gives them a sense of belonging, so they belong here. (Head Start teacher interview)

Thus, these deep understandings about children were the result of the multiple and varied assessment practices used in these exemplary classrooms, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As illustrated in the quote above, teachers were motivated to learn about the

children in their class in order to create a “sense of belonging”, and to ensure that the DLL children in their group were seen and known in the community.

Co-constructing curriculum with children. In all classrooms in the study, observational data triangulated with teacher interviews and classroom artifacts showed intentional co-construction of curriculum with DLL children. For example, during several observations in one of the public Pre-K classrooms, the class was engaged in an extended inquiry about masks. During the first observation, a DLL child had brought a mask to school which elicited interest from his peers, and many children spontaneously began making masks in the art area. The teacher picked up on this idea, and mentioned during an interview that she planned to follow the children’s interest to pursue an inquiry about masks. During a subsequent observation, she read a non-fiction book about masks, and then held a group discussion, documenting children’s ideas about the purposes of masks. She set up a small-group activity in which children could peruse books about masks, discuss what they saw, and create masks of their own. While making masks, she sat with the children, modeling and scaffolding conversation in English, but also welcoming children to speak Spanish to each other and to her. Although this topic was not part of the district-provided *Opening the World of Learning*, or OWL curriculum (Schickendanz & Dickinson, 2005), the teacher respected the children’s interests and saw value in pursuing this topic over time. In fact, during the interview she explained:

It is hard for me to follow a curriculum when the kids bring much better ideas. And I mean better not because I’m making a judgment on what is written in the curriculum, I mean better because then it’s their idea, so it is more interesting for them. I did start out using it [the prescribed curriculum], but then I stopped because in centers you can do so much math with the literacy at the same time. The comparing, the measuring, the counting patterns, they were all happening. So I stopped focusing on, “Now it’s math time.” Because learning time is learning time and we are actually

hitting all these preschool standards that are out there, easily, just by following their own interests. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

In this example, which was typical of the exemplary classrooms in this study, the teacher built curriculum around their observations and knowledge of children's interests, weaving in ways to address standards and expectations through play that is guided by children's ideas.

Another example of curriculum co-construction was observed in one of the private preschool classrooms, where teachers built on children's interests in superhero play to construct a study of "real-life super powers and pretend super qualities" (private preschool video observation). The following transcript shows how Kristen, a private preschool teacher, engages children in generating ideas about real-life super qualities, after reading the picture book *Superdog* by Carolyn Buehner.

Kristen: *We began thinking about whether there are some real-life super qualities in that book, and I think we figured out that there are. What are you thinking, Owen?*

Ole: *He helped a lot*

Kristen: *Yeah, he helped other people – that's definitely on our list. (pointing to a chart paper hanging behind her that lists super qualities, along with images that represent those qualities). What else?*

Maritza: *Save people!*

Kristen: *What's Dex doing in that picture (shows picture card of a small image from the book)*

Prita: *Stud... he's looking at books.*

Kristen: *He's studying, and looking at books. Now, do you think that's a real-life super quality?*

Children together: *Yeah!*

Kristen: *Yes, because by studying, and looking at books, he was learning new things, right?*

Colin: *Yeah – like my Dad!*

Kristen glues the image of Superdog studying to the chart, and writes "learning" next to the image.

(Private preschool video observation)

Two of the children who contributed to the discussion above were DLLs, eager to contribute to a discussion they felt connected to and passionate about, perhaps because the idea for a superhero study came from their teachers observing their play. Following the discussion, children created their own illustrations with captions of their own real-life super qualities, and imagined a pretend super power that they would like to have as well. In this example, the teachers built on the children's interests in superheroes to co-construct a curriculum that was meaningful and deeply engaging to the children, and in turn elicited high participation from the DLL children in the group.

Sharing power with children. The curricular practices described above are one way in which teachers share power with children in the classrooms. In each of the classrooms there were also daily practices in which teachers shared power with DLL children during routines and rituals of the day; practices in which DLLs were visible as contributing members, or even leaders, within the classroom community. For example, during an observation in one of the Head Start classrooms, the teacher read a story to the class, and then invited a DLL child to "read" a book to the whole class. "*Today we have a new teacher,*" she smiled, as she pretended to introduce one of the children in the group. "*Teacher Kiara. She is going to read a book to the class.*" Kiara stood in front of the group, retelling the story and referencing the illustrations, as the teacher scaffolded language when needed (Head Start classroom observation). Later, during an interview, the teacher described the practice again, explaining that she purposefully invited all children to take on this role of the teacher when they were ready, to foster confidence in being in front of the group and to share power with the children.

During other classroom observations, DLL children took on role of “greeting leader”, demonstrated skills or activities for the class during morning meetings, took responsibility for classroom jobs such as feeding the fish or taking out the recycling, or took the lead in taking attendance or announcing which children would have a classroom job to do that day. In each of these examples, teachers turned over leadership of a routine or ritual to a child, and in each case, teachers supported the child in their leadership role to the degree appropriate for that child, informed by their understanding of the child’s development. In many of the interviews, teachers discussed their intentionality behind sharing power with children in this way. As one of the Head Start teachers explained, “*I try to make them feel important as an individual*” (Head Start teacher interview).

Another teacher from a private preschool classroom said, “*We think a lot about scaffolding, so the Vygotskian theory of meeting children where they are and then bumping them up a level, supporting them to do something that they wouldn’t otherwise be capable of doing*” (Private preschool teacher interview).

Focus on language: Tailored English language supports for DLLs. In each of the interviews, teachers described seeing themselves as directly responsible for the English language development of the DLL children in their classroom. For example, one public Pre-K teacher explained, “*My expectation is for them to leave the year knowing a lot of English*” (Public Pre-K teacher interview). Teachers held beliefs, grounded in their knowledge of language development, that young DLL children deserve specific support and tailored scaffolding in order to acquire English as an additional language. The interview data revealed how these teachers actively seek and draw upon research for

teaching DLL children; for example, one teacher from a private program explained, “*The book One Child, Two Languages has been really helpful and especially because we have an ELL who came in just now – I was referring back to that book and you know how ELLs in themselves are different too, you know as children*” (Private preschool teacher interview). As a result, these teachers implemented a wide array of practices focused on supporting English language development for DLLs. As one public Pre-K teacher explained:

Varied is the word. Varied in terms of effective instruction for this age group means in and of itself is varied. It's their first experience in school, you want to develop in them a love of learning so you really want to encourage that and the only way that you can really help them access everything is to be varied, even more so because they are English language learners. All level 1s, all newcomers, are not going to respond the same way because of so many different factors. So just having different modes for them to access the curriculum, whether it's my visual gestures, whether it's the manipulatives that we make or the pictures that we use. Or...videos, picture...just having sometimes nonverbal ways for the really, newcomers, really low English language proficient children, different ways for them to access that isn't totally dependent on language. And then thinking about, we have all levels, so having it varied for them so that they can access it but also for the other students who are stronger in their English language proficiency. So I think that's the key. There's just no one way that every student in this classroom - because they're English language learners and because they're four or five - there's no one way that everyone's going to be successful. So just knowing that and having different options for everything. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

These practices should be seen as distinct from the practices for supporting bilingualism and valuing children's home languages, discussed previously, in that the goal of the practices within this theme was to foster the development of the *English* language in young DLL children. As one teacher explained:

I'm teaching them academic language throughout the day so that I know they are going to absorb it and they are going to be able to produce this academic language that they are going to need to understand things at school. And at home...teach them everything in Spanish, teach them songs in Spanish, not just to

preserve their own culture, which they should honor anyway, I think, but to preserve their own proficiency in that language, because that will serve them as well. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

Another public Pre-K teacher added that her approach to focusing on the English language with DLL children had changed with time.

One way I have grown is in the language that I use...Just because they are four does not mean I should use a stunted vocabulary. So the idea that yes - the children can use words like 'sprout' and 'transplant'. Like, 'We are going to transplant this into dirt and maybe into a bigger container'. So I've gotten more comfortable. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

Grounded in these beliefs about the importance of teaching academic English in the classroom, teachers enacted many practices focused on English, which were evident in classroom observations and videotaped model lessons across classrooms. One especially salient practice was the use of hands-on materials and activities as a means of eliciting and supporting talk in the classroom. During whole-group morning meetings, teachers brought play materials to conduct live demonstrations of their uses, labeling objects with vocabulary in real-time and passing around materials for children to handle as they learned new words. For example, during the video observation in one Head Start classroom, the teacher passed around a box of construction materials such as a brick, a piece of wood, and a roofing shingle, labeling each of the items as the children handled them and asked questions about them. These materials were later available for the children to use during play, when children worked in small group constructing miniature homes. Examples of these constructions were documented as classroom artifacts for the study, providing an additional data source triangulating this finding.

Practices unique to one program type. The majority of practices within this theme of focusing on language were evident across all classrooms and program types. However, two practices were unique to a specific program type, as illustrated in the last two examples in the table below. First, in one the private preschool classrooms, a planned approach to scaffolding DLLs with one-on-one teacher support during whole-group times and read alouds was observed, that was unique to that particular classroom. Second, in the public Pre-K classrooms, a practice called *Storytelling and Story Acting*, based on the work of Vivian Gussin Paley (e.g. Paley, 1990/1997), was used as an approach to foster oral language development in English. In an interview with one of the teachers who used this practice, she explained:

I think the hands-on activities and the modeling of words that we do in Storytelling really helps my kids learn the language, especially for the ones that are brand new, coming into the classroom, seriously, not having a single word of English, basically no comprehension, seeing a story shown to you just like you may be watching a movie, I think is really valuable. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

A detailed table in Appendix K describes and provides examples of these many practices used to support English language development. Examples in the table were selected from numerous data sources, including teacher interviews, observations, and video observations.

Conclusion

The many data examples presented in this section demonstrate how teachers in exemplary classrooms hold common asset-oriented beliefs about DLL children and their families. Building on a foundation of providing safe, respectful, and playful classrooms for all children, teachers' beliefs in *bilingualism as an asset, bilingual families as*

resources, DLL children as citizens, and a need to provide tailored English language supports to DLL children, guided them to enact a myriad of practices that honor, support, and enable DLL children to thrive. These practices, in turn, led families, directors, and other school community members to nominate these preschool classrooms as exemplary places for DLL children to learn and grow, as explained earlier in this chapter. The notable similarities between the community definitions of exemplary teaching and the enacted practices themselves will be further discussed in the subsequent chapter. The final section of this chapter considers the contextual factors that shape the teachers and classrooms in this study.

Practices in Context: Applying the *Critical Ecology* Framework

As described previously in this chapter, some aspects of the definitions of exemplary classrooms, as well as some of the teaching practices themselves, were found to be unique to a particular classroom or program type. The third and final research question guiding this study focuses on exploring what drives these variations among classrooms. The research question reads: *What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom (such as school structures, staffing, language laws, policies, and philosophies) influence these teachers and their teaching practices?* In order to explore preliminary answers to this question, the theoretical framework used to conceptualize this study, the *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* (Miller et al.) is employed, as discussed in Chapter 2. Using the different levels of this ecological systems model as a framework, a limited analysis was conducted to identify connections between the definitions of exemplary teaching as described in the findings for RQ1, the practices employed by exemplary teachers of DLLs as described in the

findings for RQ2, and the larger contexts that influence these teaching practices. This analysis was limited given the small sample size of the study, and the fact that the emphasis of data collection for the study focused on classroom-level interactions and practices. Therefore, the analysis presented here is intended to provide one example of how practices may be influenced by contextual factors. A more comprehensive analysis of the policy and structural level factors that influence exemplary teaching practices for DLLs will be explored in a separate paper, based on data from the larger Pérez and Baker study described in Chapter 3 (Pérez & Baker, in preparation).

The *critical ecology of the early childhood profession* model uses an ecological systems approach, placing the early childhood teacher at the center of the model and considering how concentric layers of environmental contexts and relationships affect teachers' practice. The findings here are thus organized according to the layers of the framework: individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The findings below are intended to provide *one detailed example* of the ways that contexts can shape teaching practices within this study. The example used here, which concerns the use of children's home languages in classroom routines and interactions, was selected based on a close revisiting of all findings related to RQ2. Language use practices presented some of the most varied and complex findings in the study related to layers in the framework, warranting additional attention and analysis.

Contextual Factors Influencing Language Use Patterns Across Program Types

As noted earlier in this chapter, although each of the three program types used children's home languages, or L1s, in classroom interactions, the ways in which L1s were used differed by program type. Across the three programs, teachers and students used

their L1s for a variety of purposes. In some of these classrooms the primary L1 was Spanish, but there were many other languages represented, including Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Armenian, Portuguese, and Korean. The narrative below summarizes practices related to L1 use for each of the programs and provides data examples that illustrate how these practices may be influenced by each layer of the critical ecology model, beginning with the individual teacher at the center of the model and working outward to broader and broader layers of contexts. Please see Appendix L for a detailed table presenting findings about language use patterns in each program type, application of the critical ecology framework as a means of understanding these patterns, and additional data examples.

The Individual

In the critical ecology framework, early childhood educators are situated at the center of the model to position them as knowledgeable experts, influencing and influenced by factors at other levels of the model. In the case of classroom language use revealed in this example, all teachers across the study held a belief that bilingualism should be seen as an asset, and all had considerable knowledge about bilingual development from personal experience and professional learning. This knowledge likely influenced practices related to L1 use in the classrooms. In addition, individual teachers' language knowledge and backgrounds likely played a role. For example, the teachers in the private preschool program were predominantly monolingual English speakers, but the Head Start and public Pre-K teachers were all bilingual or multilingual. Thus, teachers who were bilingual or multilingual were positioned to be able to use multiple languages in the classroom, whereas English monolinguals were positioned to focus on English,

supplementing this knowledge by reaching out to other community members to offer L1 expertise.

Microsystem

The *microsystem* includes the classroom, and all of the relationships with children, families, and colleagues with whom teachers engage daily. All of the findings presented in the analysis of RQ2, above, take place within the microsystem. With regard to classroom language use, data from teacher interviews, observations, director interviews, and parent focus groups painted a picture of distinct patterns of language use within each of the communities in the study.

In the Head Start programs in this study, each classroom community was quite linguistically diverse, with at least eight different languages used among the children and teachers in the classroom. Only a small minority of the children in each group (e.g. 2 out of 18 children in one of the Head Start classrooms) were monolingual English speakers. Some of the languages spoken within this community included Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Armenian, and Portuguese. The teachers spoke some of these languages, and could call upon colleagues within the Head Start organization who spoke all of the children's home languages if needed. The Private Preschool classrooms were also linguistically diverse in composition, with 5-7 different languages spoken within the community; however, the majority of children and teachers in these classrooms were English monolinguals. In the public Pre-K programs, the language composition of the group was much more homogenous, with nearly all children in these two classrooms exposed to Spanish and English as their two languages. One teacher explained, *"Everyone here speaks Spanish as their native language or is at least exposed to Spanish*

at home. And in terms of cultures most of my students are Dominican or Puerto Rican”

(Public Pre-K teacher interview). Thus, each classroom community had a distinct linguistic and cultural profile, which may have contributed to the variations observed in language use practices across program types.

Mesosystem

The *mesosystem* encompasses interactions among different microsystems. In this example, interactions between family values and beliefs and classroom practices could be seen as occurring in the mesosystem. In the current example of classroom language use, parents in the study articulated their beliefs and desires about language use during focus groups, coffee hours, and interviews. As described in the findings earlier in this chapter related to the first research question, it was difficult to discern a pattern in the data regarding participant preferences for language use in their vision of ideal preschool classroom. Yet some trends were observable in the data, especially within the groups of parents from each program type. For example, most of the Head Start parents and public Pre-K parents described a preference for bilingual classroom instruction. For example, one Head Start parent said he would prefer, *“A classroom where my child learns about the languages equally, that way the child takes advantage of both languages.”* In contrast, most (although not all) of the parents in the private preschool classrooms described a preference for English immersion at school, accompanied with a respect for their family’s bilingualism. These varied parent preferences interact with other influences in the mesosystem, and may contribute to some of the variation in language use observed across program types.

Exosystem

The *exosystem*⁴ refers to school or district-wide systems in which decisions are made about teachers and classrooms, but teachers do not directly participate. In this study, exosystem factors include decisions about staffing and ratios, as well as learning standards and assessment policies. As all programs were located in the same state, all were influenced by a common set of licensing requirements put forth by Massachusetts regarding staffing and ratios; therefore, such factors are unlikely to have influenced the observed variation in language use. However, each program followed different policy guidelines and learning standards that articulate distinct positions about language use. In the Head Start programs, the Head Start Program Performance Standards in use at the time of this study stipulated that the need for: “Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child’s health and well-being” (Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, n.d., p.12). Following this program guideline, the Head Start Development and Early Learning Framework (Office of Head Start, 2010), which guides day-to-day instruction and assessment in Head Start programs, states a specific position on support for home languages: “Programs are to ensure that children have opportunities to interact and demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language” (p.4).

In stark contrast, the public Pre-K program directors and teachers described being influenced by MA Chapter 71A, a state law that mandates the use of Sheltered English

⁴ Data related to the exosystem was gathered from director and teacher interviews in this study; however, it should be noted that, given the primary focus of this study on classroom-level factors, data related to the exosystem and macrosystem are limited. The analysis presented here should thus be regarded as preliminary.

Immersion (SEI) in K-12 classrooms across the state, and prohibits most formal instruction in children's home languages. Although preschool classrooms are technically not impacted by this law, they are embedded within public schools that serve children grades K-12 and are mandated to follow SEI policies. Both of the classrooms in this study were labeled "SEI" classrooms, and teachers and directors did report feeling the effects of this legislation when considering language of instruction in the classroom. This was explained by one of the public Pre-K teachers during an interview:

My school applies the same policy and ruling for K1 that it would for K2, even though I think legally there are no requirements for K1 as far as language services...My understanding is that legally you cannot teach in Spanish unless you are a bilingual school...I'm told here, you are not supposed to speak in Spanish for instruction, but it's okay to speak in Spanish when you just need to tell them something for clarification. (Public Pre-K teacher interview)

As part of regulations associated with this legislation, teachers in the public school system were required to hold an "SEI endorsement" credential in order to teach in SEI classrooms. The public Pre-K programs also mentioned using the WIDA assessment system for DLLs (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2012), although explained that this assessment was not required for children until kindergarten.

The private preschool programs reported being guided by the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003), one requirement for state licensing of early education programs. The guidelines do not specifically state expectations for DLLs or supporting home languages. Rather, they state, "development of children's English language skills should be a major goal of the preschool curriculum" (p.3). Although the state has also issued a document offering guidance to programs supporting young DLLs (Massachusetts Department of Early

Education and Care, 2010a), no participants in the study mentioned being aware of this document.

The three program types thus each have distinct sets of policies, guidelines and expectations, each of which articulates a different priority regarding language of instruction. Future analysis will investigate in more depth the policies, practices, and guidelines to which each program is held accountable and how this may influence teaching practices related to language use.

Macrosystem

The *macrosystem* includes socio-political factors far beyond the classroom, which still impact teachers and teaching. All classrooms in the study were situated geographically in the same part of Massachusetts, thus all share a similar macrosystem of national, state, and local factors. Data relevant to macrosystem factors were drawn from teacher and director interviews, at points during the interview where the participants referred to larger social and political factors influencing their work. However, it was beyond the scope and intent of this study to conduct a comprehensive policy analysis, which would be necessary in order to paint a complete picture of the broad socio-political context. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted as related specifically to the six classrooms included in the study.

Socio-political factors influencing teaching practices in this study might include laws affecting the education of Dual Language Learners in the state, broad beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education, as well as state-level or national beliefs and expectations about early childhood education in general. For example, although the MA Chapter 71A legislation discussed earlier specifically concerns public K-12 classrooms,

participants in both public and private programs mentioned this legislation and the impact it has on their preschool teaching practices.

In addition, participants in all program types mentioned NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) guidelines as being influential to their understandings about best practices for teaching young children. As one of the private directors explained:

We have a total appreciation and respect for what NAEYC has done to really bring appropriate practice, developmentally appropriate practice, to really into the mainstream of early childhood thinking. What to do that is appropriate, and even more courageously they early on said what was not appropriate. (Private preschool director interview)

The DAP framework does make several general references to supporting children in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. For example, the guidelines state that children should “hear and see their home language and culture reflected in the daily interactions and activities of the classroom” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p.17).

NAEYC has also issued a position statement advocating for linguistically and culturally responsive practices for young DLLs (NAEYC, 2009), but this document does not make specific recommendations about classroom language use, and no participants mentioned this position statement during interviews or observations.

Chronosystem

The *chronosystem* concerns changes to the other systems described over time. Given that data collection for this study took place over several months, a relatively short period of time, chronosystem factors were not intended to be a primary focus of this study. However, during teacher interviews, one question specifically asked teachers, “Have your practices for teaching DLL children changed over time? If so, in what

ways?” Teachers responded to this question by describing ongoing learning about DLLs over time, through both formal and informal methods. Nearly all teachers mentioned attending specific professional development workshops or taking courses related to teaching DLLs, and indicated broadly that this had affected their teaching practices. Some teachers also described increased experience with teaching DLLs as supporting their teaching practices. For example, one teacher from a private preschool program explained,

I think I feel more comfortable involving the families. Or getting more information from the families. Especially if the families' English is limited, that's challenging and sometimes that might feel overwhelming to me. But I think as I've grown as a teacher or gained more experience it's become easier. (Private preschool teacher interview)

Although these findings are not directly related to the example of language use in the classroom followed throughout this analysis, the data on change over time does indicate that, true to the critical ecology model, teachers do see their practices for teaching DLL children as dynamic and evolving over time.

Analyzing Additional Practices

This analysis has focused specifically on one teaching practice, the use of children's home languages in classroom routines and interactions, in order to consider how contextual factors might influence teachers' practices for DLL children. Although the analysis here has intentionally been focused on this one particular practice, the findings do strongly speak to the myriad of ways in which practices are shaped by factors within and beyond classrooms and schools. Additional analyses could be useful in understanding how practices are enacted and the type of support that practices have at different levels, which could be informative for those aspiring to affect changes to

classroom practice through implementing policies or structures for DLL children and families. Future analyses will trace other practices (curricular approaches, assessment practices, and family engagement practices) across the critical ecology model, continuing to explore connections between practices and contextual influences (see Páez & Baker, in preparation).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings in three parts. First, the findings related to definitions of exemplary teaching were presented. Across participant groups and program types, common themes within these definitions included: creating a safe, calm, and respectful classroom community; focusing on knowing the child and culturally responsive differentiation; offering varied channels for family engagement; highlighting playful learning as an integral practice; conducting ongoing, observation-based assessments; providing language-rich classrooms that value bilingualism; and focusing on culture. Some unique features were also noted within these definitions, such as a heightened sense of awareness about family engagement from the Head Start community.

Next, strong resonance was found between the findings on definitions of exemplary teaching and the findings of practices enacted in exemplary classrooms. Here, practices were found to be related to four core beliefs that exemplary teachers held about teaching DLL children: 1) bilingualism is an asset, 2) bilingual families are resources to the community, 3) DLL children are citizens, and 4) providing tailored supports can help DLL children to master the English language in school. The practices that stem from each of these beliefs included all of the elements in the participants' definitions of exemplary teaching for young DLLs. In addition, some particular practices were found to

be unique to one classroom or program type, such as Storytelling and Story Acting approaches in the public Pre-K classrooms, and a particular emphasis on family engagement in the Head Start classrooms.

Finally, applying the critical ecology model offered a means of understanding connections between practices and the contexts within which they are enacted. In the case of the example used in this analysis for classroom language use patterns, different patterns were evident in each of the three classrooms, perhaps due to the different structures and policies in place in each of the programs, some of which encouraged home language use in the classrooms and others that discouraged this practice. Yet despite these differences, similarities among teachers' beliefs about bilingualism may have enabled each classroom to affirm and use home languages in some way. This specific example was provided as a touchstone to understand how the role of context might be further explored in a future study.

In the following and final chapter, these findings are placed in conversation with the extant literature on teaching young DLLs, and implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study has painted vivid pictures of teaching practices for teaching young DLL children. Grounding the study in a *knowledge-of-practice* stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), in which teachers are viewed as both consumers and producers of knowledge for the field, has proven a valuable and respectful model of research for understanding teaching practices. By approaching teachers as experts about teaching young DLL, the field has an opportunity to learn from intentional, experienced educators. At the same time, engaging teachers as expert professionals contributes to elevating the professional status of early childhood teachers, who have been habitually marginalized and disrespected (Barnett et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2012).

This study was possible only because of collaborative relationships with the six early childhood programs that participated in the study, and in particular because of extended collaboration with the fourteen skilled and experienced teachers who teach young DLL children in these programs each day. Spending time in these exceptional classrooms, talking at length with the teachers, and learning from the children, families, and administrators in their communities has been an honor and a privilege. Readers should keep in mind the affordances and limitations of a study focused so intensely on six classrooms when reading the discussion below; although there are certainly implications for other classrooms and contexts, it is also necessary to keep sight of the specificity of the findings and the contexts in which they have been recorded.

This chapter first considers broad findings from the study, placing these findings in conversation with the literature reviewed on teaching young DLLs (Chapter 2). Next,

the chapter offers implications for teaching and policy, and concludes by suggesting directions for future research.

Definitions of Exemplary Teaching, Enacted Practices, and the Literature

This study began by asking, *How do multiple educational stakeholders in ECE programs define exemplary teaching of DLLs?* and *Do definitions of exemplary teaching vary by program type?* One broad finding here was that the definitions of exemplary teaching for young DLLs provided by directors, teachers, and family members were complex and multifaceted. When envisioning an ideal classroom for young DLL children, participants desired: safe, respectful, language-rich classrooms that value bilingualism and focus on social-emotional development; playful learning and observation-based assessments; deep knowledge of individual children in the class, including understanding about their languages and cultures; and authentic family engagement. In other words, participants envisioned that exemplary teachers for DLL children would be professional educators with deep knowledge of children, curriculum, assessment, and working with families.

The degree of congruence among the three communities' (private preschool, Head Start, public Pre-K) definitions of exemplary teaching for DLLs is notable. Nearly all aspects of these definitions were common across participant groups and program types. Furthermore, there was a high level of alignment between participants' hypothetical definitions of exemplary teaching and the enacted teaching practices observed in the six exemplary classrooms. These same participants' definitions helped to identify exemplary classrooms through the community nomination process, as described in the methods section (Chapter 3). In fact, when describing the "ideal" preschool classroom for DLL

children, many participants slipped from talking about the hypothetical to describing actual features of the exemplary classrooms they knew well from their lived experiences. The classrooms selected reflected exemplary practices as defined and described by both the communities (i.e., administrators, teachers, and families) and the research literature; thus, the selection process was validated by the findings of congruence between these different entities.

The definitions and enacted practices were highly consistent with the extant literature on best practices for teaching young DLL children described in the literature review (Chapter 2) (Atkins-Burnett et al., 2010; Castro et al., 2011; Tabors, 2008). For example, themes identified among participant definitions included a *focus on culture* and *language-rich classrooms that value bilingualism*. These themes corresponded with the key idea of affirming culture and language identified in the literature. The theme of *varied channels for family engagement* similarly aligns with an emphasis on forming partnerships with families noted in the research on teaching young DLLs. For example, Castro and colleagues (2011) mention the importance of teachers holding asset-based perspectives when working with young DLLs. This congruence affirms the relevance of the best practices articulated in the literature, and might indicate that participants are familiar with this literature. In fact, some teachers and directors explicitly mentioned being informed by Tabors' (2008) work and her recommendations for working with culturally and linguistically diverse families.

The early childhood community in the U.S. and elsewhere generally associates the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) guidelines put forth by the NAEYC organization (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), and program accreditation consistent with

these guidelines, with high quality education and care for young children (e.g. Douglass-Fleiss, 2013). In this study, both the definitions of exemplary practice and the enacted practices aligned with the DAP guidelines. For example, participants described learning through play as a key element of exemplary classrooms, which is consistent with best practices suggested in the DAP. I also found that observed classroom practices for young DLLs could be organized into two tiers, with the first tier (Tier 1) containing general classroom practices and the second tier (Tier 2) containing practices designed and implemented specifically with DLL children in mind. The Tier 1 practices align closely with the DAP framework, which validates the framework as important and relevant to teaching young children. Yet, as noted in the literature review, ongoing conversations in the field of Early Childhood Education argue that DAP doesn't do enough to respond to the unique cultural and linguistic realities of young DLLs and other children whose lives and developmental trajectories may differ from a white, middle-class American norm. The findings of this study provide evidence for both agreement and disagreement with these critiques. As demonstrated in the findings related to Tier 1, or general classroom practices, exemplary classrooms for young DLLs in this study did indeed exhibit many characteristics for which the DAP clearly advocates. For example, the curricular approach used in the classrooms was play-based, with an emphasis on hands-on exploration as a vehicle for learning. Family engagement was emphasized. Ongoing, observation-based assessments were emphasized over standardized tests. The classrooms were language-rich, with plentiful opportunities for authentic conversation. Each of these aspects are consistent with the DAP guidelines. Furthermore, teachers, family members,

and directors affirmed the relevance of these characteristics as important for teaching young DLLs in their definitions of exemplary teaching.

Beyond this alignment with DAP, however, one contribution of this study is to demonstrate the myriad of ways in which exemplary teachers of DLLs must go beyond the DAP guidelines to enact teaching practices specifically designed for DLL children and their families. The literature base demonstrates that development of bilingual children is distinct from that of monolinguals (Brisk, 2006; Castro, 2014; Castro et al., 2011; McCabe et al., 2013), for example due to early differences in brain development in bilingual children, or the role of transfer in vocabulary development of two language systems. Given these differences, it follows that high quality early childhood education for DLLs is not the same as for monolinguals. Indeed, exemplary classrooms for DLLs *are* following best practices as outlined in the DAP guidelines. But these exemplary teachers go far beyond this baseline. Exemplary teachers in this study incorporate children's home languages into the fabric of classroom life. They learn which communication approaches best suit the families in their community, reaching out through conversations in their home languages, text messages, and invitations to come into the classroom for breakfast or to read a story in Spanish or Arabic. They welcome families into the classroom with greetings in the languages spoken in the community, and throughout the classrooms it is clear that families cultures are represented, such as with pictures and flags of the families' countries of origin posted prominently on the walls. In exemplary classrooms, these practices are carefully planned and enacted *specifically* to benefit DLL children in the group, whether they make up the majority or a small minority of the classroom community. In sum, exemplary classrooms for young DLLs are

exemplary because of the *highly purposeful teaching* of DLL children that goes on in these settings.

Clusters of Key Practices

Findings from this study identified several clusters of practices designed and implemented specifically with DLL children in mind. These clusters included: 1) relationships, belonging, and culture; 2) guided play, co-construction of curriculum, and observational assessment; and 3) focusing on the English language. In the sections that follow, these practices are considered in relation to the extant literature on teaching young DLL children.

Relationships, Belonging, and Culture

One of the major findings of this study is that a common set of teacher beliefs drive practices for teaching young DLLs. Each of the six teachers in this study believed that bilingualism should be viewed as an asset, that bilingual families should be seen as resources to the community, that DLL children should be considered citizens in the classroom, and that these children deserve tailored English language supports, along with valuing of their home languages, in order to thrive in an English-dominant linguistic environment. The fact that these beliefs were shared across participants and program types speaks to the importance of beliefs as foundational in driving teacher practices. Driven by these beliefs, teachers then used the specific practices described in the findings chapter to build relationships with children and families, cultivate a sense of belonging in the classroom community for all children, paying particular attention to children who were DLLs.

Existing research illustrates that when teachers hold asset-oriented beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students, this can lead to positive impacts on student achievement (Flores, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Lee, 2001; López, 2016; Love & Kruger, 2005; Sheets, 1995). Other research has investigated the connections between teacher beliefs about DLLs and teaching practices (López, 2016; Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014; Sawyer et al., 2016), revealing mixed results. López (2016) and Rashidi and Moghadam (2014) both found teacher beliefs and practices to be related, while Sawyer and her colleagues (2016) were surprised to find a lack of relationship between teacher practices and the beliefs that they held; namely, teachers overwhelmingly reported positive beliefs about DLL children, but failed to enact culturally and linguistically relevant practices to benefit these children directly. In contrast, findings from the present study demonstrate that for exemplary teachers of young DLLs, beliefs were not only strongly connected with teaching practices, but seemed to drive intentional teaching for young DLL children.

In addition, as introduced in the work of Moll and his colleagues (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), the teachers in this study took an approach honoring the *funds of knowledge* of the young children and families in their community. They sought to learn more about the children in their care, and in doing so, were able to tailor their teaching in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. For example, teachers invited children to tell their stories during Storytelling/Story Acting time in their language of preference, or supported connections between home and school by explaining that the beans (*frijoles*) that children were familiar with eating in their kitchens at home were connected with the bean plants they were sprouting during an inquiry process in the

classroom. These findings relate to prior research which found that acknowledging and supporting diversity in the classroom contributes to the cultivation of a positive emotional environment for young children (Downer et al., 2012; Sanders & Downer, 2012). It may also be relevant that the majority of the teachers in the study were bilingual themselves; prior research has also found that bilingual teachers are more likely to form strong relationships with DLL children (Luchtel, Hughes, Luze, Bruna, & Peterson, 2010a), as are teachers who share the cultural backgrounds of their students (Sanders & Downer, 2012).

Teachers in this study took a holistic approach to building and sustaining relationships, not just with the children but by extending beyond the classroom to embrace and support DLL families. Exemplary teachers connected with families by frequently taking time beyond the school day to engage in home visits, communicate with families via text message or email, or meet with family members in person. As noted in the existing literature, family engagement is especially important for DLL families because of the potential for family partnerships to bridge gaps in language and culture that may exist between home and school, supporting better school adjustments and academic achievement (Epstein, 2001; Halgunseth et al., 2009; Tabors, 2008). It should be noted that the Head Start programs went beyond either of the other program types in the depth with which they engaged families in the daily lives of the classrooms, expecting and welcoming parent volunteers into the classroom each day and even including parents in curriculum planning conversations.

Guided Play, Co-Constructed Curriculum, and Observational Assessment

A second cluster of practices in the findings related to curricular and assessment approaches that use play and observational assessment as a means of fostering and making visible the co-construction of knowledge in the preschool classroom. Life in each of the classrooms in this study centered around guided play as a vehicle for learning. All classrooms environments were structured in learning centers, and children spent the longest period of the day self-directing their learning by choosing and playing in these centers while working with real, hands-on materials and interacting with peers and teachers in both spontaneous and planned playful experiences. Recall that the term *guided* play has been used to describe an active use of play as a vehicle for learning, in which teachers structure the environment and play experiences with interdisciplinary learning goals in mind (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2008). Not only did teachers in this study organize the classroom environment and curriculum in a way that emphasized a guided play approach (as described in the Tier 1 practices presented in Chapter 4), they also drew upon children's interests in order to follow emergent curricular themes and inquiries that mattered to the children in the room. Driven by the belief that all children should be seen as citizens in the classroom, teachers in this study were constantly observing and listening to children in order to use their ideas, interests, and questions to co-construct curriculum. Moreover, teachers also shared power with children regularly by turning aspects of classroom routines (greeting routines, transitions, leading songs, etc.) over to the children's leadership. In this study, guided play, co-constructed curricula, and sharing of power with children were evident in each of the six classrooms during every single classroom observation. Examples of curricula themes and activities driven by

students' interests include: the Superhero study in one of the private preschool centers; the exploration of masks in one of the public Pre-Ks; and the investigation into houses and homes that arose in one of the Head Start programs. Prior research has demonstrated that these approaches are especially effective methods of instruction for teaching young children because making connections with children's lives and interests results in deep engagement on the part of the learners (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2009; Donegan, Hong, Trepanier-Street, & Finkelstein, 2005; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2008).

Emergent curricula and guided play are not new concepts in the early childhood field, and are championed by many early childhood experts as being the most effective tools for fostering learning in the early years (Bodrova, 2007; Helm & Katz, 2010; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2008; Van Hoorn, Scales, Nourot, & Alward, 2015). Nonetheless, these approaches are constantly under pressure and sometimes neglected given the current emphasis on direct teaching and school readiness skills (e.g. Miller & Almon, 2009). Hearing all participant groups mention play as a critical element of exemplary classrooms for young DLLs, coupled with observing the prevalence of playful learning approaches in each of the classrooms in the study, offers an affirmation of the power of play as a medium for young DLL children to cultivate their language abilities, form social connections, and bring their cultural and linguistic knowledge into the life of the classroom.

The play experiences children were having in these classrooms likely contributed to their development of English, which was a major goal that teachers in the study held for the DLL children in their classes. This relates to the research literature, for example to Bohman et al.'s (2010) findings about the importance of language output in the

development of an additional language, and Piker's (2013) findings that young DLLs are more likely to use English verbally when engaged in play with peers. This finding is also consistent with prior studies of preschool classrooms for DLLs that highlight playful learning approaches as beneficial for young DLLs (Kurkjian et al., 2001; Soltero-Gonzalez, 2009). Like the teachers in each of these prior studies, the teachers in the present study also encouraged and invited children to use their home languages as well as English in play situations. As noted in prior research (Fillmore, 1991; McCabe et al., 2013; Tabors, 2008), when children are invited and supported to use their home languages in the classroom, this can increase children's engagement and foster their sense of belonging in the classroom.

While children in this study were playing and learning through a guided play approach, teachers were engaging them with questions, scaffolding language, and recording their words and thinking through observational assessment and documentation of learning processes. This was evidenced in the multiple and varied assessment practices found in the study that emphasized ongoing, observation-based assessments as well as portfolios, narrative reports, and the occasional use (primarily in the public Pre-K programs) of more structured screening tools and/or standardized assessments. Overall, the assessment practices employed by teachers in this study emphasized process over product measures of success; this may have allowed them to avoid some current challenges in the assessment for DLL children addressed in the current literature, such as a lack of culturally and linguistic responsive assessment tools for children who speak languages other than or in addition to English (Espinosa, 2013; Garcia & Frede, 2010). Castro and her colleagues (2011) recommend that assessment of young DLLs should be

ongoing and frequent, conducted in both (or all) of a child's languages, and draw on multiple strategies and data sources. The classrooms in this study, which utilized ongoing, observation-based assessment and pedagogical documentation practices as the primary means of assessing young DLL children, and frequently did so by honoring both of a child's languages, illustrate how Castro et al.'s (2011) recommendations for assessment of young DLLs children might be enacted in a range of real classrooms.

In sum, the interwoven practices of *fostering guided play*, *listening to children*, and *engaging in ongoing documentation of learning processes* were evident across classrooms in this study. These combined practices may evoke images of the municipal early childhood centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy, places where teachers and children engage together in democratic and collaborative learning through authentic, often playful, inquiries grounded in the processes of documentation (Hall et al., 2014). Reggio Emilia's early childhood programs have had widespread impacts around the globe on teaching and learning in early childhood and beyond (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012; Project Zero & Reggio Children, 2001). Indeed, many of the teacher participants in the present study explicitly or implicitly mentioned being influenced by practices originating from Reggio Emilia. Yet despite the extensive research and theoretical knowledge base that attest to the benefits of playful and democratic classroom practices, these approaches are under threat in educational contexts within and beyond the United States today due to an overwhelming pressure to focus on school-readiness and academic skills (Mardell et al., 2016; Miller & Almon, 2009). It is therefore critical to disseminate findings from research studies such as this, which offer evidence that play, co-construction of knowledge, and documentation are key practices that can benefit young DLL children.

Focusing on the English Language

A third cluster of findings from the present study pertains to the practices teachers use to support DLL children in their acquisition of the English language. The literature on the development of young DLLs makes a strong case for supporting both or all of a child's languages in the classroom (Castro, 2014; Castro et al., 2011; McCabe et al., 2013). Nonetheless, as outlined earlier in this dissertation, in the Massachusetts context within which this study took place, dual-language supports are not always an option for programs. This can be due to socio-political factors favoring English-language instruction (Smith et al., 2008), as well as practical reasons, for example if teachers and children do not share similar language backgrounds, or if the makeup of the student population is linguistically diverse. Since the classrooms nominated by the community for participation in this study were English-dominant, findings from the study can shed light on what exemplary teaching for young DLLs looks like when dual-language approaches are not possible.

Indeed, the findings from the study offer insight into how exemplary teachers of DLLs honor and support children's home languages when the primary language of instruction is English. In all classrooms in the study, teachers tailored the integration of home languages to suit the linguistic makeup of the group. In classrooms that had a single dominant language, for example in the two public Pre-K classrooms that were composed exclusively of Spanish-English emergent bilingual or English monolingual children and Spanish-English bilingual teachers, both Spanish and English were used freely in interactions with and among children and families. This is at odds with the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) law in place in Massachusetts. Teacher-led

instruction, however, was always conducted in English in these classrooms, likely due to the SEI policies and structures in place in the public programs that mandate the use of English as the primary language of instruction (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). In these programs the primary goal is to foster English language development.

Contrast that pattern with the Head Start classrooms in the study, which served a linguistically diverse group, and had policy structures that clearly encouraged teachers to use the children's home languages in the classroom and in home-school interactions. Here, teachers used multiple practices to support home languages: engaging colleagues as translators; using their own languages to interact with children and families from similar language backgrounds; inviting parents to come in and read books in their own languages to the children. Although this pattern of English as the dominant classroom language and home languages used informally in the classrooms is similar to the public Pre-K classrooms, two differences should be noted. First, the linguistic diversity of the Head Start programs meant that multiple languages were used daily in these classrooms, rather than the Spanish and English that were used in the public Pre-K classrooms.

A third pattern was observed in the private programs, where the linguistic makeup of the group included a smaller group of DLL children and a majority of English monolinguals, and no clear policy was stipulated by the programs about home language support. In these classrooms, which also used English as the primary language of instruction, practices for incorporating and honoring home languages were grounded in classroom routines and rituals, such as the morning greeting routines, "language bag", or songs that included multiple languages. Teachers in the private programs also sought additional resources to support children's home languages, for example by finding

bilingual volunteers to support particular newcomer children in their L1. As the analysis of these practices using the critical ecology framework (Miller et al., 2012) in the findings chapter demonstrated (Chapter 4), many layers of context likely influenced the variations in these practices. Study findings thus contribute to the literature by providing detailed information about how language support can vary across programs and how expert teachers incorporate children's home languages into preschool classrooms in situations in which English is the primary language of instruction.

Further, the study deepens current understandings about teaching practices used to support development of the English language by affirming prior research and extending findings to new classroom contexts. Practices used by teachers in this study to support development of English, such as buttressing communication for DLLs using gestures and objects during whole group times, were consistent with recommendations from prior research (Castro et al., 2011; Facella et al., 2005; Tabors, 2008). In particular, the study affirms prior research by Tabors (2008). Several teachers in the study mentioned actively incorporating Tabors' strategies into their teaching, for example by offering plentiful opportunities for authentic talk, extending children's utterances, and sheltering English for DLLs by simplifying speech and repeating words and phrases. Given that Tabors' research was conducted primarily in a university-affiliated private program, findings from this study provide valuable affirmation that the teaching practices recommended by Tabors are also valued and utilized by teachers in Head Start and public Pre-K programs.

In addition to these affirmations of prior research, this study contributes new knowledge to the field in two ways. First, by exploring practices across three program types, a study design not currently represented in literature, it was possible to consider

whether teachers use different strategies for supporting young children to acquire the English language. Interestingly, as evidenced by the practices outlined in the findings, the vast majority of practices for teaching English were common across programs, with only two practices observed as being unique to a particular program type: Storytelling/ Story Acting and supporting individual DLL children during whole group times through a team-teaching approach. This coherence across program types, despite the variations noted in policies and structures, is an intriguing finding, and is discussed further in the section below.

Second, given the in-depth qualitative approach taken in this study, findings can offer educators detailed information about how expert teachers support preschool children's English language development. For example, one finding was that teachers explicitly planned and incorporated the teaching of vocabulary throughout the day in ways that were interwoven with classroom routines and curricular moves. Rather than adopting a decontextualized "word of the day" approach, teachers made new words come alive through interaction with real, hands-on materials, engaging read-alouds, and conversations around play driven by children's ideas. This practice is consistent with the research on teaching vocabulary to DLL children (Graves, 2009; Graves, August, & Mancilla-Martinez, 2012), which suggests a four-pronged approach in which teachers provide rich language experiences, teach individual words, teach word learning strategies, and foster word consciousness. In particular, the first two elements of this approach were abundantly represented in the findings from this study.

The emergence of Storytelling / Story Acting (ST/SA) as a practice for supporting the language development of young DLLs is another intriguing study finding that

deepens the field's understandings of supporting DLLs' English language development. Early childhood expert Vivian Gussin Paley's own practitioner inquires track her curricular practices of transcribing children's stories and acting these stories out as a class (Paley, 1990, 1997). Paley's own writings, along with more contemporary research on storytelling approaches inspired by Paley's work, have demonstrated that the ST/SA practice fosters language and social development, and has been associated with gains on standardized literacy tests (Cooper, Capo, Mathes, & Gray, 2007; McNamee, 2005; Paley, 1990, 1997). However, this body of research is not large, nor has it focused specifically on DLL children. Thus, the examples of ST/SA from the present study contribute additional perspectives on how ST/SA is used by expert teachers of young DLL children.

Variation Among Definitions and Practices: Considering the Role of Context

The clusters of findings from this study discussed above (i.e. fostering relationships and belonging; guided play, co-constructed curriculum, and observation-based assessment; and focusing on the English language) both affirm and extend prior research on teaching young DLL children. The discussion of practices above has focused primarily on practices that were common across classrooms and program types. Yet as noted in the study findings related to the third research question of this study, *What are some ways in which contextual factors within and beyond the classroom influence these teachers and their teaching practices?*, some variation was found both within the definitions of exemplary teaching as well as in the enacted classroom practices across program types. Somewhat surprisingly, however, these variations were few in

comparison to the multitude of similar practices that were evident across all six classrooms, regardless of program type.

A solid literature base affirms the need to understand school contexts in order to situate teaching practices and consider how they must be tailored to particular children and situations (Dahlberg et al., 1999; Rogoff, 1990). It is plausible to expect that practices for teaching DLLs would vary considerably from classroom to classroom, especially in different types of programs with different policies and structures in place related to the teaching of DLL children. This being the case, why was such consistency found in practices among the six classrooms in this study? I offer the following tentative, three-part explanation, with the understanding that this phenomenon demands further exploration in future research endeavors.

First, common beliefs held by the teachers in each classroom were demonstrated to drive teaching practices; it follows that when beliefs were similar, practices would be similar as well. For example, given that all teachers in the study believed that bilingualism should be seen as an asset, all teachers employed teaching practices to honor and integrate the children's home languages into the life of the classroom.

Second, the practices themselves were in many cases adaptable to the particular people, languages, and cultures represented in the community (e.g. the "language bag" could be filled with *any* language; families were invited in to share *any* treasured tradition), and could thus change within a given classroom in response to changes in the makeup of the classroom community over time. In other words, while the "toolbox" of practices teachers drew from was similar across programs, teachers might reach for particular tools depending on their knowledge of a specific child or family in a given

situation. This was especially true of practices related to the *focusing on language* category, in which teachers tailor language supports in real time to respond to the language abilities and needs of the children in their class.

Finally, perhaps for exemplary teachers, structures and policies can be interpreted loosely as teachers rely more on their own nuanced experience about teaching young DLLs. Returning to Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) framework for understanding teacher knowledge and practice relationships is relevant and connected to this explanation. Experienced as they are in teaching young children, exemplary teachers adopt a *knowledge-of-practice* stance, in which teachers are both consumers and producers of knowledge for the field of education. The exemplary teachers in this study integrated knowledge gained through their own teaching experience with information acquired from literature or professional learning experiences related to teaching DLLs. These teachers, given their success in the classroom, may in turn be given more permission from administrators to interpret policies in their own ways, in part due to their demonstrated classroom success. Exemplary teachers adapted their practices based on their own expertise, conversations with colleagues, and knowledge of the children in their classrooms.

This discussion should not diminish the potential relevance of the critical ecology framework to guide the present study or potential future research. Considering the role of context is imperative in order to truly understand what happens inside of schools and classrooms. In fact, the conclusion that exemplary teachers in this study have greater control over classroom practices than do systems or policies would not have become visible without unpacking the many influences on practice evident in the mesosystem,

exosystem, and macrosystem. Perhaps in a study focused on novice teachers, the role of contextual factors in those outermost levels of the critical ecology model might be more influential, as novice teachers might feel more beholden to following policies with rigidity, both due to their inexperience and lesser degrees of trust from administrators that come only with time and experience.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In sum, this study builds on the current literature base by both affirming current practices for teaching young DLLs as previously articulated in the work of Tabors (2008), Castro et al. (2011) and others, as well as by providing detailed examples of classroom practices from three types of early childhood programs that currently serve DLL children in the United States. Furthermore, the study findings assert the important connection between teacher beliefs and practices, which has previously been debated in the research literature. Based on the findings from this study, several implications are possible for teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers.

Implications for Teaching young DLLs

Teachers seeking strong examples of classroom teaching practices for supporting young DLLs can learn from the level of detail offered in the findings from this study. For example, although teachers may know that inviting parents into the classroom can help to foster reciprocal communication and trust with families, this study offers detailed and specific examples of how real teachers invite family participation. Relevant examples of this practice from the study include inviting family members to make a recording counting in their home languages, serving as guest readers reading books in their home languages, or joining teachers in planning meetings to contribute culturally relevant ideas

to emergent curriculum themes. In addition, the findings from this study offer clear support for encouraging learning through play as a primary approach for teaching young DLL children. Teachers and school leaders should continue to advocate for a play-based approach to teaching and learning in preschool, and for integrating and embedding particular skills, such as vocabulary instruction, through play activities strongly connected with children's lives and interests.

In addition, educators working in contexts where dual-language instruction is not feasible or permitted can draw upon the collection of practices in this study for ways to honor and incorporate children's home languages into the preschool classroom in contexts that are English-dominant. Perhaps California's recent repeal the state's English-only legislation with 72.9% of voters voting to end the ban on bilingual education (California Secretary of State, 2016) may lend hope to those who continue to advocate for research-based practices that support both or all of a young child's languages fully in school contexts (Espinosa, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013). However, in the meantime, and in settings in which the linguistic makeup of the community makes bilingual or multi-lingual instruction impossible, the findings from this study can guide educators to effectively respect, affirm, and incorporate children's languages into the life of the classroom.

Implications for Teacher Education

The field of education widely assumes that teachers strongly impact the learning that takes place in classrooms, and that teacher education plays a significant role in preparing teachers for classroom success (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Although the ways in which these assumptions

drive policy decisions are often misguided (Cochran-Smith et al., in press; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001), the reality remains that it is the role of teacher education to prepare new teachers to best serve the children in their care. Future teachers need knowledge about how young DLLs develop, and need to understand that while the Tier 1 practices presented in this study are beneficial for a broad range of young children including those who are DLLs, these practices alone are not sufficient to fully support DLL children. Teacher educators can use findings from this and other related studies to provide examples of specific Tier 2 practices designed by exemplary teachers for young DLLs. This could be highly beneficial for pre-service or novice teachers seeking to understand what teaching DLL children looks like in an early childhood classroom. In fact, initial presentations of findings to teachers from the six programs included in the study have already revealed the benefits of discussing study findings with practicing teachers. Future professional development for in-service teachers could be designed around study findings to further support teachers' implementation of DLL-focused strategies.

Teacher educators should also encourage their students to consider how local definitions of exemplary practices shape how expert teachers plan and implement practices in their classrooms, and the examples of variation among program types presented in this study can offer tangible examples of this work. For example, students could see how experienced teachers listen to family needs and desires for reciprocal communication, then tailor communication approaches to meet those needs.

Furthermore, given the finding that teacher beliefs drive practices, teacher educators should see their role as not simply teaching discrete skills or practices for working with young DLL children, but first and foremost to do the deeper work of

cultivating and nourishing asset-oriented beliefs about bilingualism, cultural diversity, and difference. The present study adds to a robust literature base in this area (Espinosa, 2013; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Genesee, 1994; Heng, 2011; Moll et al., 1992) that affirms the importance of teachers holding asset-oriented beliefs about DLL children.

Finally, teacher educators should ensure that novice teachers understand the benefits of guided play, coupled with co-constructed thematic or inquiry-based curriculum and observational-based assessment, as pedagogical approaches that are essential for young DLL children in preschool classrooms. Drawing upon findings from this and other related studies that highlight the importance of play for young DLL children (Kurkjian et al., 2001; Piker, 2013; Soltero-Gonzalez, 2009), teacher educators can push back on the ongoing suppression of play in schools (Mardell et al., 2016; Miller & Almon, 2009), supporting novice teachers to develop skill in facilitating meaningful play experiences that foster cognitive, social, and emotional development for young DLL children.

Implications for DLL Policy

Given the complexity of teaching young DLLs, improving teaching practices will require working across multiple levels – the classroom level, the school level, and the program level. Program-level implications will be further explored in a related study currently in progress (Páez & Baker, in preparation). This is the only existing study to have specifically examined practices for young DLLs across three program types; findings may thus be of interest to leaders who oversee a variety of programs. For example, program leaders responsible for planning system-wide professional development offerings could draw upon the findings from this study to design PD

focused on teaching young DLLs. In addition, based on the findings of the present study, programs might review their policies (or lack thereof) for teaching young DLLs, considering whether the policy acknowledges that young DLLs as a particular group of children with unique strengths and needs who have a right to tailored teaching practices implemented with them in mind. In addition, program-level leaders could examine the teaching and assessment recommendations in the program, considering whether these are aligned with the community's definition of excellence for teaching their DLL children as well as with current research recommendations from the field.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The scope of the present study was intentionally constrained to six classrooms, in order to deeply understand each of these contexts and the teaching practices across these programs. Taking such a close look at individual classrooms enabled deep learning in collaboration with expert teachers and through a rigorous process of triangulation from multiple data sources (interviews, classroom observations, parent focus groups, video recordings, and classroom artifacts). These are methodological strengths of the present study. However, along with the strength of focusing in such detail on a specific group of classrooms comes an inherent limitation regarding generalizability to other contexts and populations. The following are several possibilities for future research that could continue to deepen understandings about teaching young DLL children.

There could be several possibilities for replication or expansion of the current study to include other contexts or participant groups. As mentioned earlier, working with novice teachers to learn about their practices and contexts could potentially yield different findings pertaining to the influence of policy and structure on classroom

practices. Although in this study, teacher expertise and classroom-level factors seemed to most strongly influence practice, this might not be true for novice teachers who could be looking for more guidance from structural and policy-level sources.

Replicating this study in other communities, states, or program types is another potential area for further research. For example, the sample of the present study did not include classrooms in rural or suburban areas, nor did it include for-profit private early childhood programs, or dual-language bilingual classrooms. These are other program types worthy of further exploration. Finally, a related study might ask DLL children what they think an ideal classroom would look like for them. Children's voices were evident in the present study through the classroom observations and artifacts, but DLL children were not directly asked about their opinions on exemplary teaching, and these voices could contribute additional perspectives about how communities define exemplary teaching for DLLs.

From a methodological perspective, learning from and with community-identified exemplary teachers in this study was both authentic and enlightening. By centering research on teaching in real classrooms, and by inviting community members to set their own definitions of excellence as relevant to them and their children, this study straddled the space between a university-based and school-based worlds. During the final member-checking process as the study was drawing to a close, teachers voiced their appreciation at having been included in the study. They said that they were glad to contribute to the field and hoped that others would learn from their experiences. By grounding the research in an orientation of *knowledge-of-practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and the theoretical framework of the critical ecology model, teachers were central players in

the construction of knowledge for the study. This approach may be valuable to others wishing to learn from practicing teachers about other topics in education beyond working with young DLLs. According to Miller, Dalli, and Urban (2012) who developed the critical ecology model, centering research around teacher expertise elevates and promotes a sense of professionalism in the early childhood field. Continuing this trend would contribute to counteracting a lack of professionalism that pervades the field at present (Urban, 2012).

Finally, the present study intentionally did not focus on child outcomes, but rather on processes at play within classrooms identified by the community as exemplary for young DLLs. Complementary research could look at how DLL children fare in classrooms that meet the characteristics of the exemplary classrooms described here. For example, it would be interesting to know if outcomes differ between DLL children who participate in a play-based, language-rich, emergent-curricular environment, compared to those who attend a more didactic or skills-focused program. If this line of research were to be pursued, it should certainly consider learning from a whole-child perspective, in which all domains of learning (social, emotional, cognitive, physical) are valued, rather than an approach that emphasizes only cognitive development.

Conclusion

The percentage of the U.S. population who is bilingual has been steadily on the rise in recent years, and this trend is expected to continue in the future. Based on U.S. Census data, Ortman and Shin (2011) project that by 2020, over 68 million Americans will speak a language other than or in addition to English. In the state of Massachusetts, a recent report stated that in 2013, over 40% of children age 0-5 in the state were DLLs

(Massachusetts Office of the Governor, 2013). At the same time, early childhood education programs continue to expand across the United States (Child Trends, 2014b), offering critical early learning experiences for young children to develop in all domains (social, emotional, cognitive, physical) as they establish a life-long curiosity about the world and learn to collaborate with others in a group setting. For DLL children, who frequently experience challenges with school success due to issues such as cultural disconnects between home or school (Halle et al., 2014) or struggles with English vocabulary development (Hammer et al., 2014), attending a high-quality early childhood program can be the start of a successful and joyful schooling experience. Yet, it is not enough to simply enroll young DLLs in preschool programs. Early childhood teachers must be prepared to effectively and compassionately support young children who are learning more than one language during their preschool years.

The present study has shown how six exemplary classrooms for young DLLs, guided by teachers with strong asset-oriented beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual families, utilize a myriad of practices designed for young DLLs. As this study has shown, teachers need to: foster relationships, respect, and belonging among DLL children and families; emphasize guided play and co-constructed curricula; engage in ongoing, observation-based assessment; and focus on teaching the English language. By learning in collaboration with exemplary teachers and programs, this study not only provides new and rich perspectives about practices for teaching young DLLs, but at the same time contributes to elevating the status of early childhood teachers who receive little respect for the challenging and professional work they do each day with young children (Urban, 2012).

Imagine the potential benefits if all young DLLs had the opportunity to spend their days in classrooms like the six described in this study, experiencing affirmation of their bilingual identities and authentic citizenship in their classroom community, at the same time as they are thoughtfully supported in their acquisition of the English language. Imagine the impacts if all families of DLL children participated in ongoing and reciprocal communication with their children's teachers, felt valued as assets to the school, and were encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with the school community. This study offers glimpses of Head Start, public Pre-K, and private classrooms that make these dreams a reality, thanks to the deep knowledge and dedication of the teachers who guide children's learning in these classrooms each day.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Director/Principal

Let's begin with some general information about your school, and the children and teachers in the school. You are free to choose not to answer any of the questions, and your answers will be confidential.

I. Individual Information and School Context

1. What is your role in the school/program?
2. How long have you been working at (school/district/program name)? What is your background?
Probe: Do you have any specialized certification or training for teaching DLLs? If yes, describe.
3. Please describe (school/program/district name).
Probes: Number of children, number of teachers, teacher/child ratio, age/grades of children. Does your program have NAEYC or other accreditation?
4. How would you describe the population of children and families served by your program? How would you describe the neighborhood and area around the school/program?
Probe: Do the children in your school/program live in this neighborhood, or do they come from other areas? Describe the SES, ethnicity, diversity...
5. How would you describe the teachers in your program?
Probe: When hiring teachers, what do you prioritize? Do you require teachers to hold particular certification or training? How many years of experience do the teachers have, and how long have they been at your school/program?
6. How would you describe the culture of (school/program name)?
Probe: What is the school's overarching educational philosophy? What are the dominant beliefs about cultural and linguistic diversity among children and families? What kinds of opportunities are there for professional development and collaboration? What is the school's attitude towards the state's ECE guidelines? Towards the NAEYC DAP guidelines?
7. How do you establish relationships with families?
Probes: How do you communicate with families? What information do you collect from the family when a child is new to your school? How do you gather this information? In which languages? Do you use any specific strategies for engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families? Describe any opportunities for family participation in your program. Are there any opportunities for families to be involved in making decisions for the school? What do you think is most important about working with families?

II. Dual Language Learners

Thank you! In this study, we are seeking to identify classrooms that excel in teaching preschool-aged Dual Language Learners, or children who are learning more than one language.

8. We think that some classrooms may be particularly effective in working with DLL children due to curriculum, instructional, and assessment strategies. If we

were to select two classrooms/schools that are doing an excellent job with DLLs, which would you recommend? Why?

Probes: How is the classroom set up? What is the curriculum like? What do teachers do? What do children do? Which languages are spoken?

9. What do you think effective teaching for DLL children looks like? Could you describe an ideal classroom for DLL children?
10. *If director asks which criteria to use in recommending classrooms, say:* You could consider many factors in recommending classrooms such as: creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, planning curriculum to achieve program goals, assessing children's development and learning, establishing reciprocal relationships with families.

Thank you so much for your participation. What else would you like to add that we did not already discuss? What questions would you like to ask me?

Appendix B: Observation Guidelines

Classroom Environment

- Predictable routines
- Classroom organization
- Diversity of materials – reflect children’s culture + languages
- Safe havens/special areas
- Documentation

Interactions: Child-Child

- Peer support
- Interaction between children is encouraged
- Levels of social play

Interactions: Teacher-Child

- Use L1 strategically
- Shelter English (simplify, repetitive)
- Discusses linguistic and cultural diversity
- Here and now
- Expand and extend utterances
- Fine tuning/scaffolding
- Engage children w/questions

Teacher-guided instruction (whole group, or small group)

- Cues, gestures, scaffold
- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Focus on particular language features
- Focus on language learning, awareness of other languages (words, sounds)
- Group DLLs and Monolinguals together

Assessment

- Ongoing, frequent, systematic
- Documentation

Interactions: Family–Teacher

- Integration of family values, traditions, language
- Parent participation in classroom

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocols

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview 1: Initial Interview

(to be conducted following 1-2 classroom observations)

Let's begin with some general information about your school, and the children in your class this year. I am interested in learning more about you as a teacher and your teaching practices. You are free to choose not to answer any of the questions, and your answers will be confidential.

II. Individual Information and School Context

1. What professional degrees do you have? From where? What is your current teacher licensure? Do you have any specialized training?
Probe: What types of training?
2. How many years total have you been teaching? What subject areas and grades have you taught, and where?
3. How long have you been teaching at (school/program name)? What brought you to this school?
Probe: What were the factors that influenced your decision to teach here?
4. Please describe the children in your class.
Probe: How many children in the class? Where are they from? What cultures and/or ethnicities are represented? What languages do they speak, and in what contexts? How many children are bilingual, or Dual Language Learners? What kinds of skills and knowledge do they bring to the classroom? What do they struggle with? What do they find most engaging or disengaging? Does this group seem similar to or different from groups you have taught in prior years? In what ways? (number of children, diversity, race, socio-economic, linguistic, children with special rights)
5. How would you describe the neighborhood and area around the school?
Probe: Do the children in your classroom live in this neighborhood, or other areas? Do you live near the school?
6. Who are the other adults in your classroom?
Probe: How do you collaborate or interact with these other adults? Do you have a paraprofessional in your group? For how many hours per day/week? Are there other adults who support, such as...(specialist teachers, therapists, volunteers, student teachers)?
7. How would you describe the culture of (school/program name)?
Probe: What is the school's overarching educational philosophy? What are the dominant beliefs about cultural and linguistic diversity among children and families? What kinds of opportunities are there for professional development and collaboration? What is the school's attitude towards the state's ECE guidelines? Towards the NAEYC DAP guidelines?
8. Has the school changed in any way during the time that you have been here? If so, how?

II. Teaching Early Childhood

Thank you! (friendly comments about group, teaching background) Now, let's start talking specifically about your teaching, thinking now about your whole classroom.

9. Describe your classroom environment.
Probe: What do you consider when setting up the classroom environment? How do the resources available in your school impact this environment? Do you do anything particular in the classroom environment with DLL children in mind?
10. What, if anything, do you do to build classroom community?
11. How do you think young children learn best?
Probe: Are you inspired by any particular theories or ideas about how children learn? What do you think children need to learn in preschool? What specific skills do you think are important for math? Literacy? Social learning?
12. What curricula or curricular approaches do you use in your classroom?
13. How do you document or assess children's learning and development?
Probe: Do you conduct any formal assessments? If so, when?
14. What do you think about the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice guidelines? How influential, if at all, are these guidelines in your teaching, or in the philosophy of the school?
15. Describe a lesson, activity, or project that best illustrates who you are as a teacher.
Probe: Mention particular activities or projects that have been observed which may be useful for discussion.

III. Teaching Dual Language Learners

The next few questions ask specifically about teaching the bilingual or DLL children in your class.

16. What do you think effective teaching for DLL children looks like? Could you describe an ideal classroom for DLL children?
17. When thinking about the DLLs in your classroom, how do you go about teaching these children? Are there particular strategies that you use for these students?
Probes: Do you do anything particular to plan for teaching DLL children? Are there any curriculum, instructional, or assessment practices that you use specifically for DLLs?
Probe: Mention particular strategies that have been observed which may be useful for discussion.
18. How have your teaching practices changed over time? If so, in what ways? Why?
19. Do you use any languages other than English in your classroom?
Probe: If yes, in what ways?
20. What goals and expectations do you have for DLL or bilingual children?
21. How do you assess or document DLL children's learning and development? In which languages?

IV. Relationships With Families

The final questions have to do with working with families.

22. How do you establish relationships with families?
Probes: How do you communicate with families? What information do you collect from the family when a child is new to your school? How do you gather this information? In which languages? Do you use any specific strategies for engaging families who speak languages other than English? Describe any opportunities for family participation in your program.
23. Describe your interactions with the families of children in your class. Are your interactions with bilingual families similar or different to your interactions with monolingual English-speaking families?
24. What do you think is most important about working with the families of the children you teach?

Thank you so much for your participation. What else would you like to add that we did not already discuss? What questions would you like to ask me?

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview 2: Video Debrief

This interview will be conducted following the video taping of an activity selected by the teacher.

1. What are your initial reactions to the video?
2. Why did you choose this particular activity to be video taped? What teaching strategies for teaching DLL children were you hoping to focus on?
3. How did you plan for this activity? What were your intentions/goals/objectives for the activity? Were these goals met?
4. What went well?
5. What would you change if you did this activity again?
6. What did you notice about the engagement and participation of the DLL children in the group? (Probe: Was this as expected, or did anything surprise you?)

Appendix D: Family Coffee Hour and Focus Group Protocols

Family Coffee Hour Questions:

The following questions will be orally asked informally during the coffee hour, to individual parents or small groups. Responses will be recorded on paper by the research team. No identifying information will be collected.

We'd just like to ask you a few questions.

- What languages do you speak in your family?
 - What do you think is a good classroom for your (bilingual) child?
 - How would you describe a good teacher for your child?
 - Would you prefer a program that uses only English, or a bilingual program? (If parent responds "bilingual" ask, What type of bilingual program?)
-

Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol: Families of DLL children

Thank you for joining us for today's focus group. We are interested in your perspectives as parents or guardians of children who are learning more than one language. You are free to choose not to answer any of the questions, and your answers will be confidential.

1. As a way of introducing yourselves, please tell us how many children you have, their ages, and what languages your family speaks at home, school, or work.
2. Why did you choose this preschool for your child, and how would you describe the program and teachers at this school?
3. What does the preschool do to involve or communicate with parents? How do you feel about these efforts?
4. In what ways is your child's classroom a good place for a bilingual child? What would make the classroom even better? (Probes: How is the classroom set up? What is the curriculum like? What do teachers do? What do children do? Which languages are spoken?)
5. What do you hope your child will learn in preschool? Do you think your child is learning these things?
6. Ideally, would you prefer a bilingual program or an English-language program for your child?

Thank you so much for your participation. What else would you like to add that we did not already discuss? What questions would you like to ask me?

Note: Whenever possible, family members will be invited to respond in the language of their choice, and translation will be provided either by the research team or program staff.

Appendix E: Family Survey

- 1) What languages do you speak in your family?
- 2) What do you think is a good classroom for your (bilingual) child?
- 3) How would you describe a good teacher for your child?
- 4) Would you prefer a program that uses only English, or a bilingual program? (If bilingual, what type?)

Appendix F: Child Assent Procedure

When the researchers first visit a classroom, they will introduce themselves to the group and explain that they have come to learn more about the classroom. They will explain that children can ask not to be observed at any time if they prefer. They will use the following script either in a large-group or small-group situation, as preferred by the classroom teacher, but ensuring that they obtain assent from all children in the group:

Researcher: Hello! My name is (name of researcher). I work at Boston College, and I am visiting to learn more about your classroom. I am going to watch your class today and take some notes about what I see and hear. I might come back some other days as well. What questions would you like to ask me?

Invite and respond to child questions

Researcher: Is it ok if I watch and take notes in your classroom? You can always tell us if you change your mind later.

Elicit child responses

Since there is no formal assessment of children in this study, and children will never be removed from the classroom or asked to do anything unusual for the study, assent will also be obtained on a situation-specific basis as researchers observe particular interactions between teachers and children, using the following script:

Researcher: Is it ok if I watch you play/work right now? You can say “yes” if it is ok to watch, or “no” if you don’t want me to watch.

Elicit child response.

Whenever possible, this explanation will also be provided in the child’s first language as well as in English.

Appendix G: Definitions of Exemplary Teaching for Young DLLs - Relationships between Themes and Codes

Theme	Explanation of Theme	Codes contributing to this theme (<i>descriptive and in vivo:</i> <i>in vivo codes displayed below in quotes</i>)	Examples of Data associated with these codes
“Happy Teachers, Happy Children”: A Safe, Calm, Respectful Community with a Focus on Social-Emotional Development	Codes in this theme relate to social-emotional development, the emotional climate of the classroom, and cultivating a sense of community within the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • happy children, happy teachers • “nurturing, supportive, kind teacher” • emotional well-being • safe inviting classroom • “respectful routines” • “develop a sense of community” • “develop children’s confidence” • foster child-to-child communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a good classroom is one “where the child feels safe” (Head Start parent) • “the classrooms are welcoming, they’re inviting, they’re safe” (Public director)
Knowing the Child and “Culturally Responsive” Differentiation	Codes in this theme relate to teachers having deep understandings of children and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and using this knowledge to inform decisions about teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate culture • teachers come from the community • listening • knowing the child • relationships with students/families • “culturally responsive” differentiation • “materials representative of the families” • “culturally sensitive” • “know them really well” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “appreciate their culture and their language” (HS teacher) • “understand the student” (Public parent) • “first you have to really know that particular child” (Private director)
Varied Channels for Family Engagement	Codes in this theme relate to interactions between families and teachers, including communication, events, and participation in classroom activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant communication with family • welcoming families • awareness of family needs • parents - trust • invite parents in • parent engagement • parent participation • weekly newsletters • phone calls • text messages to families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There’s different ways to get involved...allowing us to pick a channel that works means we’re involved in the community without pressure” (Private parent) • “Stay in constant communication with the family” (Private director) • “Parents are in the classroom” (Head Start teacher)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents volunteering • “parent partner” 	
“Even as they are playing, they are learning”: Playful Learning as an Integral Practice	Codes in this theme relate to play and playful learning. Playful learning includes child choice, hands-on investigation, inquiry, and embedding of content through playful activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play • inquiry approach to curriculum • “holistic approach” • embedded vocabulary instruction • “a play-based program” • “hands-on” curriculum • “thematic, vocabulary-rich curriculum” • centers • open-ended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “even as they are playing, they are learning” (Public parent) • “that idea to discover what I want to do today” (Private parent) • “My belief in curriculum is it should always be something you can touch, taste, feel, and smell.” (Head Start director)
Ongoing, Observation-Based Assessments	Codes in this theme relate to assessment of children’s skills and learning, including tools and processes used by teachers and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anecdotal notes • observation-based assessment • formative assessment • ongoing observational assessment • “frequent check ins and targeted feedback” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel that taking anecdotal notes is very important because it tells you how their vocabulary is growing, it actually tells you how they are communicating with their peers.” (Public director) • “observing ELLs to support them where they need it” (Private teacher)
Language-Rich Classrooms that Value Bilingualism	Codes in this theme relate to teaching practices that target language use or acquisition in the classroom, language models used in classrooms, and language background of teaching staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bilingual teachers • honor L1 • valuing bilingualism • language-rich • multimodal communication • gestures, visuals, videos, pictures • “books in every language” • “incorporating languages into the daily routine” • “retain a child’s home language” • “using symbols and pictures” • “rich language” • “lots of oral language” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “creating sense that this is such a wonderful thing...she is lucky, she speaks Portuguese” (Private director) • “restating it in a variety of different ways so that the children really understand” (Public directors) • “Always have something in your hand whenever you are talking” (Private teacher)
Focus on Culture: “Sensitivity to Culture” and “Expanding Horizons about the World”	Codes in this theme relate to the representation of diverse cultures in the classroom, respect for culture, and sharing of cultural knowledge among teachers and children in the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “appreciate their culture and their language” • “cultural competence” • multicultural mix of teachers and children • “culturally responsive” differentiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “teaches her to respect her culture as an equal and not as subordinate” (HS parent) • “They should really want to share their home language and their home culture with the rest of the group” (Private teacher)

Appendix H: Partially-Ordered Display of Definitions of Exemplary Teaching for Young DLLs

Public Pre-K: Brooks and Edison			
DAP Category	Participant Group		
	Directors	Teachers	Parents
Structure and Policy	NAEYC accredited “non-white teachers” teachers who speak children’s L1s * diverse classroom “teachers are qualified” – ECE teacher is from/involved in the community <i>PD and coaching in place – not sure this should be coded as a definition of exemplary</i> passionate teacher language model: dual language (1), English-only (1)	teachers come from the community strong teaching team language model: both languages used in classroom	dedicated staff ratios allow children ample time with teachers skilled teachers: “teach good” diverse school language model: bilingual (11 responses), English-only (1 response)
Creating Community	small groups * kids can’t sit too long “gives children space and time” “the classrooms are welcoming, they’re inviting, they’re safe” languages and cultures represented in the classroom knowing the child: “she has great relationships with her children and she knows them really well” respectful routines: “strong procedures and routines that are respectful”	connect with the wider community social-emotional focus * “a calm environment” “professional atmosphere” develop children’s’ confidence	“enforce rules and respect for others” knowing the child “understand the student” “teach that anything is possible” teaches self-regulation strong teacher-child relationships children learn independence focus on social-emotional development (e.g. sharing) “where the child feels safe” caring teacher ** “respecting the child’s individual needs and culture”
Teaching and Planning Curriculum	“thematic, vocabulary-rich curriculum” “rich language” / “a lot of oral language” tiered vocabulary instruction	“hands-on activities” language-rich storytelling	“even as they are playing, they are learning” engaged children

	<p>lots of visuals (labeling, charts, “muti-step directions with visual supports”)</p> <p>engagement (in curriculum, with oral language)</p> <p>multi-media</p> <p>open-ended</p> <p>“hands on” curriculum</p> <p>integrated curriculum: “it should all connect”</p> <p>centers</p> <p>differentiated teaching</p> <p>knowing the child</p> <p>“culturally responsive” differentiation</p> <p>multiple entry points *</p> <p>use L1 for clarification</p> <p>using multiple languages in writing, labeling *</p> <p>“modeling self-regulation”</p> <p>modeling expectations</p>	<p>repetition</p> <p>“varied instruction”</p> <p>multimodal (ex. gestures, manipulatives, pictures, videos, non-verbal)</p>	<p>teaches school readiness skills</p> <p>intentional teaching</p> <p>“varied opportunities”</p> <p>supports biliteracy</p>
Assessing	<p>ongoing observational assessment: “taking anecdotal notes” *</p> <p>formative assessment: “frequent check ins and targeted feedback”</p> <p>proven successful through “academic data”</p>		
Engaging Families	<p>culturally competent teacher</p> <p>“understand their culture”</p>	<p>teacher is open and aware of families</p>	<p>convenient communication (e.g. texting)</p> <p>*</p> <p>home visits *</p> <p>communicates caring</p>

Head Start: Hillside and Riverview				
		Directors	Teachers	Parents
	Structure and Policy	bilingual teachers teachers who speak the languages of the children (or at least learn a few phrases)		program offers special services teachers speak the languages of the children language model: 15 responses prefer English-only, 23 prefer bilingual
	Creating Community	happy children, happy teachers (emotional well-being) nurturing, supportive, kind teacher knowing the child	“appreciate their culture and their language” know the child “acceptance”	multicultural mix of teachers and children “teaches her to respect her culture as an equal and not as subordinate” builds self esteem / confidence knowing the child develops “compassion/sense of community” “teacher can be aware of the culture of the students” supports social/emotional development <i>(summarizes many of the comments wanting a balance of academic and social learning)</i> “culturally sensitive” children feel safe, sense of belonging “she never refuse to stay” “when my boy is happy, I’m happy”
	Teaching and Planning Curriculum	a classroom with “flow” teachers use gestures, expression in voice previewing focus on language, DLLs “materials representative of the families” e.g. books in L1s “retain a child’s home language” “curriculum should always be something you can touch, taste, feel, and smell” intentional teaching	visuals shelter English support L1 so children keep first language preview 1-on-1 and small group learning authentic, embedded vocabulary instruction “rich environment”	supports both L1 and L2 “interactive learning” teaches children: critical thinking how to find information academic skills (descriptive code) English language teacher qualities (all in vivo) cares about the future of our kids understanding patient driven encourages learning

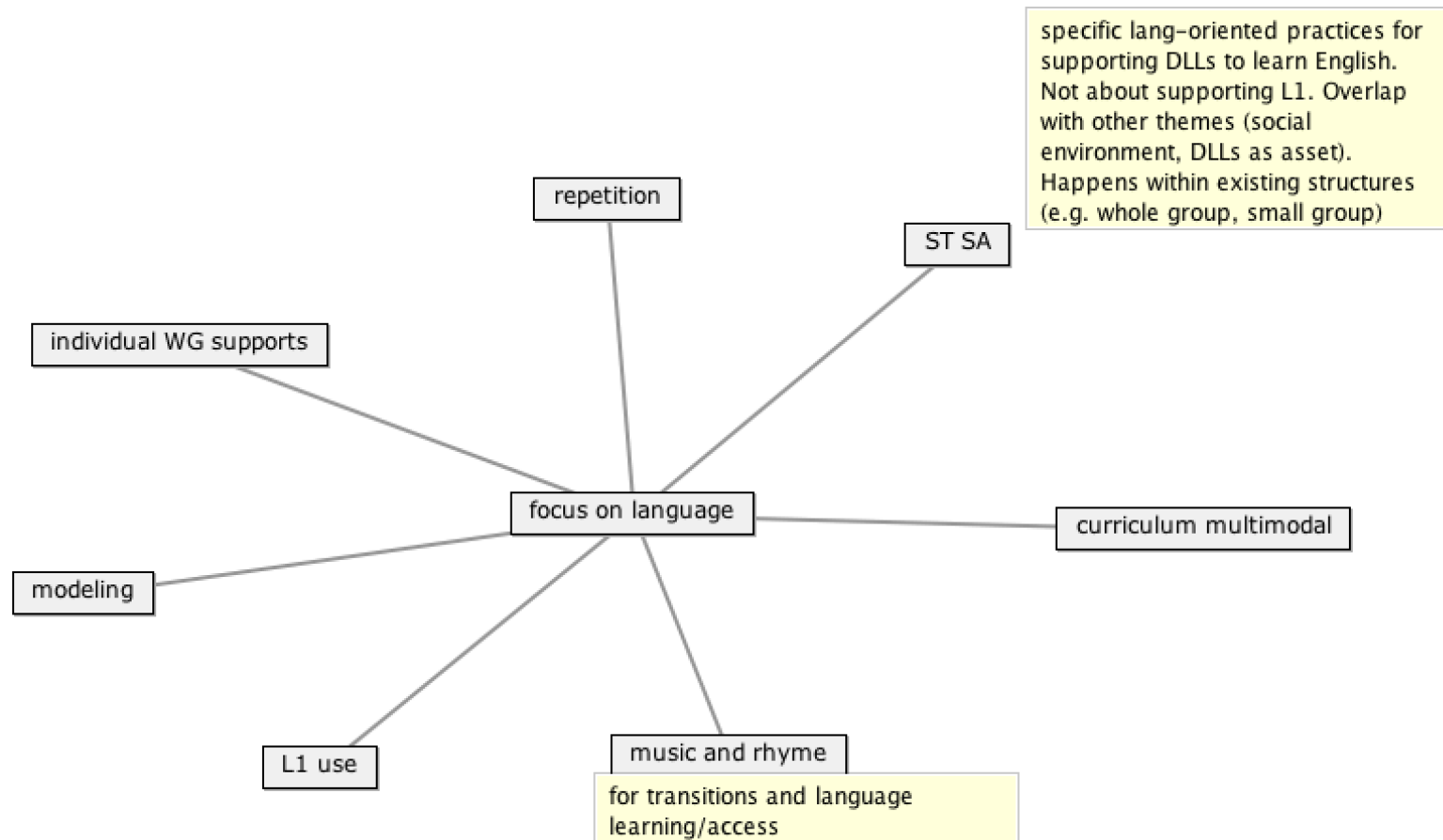
				listens “they can write, learn the number, but they can play and feel so free” language focus; “talk to them all the time”
	Assessing	“outcomes” (test scores on DLA)		“your child make good progress” outcomes: school readiness “observes the children socialize”
	Engaging Families	“parent participation” “engaging different families” parents volunteering and speaking multiple languages in classroom support parents to learn English “respect for parents” build trust with families, knowing the family “cultural competence”	invite parents in	“full communication so I can follow hand in hand at home” “parent partner” - volunteering “we’re here” home visits “because it’s a comfort zone you know for the kids”

Private University-Affiliated: College Children's Center (CCC) and Early Learning Center (ELC)				
		Directors	Teachers	Parents
	Structure and Policy	teachers are "excited about early childhood" teachers are "creative and innovative"	language model: English-only	diverse school: "I love the idea for F to live in an environment with very diverse backgrounds" language model: 1 prefers bilingual, 3 English-only
	Creating Community	knowing the child foster the "disposition...that it is really wonderful to know languages"	focus on "adjustment to the social group" "helping them [DLL children] to get comfortable and feel secure and safe" "I'm ready and I'm going to listen and hear and make sure when you call out in a group I hear you too" valuing bilingualism "DLLs should be a really essential and vibrant part of the classroom community" "part of the buzz" "include children's home languages in the classroom" "[children] should really want to share their home language and home culture with the rest of the group" foster child-to-child communication	warm, thoughtful teachers calm organized predictable routines "she always wants to stay and play here more" encourage "thoughtfulness" (e.g. birthday banner) "not only the teachers but actually the kids are very kind to each other... even though he doesn't understand English, kids are helping each other" supporting a positive disposition towards diversity / "tolerance"
	Teaching and Planning Curriculum	modeling phrases "using symbols and pictures" using wordless music adapting teaching "so we can access what they know" "a play-based program" "inquiry approach to planning curriculum" intentional teaching "in planning curriculum we try to think of all the languages that the families bring"	lots of visuals * repetition * slow down and simplify speech * non-verbal cues books in other languages ** "incorporating languages into your daily routine" bilingual model gesturing * "always have something in your hand whenever you are talking" "talking about the here and now" "buttressing communication" * "upping the ante"	"holistic approach" listening: "there's a conversation...if the student says something, the teacher will often try to follow up" teaching academic skills child choice "that idea to discover what I [child] want to do today" inquiry approach to curriculum encourage emergent literacy "It's not like the teachers are pushing the kids but the kids are actually moving towards the place they want to go" knowing the child: "when the time is right the amazing thing will just happen"

		during whole group time “teacher nearby for language support”	“emphasis on different languages”
Assessing		“assess in the other language” involve family in assessment to report on c’s language at home “observing ELLs to support them where they need it”	
Engaging Families	“in planning curriculum we try to think of all the languages that the families bring”	“communicate a lot with the family” “stay in constant communication with the family” preview visits to classroom send books home “their families should feel welcome” encourage families to speak L1 and home get lists of words from families	“at the end of the week we get some pictures... and letters” “weekly summaries of activities” teachers talk with families about curriculum and approach “there’s different ways to get involved...allowing us to pick a channel that works means we’re involved in the community without pressure”

Appendix I: Sample Thematic Code Map

This is an example of one of several thematic maps generated in HyperResearch that were useful in consolidating data into themes. Note that this is an example of a map during the process of data consolidation at a midpoint in the iterative data analysis process; further iteration of themes took place after this map was created.



Appendix J: Practices for Reciprocal Communication with DLL Families

Practice	Description	Data Examples
Sharing personal and contact information among families	With families' permission, teachers prepare a class phone book or contact sheet with family names, photographs, and contact information, in order to facilitate connections among families. These resources also include information about who the teachers are and their backgrounds.	<p>"At the beginning of the year, I send home lots of information about our program and about me and Ms. A. So they [families] know we are two people... and we just want to make them feel welcome." (Public Pre-K teacher interview)</p> <p>A family directory containing photographs of each family, family names, and phone numbers is provided to each family during the fall Community Meeting. (Private preschool classroom artifact)</p>
Inviting families to provide culturally/linguistically relevant materials	Families provide materials for classroom use. Materials may include: lists of words or recordings of words in home languages; books or charts in home languages; household objects for use in dramatic play (such as empty food containers, dress up clothes, dolls, etc.).	<p>Families donate empty food containers with labels written in Korean for use in the Dramatic Play kitchen. (Private preschool classroom visual data and interview)</p> <p>A wall chart of the Hindi alphabet hangs in the writing center, donated by a former family. (Head Start classroom visual data and interview)</p>
Welcoming spontaneous conversations	School staff (teachers, directors, family liaisons) keep their doors and ears open, willing to talk informally with family members whenever possible. Staff understand that culture affects how comfortable families may feel approaching staff about concerns or questions, and strive to offer as welcoming and relaxed an environment as possible to encourage a high comfort level for families.	<p>"It's a really friendly environment, welcoming parents, greeting families, we have open door policies, like our director goes all open, all the time. You never see her door closed unless something emergency and there has to be privacy. But besides that, her door's open, 10 hours a day. From 8:30 until 5:30. ...People are different. I think it's a culture too. Where in some cultures they feel if they should bring up an issue with you, maybe they don't want anybody to hear it. You know what I mean? Some people, they are really open, so they like to share, because they're looking for help and they feel like, 'Oh, I need to get it out somewhere.' So they feel a safe environment to be here and talk to staff." (Head Start teacher interview)</p>
Writing newsletters	Teachers write regular newsletters, often including photographs, to share information with families about class curriculum, events, and happenings. Newsletters may be distributed in hard copy or via email, and may also be posted in a designated area of the classroom.	<p>Family bulletin board near classroom entrance parent and visitor board near entrance includes a copy of the class newsletter. (Public Pre-K classroom visual data)</p> <p>Each week, teachers send an electronic newsletter to families via email, including numerous photographs of children engaged in activities throughout the classroom. (Private</p>

		preschool visual data and interview)
Sending electronic messages	Family members and teachers send text messages to each other about daily questions and events. Teachers may send photographs or short videos to families to share documentation of a child's work or play in school. Teachers may also reach out to families to check in via phone after the first few weeks of school, to see if family members have questions or concerns.	"What I found in the last two to three years is that the cell phone is the best way to do it. I was really hesitant to give my number out but now I just let it go. It's out there. I give my cell phone number out right at the beginning of the year. I encourage parents to text me during the day and then even at night. I respond a lot more quickly just personally who I am, to a text than I will to a phone call, and more often than not my parents will text. So I've had a lot more success just communicating more regularly with parents. So you saw me taking a video today. I took a video because this is someone who I talk to often. Her mom, we text all the time. If the video might be too big for me to send as a text, I'll invite her to come in the morning I'll show it to her... When they need me, they send a text and I can respond really quickly." (Public Pre-K teacher interview)
Sending books and social stories home	Teachers send books home to preview or review a read aloud text, or to build background knowledge about a curriculum topic. Although the books may be in English, teachers encourage parents to engage with their children around the text in their home language. Teachers also send home social stories, or handmade books with photographs that depict classroom routines or events.	"Whether its in October and we're going to be reading stories about pumpkins, I would want to assess and understand their understanding of the concept of a pumpkin. Do they know what it is? Is it familiar to them? Is it something that is in their environment? And if it's not, than we would support that by sending books home to family. Sometimes we send the books home before we read them to the families so they can preview them and read them together and sometimes we send the books home afterwards for reinforcement." (Private preschool teacher interview)
Home visiting	Families welcome teachers to their home, either prior to the start of the school year or during the year. Home visits may include reading stories, playing with children, talking with family members, and conducting developmental screenings. When families prefer, teachers use the family's home language during the visit, or bring a translator to support communication.	"It's purely just 'get to know you'. They can see me. I usually bring my own children. I take a picture of the family. We make a book, <i>The Day Ms. V. Came to Visit</i> , for our classroom library. And it is for the parents to feel better about me, or know me, because most of the kids come on the bus. It really does help as far as feeling comfortable because if I know them, I have been in their house, and I have to call and talk about something hard, it's not quite as bad as if I have never spoken to them at all." (Public Pre-K teacher interview)
Sharing narrative reports	Once or twice annually, teachers prepare a narrative report of each child's development, including observational records of the child's work and play. Reports are shared and discussed with families, often during a family conference.	"We will generate a developmental report around October for the parents. In the October report, we then have a parent conference. So we focus mainly on their adjustment to our classroom, their social emotional adjustment and development. And our broad goals for the year for them. And then around this time we're starting to generate the reports

		again for our second parent conference and we'll focus on all areas of development so their social-emotional, physical, language, math development, literacy development. We even do science and social studies and arts.” (Private preschool teacher interview)
Creating portfolios	Teachers organize children’s work, observational notes, and summative assessments (if used) into portfolios that are later shared with children and families during conferences or other informal conversations. Children may suggest items to be added to their portfolios. Whole-class events or curricular projects may also be documented and added to portfolios as a record of learning.	<p>Daniel’s portfolio includes artwork with quotes, documentation of curricular activities such as a study on magnetic and non-magnetic objects, photographs, and a letter to families from the teachers. (Head Start classroom artifacts)</p> <p>Adili’s portfolio includes writing and drawing samples, artwork, dictated stories, and scored rubrics for math and literacy summative assessments. (Public Pre-K classroom artifacts)</p>
Conferencing with families	One to three times annually, family members meet with teachers, either at the school or at the family’s home, to formally discuss their child’s progress. Teachers and family members set goals together for the coming months or year.	A copy of a child’s narrative report includes a section for populated during the family/teacher conference. (Head Start classroom artifacts)

Appendix K: Practices Focusing on Language for Young DLL Children

Practice	Description	Data Examples
Ensuring opportunities for authentic talk	Classroom activities and routines revolve around the use of hands-on, engaging materials (e.g. dramatic play props, art materials, natural materials). Teachers provide ample time in the daily schedule, space, and opportunities for children to spend extensive time playing and interacting with peers and teachers while using these materials.	<p>Three children, all newcomers to the English language, are playing at the water table. Their teacher, AB, joins and observes for a few minutes, then asks, “What’s happening, M? What’s happening to the water? (pointing to the funnel inside of the bottle). She names materials in the water table, pointing to each. “Bubbles. Funnel.” She watches with the children as the water pours through – two children work together, pouring water through funnels to fill bottle. Suddenly, SK grabs at bottle MK is holding. MK: No! AB: MK is using that. Do you want to play together? Say, “Can I play with you?” (Head Start observation)</p> <p>Ms. V reads a non-fiction book about earthworms at morning circle to launch observations of worms in soil during center time. At the science center, four DLL children hold and observe the earthworms, using hand lenses to look closely. As they observe (with no teacher present at this moment) the children talk excitedly with each other: C1: wow – look it’s climbing! C2: I found another worms – I got 3 worms now! I got 3, now I’m getting 4. C3: The worms tickle me (giggling) C4: Look, I have 2 worms! C3: Me too! (Public Pre-K observation)</p>
Engaging with questions	Teachers use open-ended questions, “why” questions, and authentic questions (teachers really don’t know the answer and are genuinely curious about the children’s responses and thinking).	<p>While reading <i>Make Way for Ducklings</i> by Robert McClosky, the teacher asks, “What do you think will happen to the ducklings next?” (Public Pre-K observation)</p> <p>While experimenting with magnets in a small group: Teacher: What do you think is inside? Child 1: Metal! Teacher: Oh – there could be metal inside.... Wow, how many pebbles do you have in there? Child 2: (counting) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Teacher (looking closely): Oh – seven? How do you think you could get more in there? (Head Start observation)</p>

Teaching vocabulary all the time	Teachers see any moment as a chance to embed rich and relevant teaching of vocabulary. This includes implicitly teaching vocabulary in context (e.g. during play), as well as explicit teaching of vocabulary (e.g. through read alouds or whole-group previewing activities). Teachers also encourage and model curiosity about words and what words mean.	<p>“An example that happened a few years ago that is a good one is this word digging. Everyone stopped when I said, ‘And the dog was digging,’ in the story. And it was clear with the blank looks they did not know what the word meant. So that’s an easy one to show, ‘Okay, this is digging, like a dog would dig. Everybody, let’s practice digging.’ And then they knew the word.” (Public Pre-K teacher interview)</p> <p>“You know Jordan?...He goes, “What does amicable mean?” So I explained it to him and he goes, “Oh, that’s amicable.” He was so interested in the English language. (Head Start teacher interview)</p>
Using music and rhyme	Transitions and classroom routines, such as clean up routines and morning meeting rituals, are facilitated through predictable music and rhyme, often in multiple languages and accompanied with gestures or movement.	“Songs and silly poems really work, I’ve found. You know, I’ve heard and seen children repeating and remembering a silly finger play or a song or a poem, even as they’re still challenged communicating and having conversations, saying they can remember and sing fun songs. Like ‘Hello, Everybody.’ Songs like that we repeat often and they may be part of a predictable time of day.” (Private preschool teacher interview)
Scaffolding language with a broad repertoire of strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using visuals • targeting L1 use • modeling • gesturing • repeating • rephrasing utterances • slowing speech • sheltering English 	Throughout the day, teachers draw upon a broad array of specific strategies to support understanding and English language acquisition for DLL children. Exemplary teachers use multiple strategies in combination and with flexibility to tailor to particular children’s abilities.	<p>Gesturing and using visuals: “Gesturing is really important. Using visuals. Always having something in your hand whenever you’re talking, especially ELLs... you have to be talking about the here and now.” (Private preschool teacher interview)</p> <p>Targeting L1 use: <i>During a whole group activity observing growing bean plants, the teacher translates the Spanish word for “bean”. Children nod and repeat the word in Spanish, and some in English.</i> (Public Pre-K video observation)</p> <p>Sheltering English: “When I say <i>downstairs</i>, I want M to know where we are going. So instead of saying <i>downstairs</i>, I say ‘<i>smaller room, play room</i>’. I will just keep it all it consistent.” (Head Start interview)</p> <p>Rephrasing utterances: “Modeling language. Giving them the words...Not correcting them...I don’t want to make them feel bad that they speak incorrectly because I don’t want to stop them. I just say ‘oh you mean’, or just say the right word...Rephrase. Not correct.” (Head Start interview)</p>
Practices Unique to Particular Program Types		
Supporting individual DLLs during whole group times	Teachers collaborate during whole group times, with one teacher leading the whole group and the	During whole group time, teacher Molly reads a large-format version of <i>In the Forest</i> by Mary Hall Ets. Teacher Grace sits

	second teacher sitting close to one or more DLL children to provide ongoing and targeted language scaffolding (see below).	<p>next to Juanita, a native Spanish speaker who is just beginning to learn English. Juanita holds a small version of the same story. As Molly reads to the whole group, Grace reinforces by translating key words into Spanish, pointing and labeling illustrations in the small book, and gesturing/acting out parts of the story. (Private preschool observation)</p> <p>(unique to one of the Private preschool classrooms)</p>
Storytelling/ Story Acting	Teachers take dictation of children's stories, then the whole class acts out the stories during whole group time. Inspired by Vivan Paley's (e.g. Paley, 1990) work.	<p>During Center Time, Yasmin dictates a story, entitled "The Fairy and the Princess" to her teacher, who writes it down into <i>Yasmin's Story Notebook</i>. At Whole Group Time, the class acts out Yasmin's story as the teacher narrates. After the story, the teacher engages the group in a discussion about the characters and happenings in the story. (Public Pre-K observation)</p> <p>(unique to the two public Pre-K classrooms)</p>

Appendix L: Examples of ECE Teaching Practices for DLLs Influenced by Layers of the Critical Ecology Framework

	Head Start	Public Pre-K	Private Preschool
Example of teaching practice for use of L1/home languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English used as primary classroom language Multiple home languages used in teacher-child and child-child interactions Family's L1 used for teacher-family communication as appropriate Assessment: screening assessments conducted in child's L1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English used as primary language for formal instruction (whole group times, teacher-directed activities) Spanish used in classroom daily among children and in teacher-child interactions (primarily by paraprofessional) Spanish used as appropriate for communication with families Assessments: conducted in English, unless for special education screening purposes (then conducted in L1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English used as primary classroom language Multiple home languages used in daily routines (morning messages, language bag, greetings) Specific words in child's L1 used occasionally for teacher-child communication. L1 rarely but occasionally used by translators for teacher-family communication Assessments: if teachers speak child's L1, used to record observations; parents asked to describe child's L1 development
Influenced by...			
Individual Factors (teacher's background, beliefs, attitudes)	<p>All teachers expressed a belief in bilingualism as an asset (see section on <i>Bilingualism as an asset</i> earlier in this chapter).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual – speak languages of some children in group Seek opportunities to learn words in children's home languages from colleagues or families Former Head Start parents themselves <p>Data Example: “I speak Albanian...I’ve learned some Spanish words but I can’t say I speak Spanish. But I do understand some of the words they say and I’ve learned some basic words. The same with Arabic and Creole, because as I said those are the majority of the kids that we get here. And I learned some words of Arabic from the children and my co-worker.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual, Spanish-English speakers (or at least proficient in Spanish) <p>Data Examples: “I actually am not fluent in Spanish. I can speak Spanish, I can talk to my 4 year olds and I can hold varying degrees of conversations with the parents...My family is Puerto Rican, I grew up hearing Spanish.” (Public Pre-K teacher interview)</p> <p>“Yes, I’m bilingual. I speak Spanish and English. That is an advantage for children who are learning the English language.” (Public Pre-K paraprofessional interview)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly monolingual, English-speaking <p>Data Example: “I’ve only used English with the children. Well... we use other languages for greetings and things like that, but when we’re speaking with children... like I know that a child speaks Spanish and I know a little bit of Spanish but I haven’t spoken to her in Spanish. But I only know like very very minimal Spanish.” (Private preschool teacher interview)</p>

Microsystem (Classroom level; relationships among teachers, children, and families)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community is linguistically diverse <p>Data Example: <i>“There are 8 languages spoken in the class.”</i> (Head Start teacher interview – there were 2 English monolinguals and 18 DLLs in this group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common community language – Spanish – spoken by teachers and nearly all families in the class SEI classroom structure groups bilinguals together <p>Data Example: <i>“When families enter into BPS they go to the Newcomer Assessment Center and they take the home language survey. On this survey if it seems they speak another language at home then they are put into a SEI classroom.... So everyone here speaks Spanish as their native language or is at least exposed to Spanish at home. And in terms of cultures most of my students are Dominican or Puerto Rican.”</i> Public Pre-K teacher interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community is linguistically diverse <p>Data Example: <i>“We have quite a few cultures and ethnicities represented. A family from Brazil... Norwegian, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese background, Indian background...”</i> Private preschool teacher interview</p>
Mesosystem (relationships among microsystems – e.g home-school relationships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most family members communicate a desire to see both English and their home language used in the classroom. <p>Data Example: <i>An ideal classroom would be, “A classroom where my child learns about the languages equally, that way the child takes advantage of both languages.”</i> (Head Start parent coffee hour)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most families want teachers to use both languages, and to support their children to maintain their home languages <p>Data Example: One parent said she appreciates <i>“la evolución de currículo la forma que todo están aprendiendo mas en ingles pero no olvidan la español.”</i> (that the curriculum evolves so that everyone is learning in English but do not forget their Spanish). (Public Pre-K parent focus group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most families desire an English immersion experience for their children at school, with an emphasis on embracing bilingualism. <p>Data Example: <i>“Even though [my son] doesn’t understand English, kids are helping each other. So I think that’s what the school fosters. A very good culture and the environment that helps the dual language children safely learn the other language [English] here.”</i> (Private preschool parent focus group)</p>
Exosystem (school/district level: systems in which decisions are made about teachers, but teachers do not directly participate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start standards stipulate supporting both acquisition of English and support for children’s home languages. <p>Data Example: <i>“Part of the Head Start mandate is to make sure that children are developing English language skills...So that’s the goal, but we have to honor the home language. We have</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation in the state of MA requires the use of Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) approaches and prohibits L1 instruction for K-12 students in public schools. Although public Pre-K classrooms are technically outside of this jurisdiction of this law they are still influenced by SEI structures in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State standards for early childhood programs are used as a guiding framework; English development is a primary goal in these standards <p>Data Example: <i>“We use the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, the Pre-K Frameworks for Massachusetts. And right now we also use Teaching Strategies</i></p>

	<p><i>to preserve the home language. We have to support the home language.”</i> (Head Start director interview)</p>	<p>Data Example: <i>“My school applies the same policy and ruling for K1 that it would for K2, even though I think legally there are no requirements for K1 as far as language services...My understanding is that legally you cannot teach in Spanish unless you are a bilingual school...I’m told here, you are not supposed to speak in Spanish for instruction, but it’s okay to speak in Spanish when you just need to tell them something for clarification.”</i> (Public Pre-K teacher interview)</p>	<p><i>GOLD, which is an assessment system but is linked to the Massachusetts Frameworks.”</i> (Private preschool teacher interview)</p>
<p>Macrosystem (socio-political context – common across programs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All programs located in the Greater Boston area in Massachusetts. Massachusetts state policy according to Chapter 71A mandates Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) for DLLs in K-12 settings NAEYC DAP framework widely acknowledged as an influence over early childhood education in the state. NAEYC guidelines support culturally and linguistically responsive practices, but do not offer specific recommendations about L1 use with young DLLs <p>Data Examples: <i>“I don’t know if you’re familiar with the whole Unz initiative and how bilingual education changed in Boston as of 2002. We moved from the bilingual education model, or transitional bilingual education model to Sheltered English Instruction or Sheltered English Immersion. [MB: Do you think this impacts early childhood programs as well?] I think it does.”</i> (Public Pre-K director interview)</p> <p><i>“We have a total appreciation and respect for what NAEYC has done to really bring appropriate practice, developmentally appropriate practice, to really into the mainstream of early childhood thinking. What to do that is appropriate, and even more courageously they early on said what was not appropriate.”</i> (Private preschool director interview)</p>		
<p>Chronosystem (changes in systems over time)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning offers additional perspectives for teachers related to teaching young DLLs. Greater experience working with DLL families leads to increased comfort and confidence <p>Data Examples: <i>“I have changed [my strategies]. I have attended many workshops, I took a college class too about how to teach English Language Learners. I’ve heard new strategies around to help [DLL] children.”</i> (Head Start teacher interview)</p> <p><i>“I think I feel more comfortable involving the families. Or getting more information from the families. Especially if the families’ English is limited, that’s challenging and sometimes that might feel overwhelming to me. But I think just as I’ve grown as a teacher or gained more experience it’s become easier. And I have more success, you know I’ve had over the years, more children that I feel like have benefitted from our center and our classroom, so I feel more confident talking to the families.”</i> (Private preschool teacher interview)</p>		