

Exemplary practices that affirm and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in head start classrooms

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**Exemplary Teaching Practices that Promote and Affirm Cultural and
Linguistic Diversity in Head Start Classrooms**



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Abstract

Out of the one million children who were enrolled in Head Start's early childhood education programs across the country in 2015, 67% of children were Black or Hispanic, and 29% of children spoke a language other than English at home (Head Start Program Facts, 2015). With the continued growth of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, it is necessary for teachers to be intentional about serving students whose backgrounds are assets but nonetheless different from the dominant culture and language in American society.

Because most research on teaching practices has focused on the academic development of young children in preschool, this study tries to fill a gap in the literature by examining teaching practices that respond to and affirm cultural diversity. After conducting interviews and observations in three Head Start classrooms, four core teacher beliefs (reciprocal relationships with family, importance of home language, social emotional emphasis, and inclusion of culture) were identified across the sites; these beliefs impacted how teachers created a multicultural space and tailored instruction for students. The results of this research contribute to the field by providing insight into how teachers can continue to foster inclusive classrooms that value and celebrate children's unique identities.

Key words: cultural and linguistic diversity; early childhood; preschool; dual language learner; Head Start

Introduction

At as early as the age of three, children have learned to recognize and associate race, culture, gender, and physical ability with what they have seen or heard, often mirroring societal expectations of power and privilege (Derman Sparks & Ramsey, 1999). A sense of self and “others” begins to develop too, as children interact with peers in the preschool. With the continued growth of diverse populations of children in early childhood education settings, it is crucial that teachers foster an inclusive classroom that encourages children to not only tolerate, but also to value everyone’s individual experiences, traditions, and languages.

Educators, researchers, and policymakers across the nation have recognized numerous benefits of early childhood education for young children, especially for young children with immigrant family backgrounds and children who live in poverty (Magnuson, Lahaie, & Waldfogel, 2006; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Beyond the cognitive and academic skills that children gain during their preschool experiences (Yoshikawa et al., 2013), children also mature as individuals who navigate a classroom context that is shaped by their teachers’ attitudes, practices, and instruction. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has emphasized the social skills and confidence that students gain during preschool years can impact their social, psychological, and academic development in subsequent years (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

NAEYC also encourages teachers to use Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) to ensure teaching practices are “appropriate to children’s age and developmental status, attuned to them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. xii). Being responsive to the social and cultural differences is especially important, given the growing diversity of the United States as a country. In 2014,

approximately 44% of children in the United States were from racial minority groups (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015). Furthermore, U.S. census data from 2014 indicated that one in five children in America lived in poverty, and even higher poverty rates for Black and Hispanic children (Children's Defense Fund, 2015).

Head Start, a federally funded early childhood education program, specifically provides health services and education for low-income families. Current policies and regulations assert that teachers must understand the principles of language acquisition and optimally engage with families in a culturally responsive manner; the Office of Head Start and recent publications by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services note, however, that improvements can still be made to ensure optimal academic and social progress for linguistically and culturally diverse children (Report to Congress on DLLs in Head Start, 2015; U.S. DHH and ED Policy Statement, 2016).

Problem Statement

Recent progress in research has documented the unique and complex growth trajectories that children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds experience. Moreover, multiple frameworks (e.g. multicultural framework, anti-bias curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy) outline the potential for more appropriate practices to significantly impact children's academic, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Despite the existence of this developmental and theoretical research, there is a lack of knowledge on specific practices that can be implemented in the preschool classroom. Most research has focused on school readiness and academic achievement of young children in preschool, while only a handful of case studies have examined how teachers in the classroom respond to and affirm cultural diversity. Furthermore, evidence for cultural and linguistic diversity only occupies a small section of existing quality measurement

instruments for early childhood education. More research is therefore necessary to investigate the ways teachers in diverse classrooms can responsibly support learners and families of all backgrounds.

Purpose and Research Questions

Given that the preschool years are a critical period during which children develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills that will shape their future perspectives and decisions, teachers must act with intentionality and responsibility to guide young children's thinking and learning as they interact with peers and adults in a diverse world. Through this research, I strive to examine exemplary classrooms and identify strategies that teachers may use in their future instructional practices. This study utilizes data from a larger research project by Dr. Mariela Pérez and Dr. Megina Baker that examines relationships among existing policy, practices, and child outcomes across three types of preschools (public, private, and Head Start). Within this research project, my study is unique in its aim and its methodology because it investigates the notion of cultural and linguistic diversity specifically in Head Start classrooms. It also incorporates data from the Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation (ELLCO) measure, which is not currently being examined in other analyses. The present study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What practices do exemplary teachers in Head Start classrooms use to promote and affirm cultural and linguistic diversity?
 - a. The term "practice" can consist of the following domains: teacher beliefs and attitudes, teacher instruction and interactions, environmental characteristics of the classroom, and engagement with families
2. How do the three Head Start classrooms vary from one another?

- a. More specifically, in which domains are the classrooms similar or different from each other?

Significance

Through highlighting the practices that exemplary Head Start teachers use to promote and affirm cultural and linguistic diversity among preschool children, this research will contribute to the field by providing insight into how teachers can continue serving diverse learners in early childhood settings. As teachers continue to learn and apply these practices, it is my hope that children in their classrooms will become confident in their own identities and see others as individuals who are equally important and indispensable. The fabric of the United States has always, and still does, consist of numerous cultures and nationalities woven together to form a land that is abundant in opportunity and liberty. Instead of belittling certain pieces of this quilt or marginalizing certain populations based on their differences, children should learn that unity is possible even with diversity; schools and early childhood education classrooms are uniquely positioned to convey this message to young students.

Literature Review

Background on Early Childhood Education

Research has repeatedly documented the substantial benefits of early childhood education for young children's early learning and growth (Ramey, Ramey, & Stokes, 2009). There has been robust evidence that attending high quality preschool not only improves children's cognitive, early literacy, and mathematics skills, but also yields other positive outcomes such as higher levels of school attainment, increased earnings, reduced criminal behavior, and lower incarceration rates in youth and adulthood (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Recent analyses note that preschool enhances the growth and development for children from a range of backgrounds, but it has the greatest impact on children living in or near poverty, children with immigrant backgrounds, Hispanic children, and children whose primary home language is not English (Yoshikawa et al., 2013; Gormley, 2008; Magnuson, Lahaie, & Waldfogel, 2006).

Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners across the nation have recognized the educational, health, and behavioral impacts of early childhood education, as well as the importance of identifying the best teaching practices to effectively support young children. Specifically, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has adopted a framework known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) to promote excellence and equity in early childhood education. DAP is grounded in a body of research on human development and learning, to ensure that all teaching practices are "appropriate to children's age and developmental status, attuned to them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. xii).

The ways in which educators support children, especially those who come from diverse social and cultural contexts, deserves particular attention given the current demographic trends in

the United States. In 2014, approximately 44% of children in the United States were from racial minority groups (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015). Furthermore, U.S. census data from 2014 indicated that one in five children in America lived in poverty, and even higher poverty rates for Black and Hispanic children (Children's Defense Fund, 2015). Head Start, a federally funded early childhood education program, specifically provides health services and education for low-income families and children. Out of the one million children who were enrolled in Head Start across the United States in 2015, 67% of children were Black and/or Hispanic, and 29% of children spoke a language other than English at home (Head Start Program Facts, 2015).

With prevalence and predicted growth of diverse populations of children in the United States, early childhood teachers must learn to appropriately support classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) is used by professionals and practitioners to describe populations of students whose cultures and/or languages are “assets for learning but nonetheless different from that of the dominant culture or language in American society” (AACTE Committee on Multicultural Education, 2002, p. 2). By further embracing a strengths-based perspective, children who are learning a second language (e.g. English) either simultaneously or sequentially with their home language can be referred to as dual language learners (DLLs), which emphasizes the value of children's home languages and avoids classifying children merely by their English proficiency level (Gutierrez, Zepeda, & Castro, 2010).

NAEYC, Head Start, and most recently the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services have published position statements and standards to support culturally and linguistically diverse students, including DLLs, in early childhood classrooms. Ultimately, leaders at the state, program, and classroom level must all have an

understanding of the children and families they serve and intentionally promote a caring learning community that incorporates and affirms the languages and cultures of all children (U.S. U.S. DHH and ED Policy Statement, 2016; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Research on CLD students

In the field of early childhood education, the term dual language learner (DLL) encompasses other frequently used terms such as English Learner (EL), English Language Learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and children who speak a language other than English (LOTE). When referencing research from the field, the respective terms that the author(s) used will be employed to describe their studies, but the term DLL will be used otherwise. Although it is true that many DLLs come from immigrant backgrounds, there are also many children who speak multiple languages but have non-immigrant families, as well as English-speaking children who have diverse cultural origins. Thus, the cultural backgrounds of children can vary as much as their linguistic backgrounds. Because this study expands beyond the subject of language, the term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) will also be applied frequently and will include DLLs but also children who may have different home cultures.

To consider the most appropriate and effective ways teachers can serve diverse learners in the preschool classroom, it is first crucial to be informed on processes of child development and learning. Research on the linguistic, cognitive, social emotional, and identity development of dual language learners will be briefly presented here. According to Hammer and colleagues (2014), children are capable of learning multiple languages at a young age, and they develop two separate but interrelated language systems. Rather than being confused by the exposure to two languages, DLLs learn how and when to use the two different languages appropriately. Although there may be some short delays among infant and toddlers' phonological abilities, it appears that

DLLs catch up to monolingual peers during the preschool years (Hammer et al., 2014; Genesee, 2008).

Moreover, despite the common assumption that using children's home language will hinder their English language learning, research has documented that instruction in the home language contributes to both growth in English and home language skills because language and literacy skills often can be transferred from one language to another. In addition, research has demonstrated the cognitive advantages to being bilingual, such as better performance on cognitive flexibility and executive control tasks (Barac, Bialystok, Castro, & Sanchez, 2014; U.S. DHH and ED Policy Statement, 2016). Therefore, long term high-quality exposure to both languages, and opportunities to use both languages, can help DLLs grow as bilingual or multilingual individuals (Goldenberg, Hicks, & Lit, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013).

The social emotional development of dual language learners also deserves attention because many children have to negotiate differing expectations and maintain relationships in home, cultural and social contexts that do not reflect norms of the dominant, American school culture (Espinosa, 2013). Halle and colleagues' (2014) review of this literature revealed that the use of the home language for children in preschool settings may help children adjust and lead to better frustration-tolerance, social skills, and lower levels of peer victimization. Overall research findings regarding social emotional development, however, were inconclusive as DLL status is often correlated with and difficult to separate from characteristics such as lower socioeconomic status, language proficiency, and immigrant background (Halle et al., 2014). Further research is needed to explore and elucidate the unique social and emotional experiences of diverse populations of students, especially since children develop linguistic, cognitive, and social

emotional skills simultaneously within the contexts and cultures in which they live (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005; García & Jensen, 2010).

Children's early experiences with linguistic, racial, cultural, social class, gender, and ability differences will shape their future perceptions and actions, making the preschool years a key period for children's language and identity development (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 1999). In English-dominant early childhood settings, young DLLs' home languages, which embody valuable cultural capital and family background, are especially at risk of being lost. As a result, minority children who are not supported in their home language will not only lose their language skills but also experience disruptions with family relations and heritage culture, as well as face challenges in their identity development (Wong Fillmore, 1991).

From a broader perspective, the existing gap in academic achievement for children from low income and ethnic minority backgrounds also prompts the need to examine how culture and language interacts with risk and resiliency (Shivers & Sanders, 2011). This study therefore seeks to further explore practices exemplary classroom teachers use that best support DLLs in preschool classrooms. In particular, this study will examine practices in Head Start classrooms because of the program's dedication to serving diverse populations of children and its recognition of all of the developmental domains discussed previously (Head Start Learning Outcomes Framework, 2015). Informed by developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and the field's research on culturally and linguistically diverse children, theoretical frameworks that guide preschool teachers' instruction and classroom practices will now be examined.

Theoretical Frameworks for Teaching CLD Students

The developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) framework by NAEYC has been widely used to inform instruction in early childhood classrooms. In response to critiques that DAP has

relied on developmental research based on experiences of White, middle-class children, which has overlooked and marginalized children of color and low income families, the third edition of DAP discussed with heavier emphasis the importance of creating an inclusive environment that acknowledges, incorporates, and honors the backgrounds of CLD students (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016). In recent years, Head Start and the U.S. Department of Education have also published policy statements and guidelines that highlight the importance of appropriately supporting diverse student populations (Head Start Multicultural Principles, 2015; U.S. DHH and ED Policy Statement, 2016).

With the increasing number of students who come from different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, various approaches have emerged to direct and guide the practices of program directors and teachers. Some approaches originate from an underlying idea of assimilation where students are encouraged to learn and adhere to the dominant, European-American cultural practices in school. In some circumstances, there may be acknowledgement of diversity but the overall, silent implication is to conform to the American culture (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 1999). A larger push to truly honor, respect, and affirm diversity in American classrooms has recently gained momentum, and many educators have advocated for alternative frameworks, such as multicultural education and the anti-bias education, both of which have been utilized in the field of early childhood education.

Although there are a variety of definitions, multicultural education broadly centers on the principle that diversity is a normal, characteristic, and essential component of the United States and that individuals, through understanding diverse perspectives, can become enriched in their thinking, learning, and functioning in all of the communities to which they belong (Souto-Manning, 2013; Banks, 2014). According to Banks (2014), multicultural education consists of

five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and structure. These dimensions encourage teachers to integrate a variety of perspectives into their daily instruction so students can investigate implicit assumptions and biases, and construct knowledge with an understanding of their racially, culturally, linguistically, and socially diverse school community.

Mariana Souto-Manning (2013) specified that in the early childhood classroom, multicultural education “seeks to respect the humanity of every person, prioritizing teachers’ and children’s personal, practical knowledge as foundational to promoting change” (p. 7). Souto-Manning and Banks’ perspectives on multicultural education illustrate not only the importance of affirming the differences and backgrounds of students in school, but also highlight the ultimate goal of transforming education and social equity.

The underlying themes and principles of multicultural education are similar to those of anti-bias education, which seeks to teach “children to be proud of themselves and of their families, to respect human differences, to recognize bias, and to speak up for what is right” (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010, p. 1). Anti-bias education, however, places a heavier emphasis on diversity in multiple aspects of an individual’s identity, including gender, sexual orientation, race, social class, religion, and disability. Moreover, anti-bias education aims to provide preschool children with language to express their comfort and joy with human diversity, and to recognize, describe, and react to unfairness (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010).

Thus, the anti-bias curriculum moves beyond the frequently used “tourist curriculum” of designating specific units or weeks to build respect for diverse cultures or languages of children; it steps toward an ongoing process of building children’s skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and bias as they observe and learn from society in which they live. Another

unique note about the anti-bias curriculum is that it was designed for young children in early childhood settings, supported and published by NAEYC. Thus, the practices of the anti-bias curriculum are also developmentally appropriate for preschool aged children. Anti-bias education and multicultural education frameworks overlap in many ways as they both seek to change the ways children think about diversity and, because they are not mutually exclusive, teachers can and often strive to use both approaches to serve diverse populations of children.

Additionally, the field recognizes the significance of preparing teachers to use culturally relevant instructional strategies to enhance student achievement. The works of Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay have been seminal in shaping how teachers can successfully support culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a pedagogy of opposition, where teachers are committed to empowerment and academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). By acquiring in-depth knowledge of children's home cultures, values, learning styles, and lived experiences, teachers can modify curricula and instruction to build bridges between their community and school, as well as create connectedness among students. Furthermore, using cultural referents and funds of knowledge as a basis for teaching, culturally responsive teaching fosters cultural competency and challenges teachers to become learners too (Gay, 2002; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Villegas & Lucas (2002) contribute to the vision of culturally responsive teaching by defining six salient qualities that a teacher must have, including 1) sociocultural consciousness; 2) affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds; 3) seeing himself or herself as agents of social change; 4) having constructivist view of learning; 5) knowing the lives of students; 6) using students' funds of knowledge to design instruction. These qualities are visible themes in Ladson-Billings and Gay's conceptualizations of culturally relevant pedagogy, and collectively

these values have been adopted by teacher preparation programs to help preservice teachers learn to critically examine and respond to the diverse students they will teach (Nganga, 2015).

Multicultural education, anti-bias education, and culturally relevant pedagogy all align in their commitment to investigating and attending to the lived experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Each approach, however, differs in the range and breadth of its focus. Multicultural curriculum broadly strives to generate respect and value for diversity and can manifest in a variety of ways in the classroom; the anti-bias approach is directed more specifically toward young children's experiences to bias, stereotypes, and identity formation; culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes student success with cultural continuity from the home to the classroom and has been applied more specifically in the field of teacher education.

Head Start's commitment to supporting diverse children and families generally aligns with the multicultural and culturally relevant frameworks. In reviewing the regulations and standards spelled out in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, the Head Start Program Performance Standards 45 CFR Chapter XIII, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2013), the following themes were consistently present:

- Provide linguistic and culturally appropriate, evidence-based services and instruction to non-English speaking children and their families
- Build a classroom that respect and values children's home languages and cultures
- Foster two-way communication and family involvement
- Identify and enhance the strengths of children during instruction
- Provide culturally relevant learning materials and meals
- Support each child's unique identity

The terms culturally relevant and culturally responsive were also used repeatedly throughout the documents, demonstrating that Head Start supports diversity with the idea of building a respectful, culturally continuous classroom where teachers have a deep understanding of children's lived experiences and strive to promote children's understandings of their own culture and those of others.

It is worthy to note that Head Start's definition of developmentally appropriate is "any behavior or experience that is appropriate for the age span of the children and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, developmental levels, and cultural backgrounds of individual children" (Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2013, p. 11). The inclusion of culture as an aspect of developmentally appropriate practice demonstrates that culture is fundamental to Head Start's approach and mission for providing high quality programs to the populations it serves. These frameworks for appropriate practices in early childhood settings have the potential to significantly impact children's academic, cognitive, social and emotional development, but there exists a need for continued research that clarifies and delineates how effective instruction and practices are implemented by teachers in their actual classrooms.

Previous Research that Examined High Quality Teaching for CLD Students

Children who attend high quality early child care, especially children from immigrant and low income families are more likely to start school with better cognitive, academic, and social skills (Yoshikawa et al., 2013; Magnuson, Lahaie, & Waldfogel, 2006). Accordingly, research has found there are multiple aspects to an early childhood setting that significantly shape children's learning and growth (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003; Burchinal, 2010; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Structural qualities, such as the student-teacher ratio, classroom materials, and spatial

arrangement, can have a strong influence on children from diverse backgrounds. Structural qualities in turn can also help create the conditions for positive process qualities, such as caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness, instruction, classroom management and activities that positively affirm children's unique lived experiences.

Classroom environment and structure for CLD students. The materials and structure of the classroom environment is one domain of quality that has been studied to shed light on how teachers can best support dual language learners and children from diverse backgrounds. In studying the culturally relevant practices of seven Head Start teachers, Gichuru, Riley, Robertson, and Park (2015) concluded that teachers took into consideration their students' interests, ethnicities, and family backgrounds by using posters, pictures, books, dolls, and music representative of various cultures in the classroom, but these characteristics of the physical environment were not explicitly connected to the curriculum or used to enhance children's own understandings of various cultures.

In another analysis of classroom characteristics in an early childhood setting with low income, ethnic minority children, Heng (2011) found that the meals served in the classroom denoted a cultural mismatch between students' home and school environments. The teachers in this study were aware of the possible cultural discontinuity, but they did feel the need to explain to children or affirm their experiences as they struggled to negotiate two sets of eating habits and diets. Teachers' lack of in-depth understanding, and the subsequent limitations in facilitating meaningful constructions of knowledge based on children's home experiences and their encounters with a dominant, European-American school environment, demonstrate a great need for teachers to be more intentional in their practices. For example, frequent reading of dual language books, during which teachers affirm students as they discover linguistic connections

between languages and recall funds of knowledge from their linguistic and cultural experiences, can promote children's identities as capable learners and valued multilinguals in the classroom (Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne, & Pfitscher, 2012). Thus, teachers not only need to use materials and resources that represent students' individual backgrounds and cultures, but they also should aim to actively incorporate those as a basis for learning and consider how their classroom environment can best promote and affirm students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Teachers' beliefs, practices, and reflection on teaching diverse students. Teachers own perceptions, reflective attitudes, and ethnic backgrounds have also been examined in relation to culturally responsive teaching practices. In one study, exemplary teachers who serve diverse children identified the three key themes that are necessary for implementing culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate practices in pre-K settings (Brown & Lee, 2012). After conducting classroom observations, interviews, and collecting artifacts from these exemplary preschool teachers, participants stressed that preservice teachers need to develop a passionate disposition for teaching and cultivating potential in all pre-K students, resilience as a professional in a high stakes education system, and cultural competence that helps them recognize the complexity of children's lives and alter classroom activities so that they are more valuable to students (Brown & Lee, 2012).

There were limitations, however, in the extent that teachers fostered sociocultural consciousness among their students and themselves, such as using the Thanksgiving holiday to help children learn to appreciate everyone's culture and give thanks to their families but failing to challenge the traditional narrative's basis and perspective (Brown & Lee, 2012). Similarly, a discrepancy between teachers' intentions and their practices was conveyed by Soltero-Gonzalez

(2008), as teachers voiced support for bilingualism but gave children limited opportunities to use their first language and discover links between their languages.

There has been mixed evidence that delineates the associations between classroom composition, teacher ethnicity, language proficiency, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' practices. In a study surveying 564 teachers, Flores and Smith (2008) found that a combination of factors influence teachers' attitudinal beliefs toward cultural and linguistic diversity. The number of minority students in the class, teacher ethnicity, teachers' language proficiency in students' home languages, and exposure to diversity training, together, predicted their positive attitudes toward diversity and language minority students.

In a study with a slightly different focus and different findings, Sawyer et al. (2016), after observing and surveying a sample of 72 preschool teachers, found that the percentage of DLLs in the classroom was *not* associated with teacher practices or beliefs, nor were teachers' beliefs associated with their language and literacy practices for Spanish-speaking children. Although teachers held informed beliefs on language learning, there was overall minimal reading and writing support for DLLs in English and Spanish. Sawyer et al.'s (2016) research concluded that opportunities for students to use their native languages or to make meaningful connections bridging two or multiple cultures have been lacking in early childhood classrooms.

These discrepancies found between teachers' intentions and their implementations of practices that support CLD students prompt a need for teachers to critically examine their own instruction in the classroom. As Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2010) suggested, a culturally responsive cycle of forming narratives, documenting and interpreting events, constantly reflecting and learning from students, to inform future instructional practices are essential components of teaching. As important as practices are, teachers must continue to critically

examine their own beliefs and whether their actions are truly transforming the classroom for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Instruction, interactions, and curriculum for CLD students. Research has identified numerous strategies that promote language and literacy skills among DLLs, such as using children's native language, employing gestures, visuals, repetition, and hands on materials (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Goldenberg, Hicks, & Lit, 2013). Additionally, establishing regular routines, low-anxiety environments for learning, and providing spaces, such as a safe haven that allows for diverse children play individually if they are overwhelmed, can promote dual language learners' learning (Krashen, 1982; Tabors, 2008; Castro, Espinosa, & Pérez, 2011).

In a study with 357 Spanish-speaking four-year-old children, Burchinal and colleagues (2012) also found that using modest amounts of children's native language (Spanish) during instruction, coupled with strong emotional support, is associated with higher math and reading scores. This research importantly illustrated the power of responsive and sensitive teaching for children's academic achievement.

Funds of knowledge, or the knowledge that the child has accumulated and uses in multiple spheres of activity in their life, has received strong recognition particularly within an additive model of education, to draw on children's cultural and cognitive resources that power their learning in school (Moll et al., 1992). Especially among culturally and linguistically diverse children, teachers must actively seek out specific ways to engage and value families' language, experiences, knowledge, and participation within the curriculum (Amaro-Jimenez & Semingson, 2011). However, few studies have been conducted to associate classroom practices with children's socioemotional outcomes or sense of pride for their own cultures.

In one Alaska Head Start program, the teacher used indigenous Yuk'ik groups' concept of "growing out" to implement a classroom activity where children "observed out" to develop their visual skills gradually while respecting the flow of the local tradition. Moreover, games in this classroom also included ice fishing, basket making, and tent-making in the play area (David, 2005). These strategies place value on children's local cultures and generate an environment that is comfortable, familiar, and congruent with the homes of children. Children in turn, are likely to feel affirmed in their cultures as their teachers welcome and actively uses children's funds of knowledge to guide their learning.

Another example of integrating an important cultural tradition into the classroom was featured in Upadhyay's (2009) study, where a teacher used gardening in her science instruction to make a direct connection between the Hmong community's knowledge of plants and herbs and the content that children learn in class. This culturally responsive practice allowed students to see the relevance of science in their lives and also helped non-Hmong students appreciate a culture that cherishes the spiritual significance of gardening.

Many classrooms, however, do not adequately honor children's home cultures and traditions (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). For instance, Heng (2011) described a "sociocultural mismatch" that impacted Chinese children's adjustment and negotiation of differing expectations. Holding an assimilationist view, these teachers' expectations for children in regards to independence, decision making, and meritocracy confused children because they were in contrast to expectations from children's homes, which emphasized interdependence, respect for adult decisions, and group harmony. In this case study, Heng (2011) stated that hesitant parents who remained silent, coupled with the ignorance on the part of teachers, caused the status-quo and dominance of European-American values and practices in the classroom to

remain unchanged. Developmentally appropriate goals, in this case, were not entirely suitable for this population of Chinese, immigrant children who were encouraged to learn a different set of goals by their home. Surface level incorporations, or no incorporation at all, rather than embedding children's cultures into the daily curriculum, is unfortunately still common in early childhood classrooms (Gichuru et al., 2015). Instruction and curriculum for diverse populations of children must continue to partner with families and utilize strategies that are culturally relevant.

Family involvement and communication. Gathering information about cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students in the classroom is an essential, continuous process for teachers to carry out. Through home visits, intake interviews, and family questionnaires, teachers can identify the strengths of families, as well as collaborate with parents on their children's learning (Amaro-Jimenez & Semington, 2011; Tabors, 2008; Gichuru et al., 2015). Teachers may ask parents about their practices such as child-rearing beliefs about discipline, cultural food preferences, separation behaviors, and conduct expectations in group situations. Participating in community-wide celebrations or gatherings could also provide teachers with valuable cultural information for developing instruction connected to children's lives (Tabors, 2008).

After conducting focus group interviews with more than 100 immigrant parents in five U.S. cities as a part of the Children Crossing Borders (CCB) project, Adair and Barraza (2014) conveyed that immigrant parents generally have high respect for teachers and were grateful for their children's education, but they were hesitant to raise questions for teachers. According to immigrant parents, teachers who intentionally asked parents for their input on the early learning environment, their previous experiences with education in their home country, and their children's learning patterns and interests, made parents feel more welcome at school. Teachers

frequently endeavor to create translated newsletters or ask community volunteers to translate for families who speak a language other than English, but Gichuru et al. (2015) suggested this type of communication was generally one-way. Gichuru and colleagues recommended teachers foster two-way communication by developing on-going relationships with families, encouraging families to share their desires for their children, and reach out to other cultural mediators in community agencies, local churches, and neighborhood centers.

Tabors (2008) proposed for teachers build a close partnership by inviting parents into the classroom periodically. Whether it be to lend a hand during breakfast, to read a book in a child's native language, or to demonstrate a specific skill, parents are valuable resources to enrich the classroom curriculum. These demonstrations, however, need to be integrated into the classroom environment that fosters acceptance and respect, not exoticism. For instance, Native American traditions of pow-wows and rituals of drumming were incorporated into the daily curriculum of a early childcare center on the Flathead Indian Reservation, creating a sense of belonging among the children (Gilliard & Moore, 2007). By maintaining communication, these eight preschool teachers also invited parents to model their family's tribal language in the classroom, as well as respected some parents' beliefs to only tell the "Coyote Stories," tribal stories passed down by elders, during the winter months. Describing their actions as influenced by respect and understanding (Gilliard & Moore, 2007), these early educators exemplified idea of family engagement and honoring the communities of the children.

Despite case studies that illustrate culturally responsive teaching, research has found mixed results for parents' involvement in their child's early education experience. In Riley, Gichuru, and Robertson's (2013) research, Head Start parents felt they could trust the faculty and staff to do what was best for their children, resulting from the home visits, phone calls, and

frequent communication with Head Start teachers. The parents' responses, however, also indicated that they had few expectations their children would have experiences that represented their family culture. Parents' passive acceptance or content-ness of the dominant culture at school is similar to the silence from parents in Heng (2011) and Adair & Barraza's (2014) studies; parents did not feel entitled or warranted to voice concerns about whether the social or cultural practices in the classroom diverged from their children's home experiences. Although NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice necessitates establishing reciprocal relationships with families to collaboratively support their children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), it seems that parents should be acknowledged to a greater extent as being a valuable resource in children's growth and development.

Quality Measurement of CLD Classrooms

Research has demonstrated that high quality early childhood education is associated with higher language, academic, and social skills, but there exists a question of whether quality measurement tools accurately capture quality care that attends to the unique experiences of children from a variety ethnic and cultural backgrounds. (Burchinal, 2010; Burchinal & Cryer, 2003). Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) have been used by states to assess the quality of early education programs, and in response to the growing population of diverse learners, NAEYC developed a guide that supplements the QRIS criteria to gradually move the field to identifying and embedding culturally competent practices in meaningful ways (Quality Benchmark for Cultural Competence Project, 2009). This tool does not specify criteria, but rather provides ideas for implementing and evaluating cultural competence in early childhood and is flexibly used at the state and program levels.

Recent measurement instruments “comprise of multiple scales in which developers identify a set of items that would reliably and validly assess selected dimensions of quality” (Bryant, Burchinal, & Zaslow, 2011, p. 35) have been used in state QRIS, licensing, and professional development efforts (Bryant, 2010). Examples of such measurement tools include the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), and the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO; Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002), among others. Some tools focus more on the teacher-child interactions and others focus on the physical features of the classroom or the language and literacy practices, but a limited number of studies have considered the cross-cultural validity of these measures (Bryant, 2010).

Recognizing the importance of examining how existing observational measures function in a diverse classroom and whether quality measures reflect a program’s ability to provide culturally appropriate care, Burchinal and Cryer (2003), Downer et al. (2012), and Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2014a) have conducted analyses to fill this gap in research. Burchinal and Cryer’s (2003) secondary analysis of data from Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study and the NICHD Study for Early Child Care indicated that the ECERS-R showed comparably high levels of reliability and validity for White, African-American, and Latino children. Their study yielded no differences among the three racial groups in regards to the relationship between quality care and gains in cognitive and social skills.

Moreover, match between children’s and caregivers’ ethnicity, and match between mothers’ and teachers’ child-rearing beliefs, were not consistently related to child outcomes. The authors concluded that global dimension of quality can manifest as different types of practices,

but as long as they are sensitive and stimulating, children from variety of racial groups can benefit (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003). Downer et al. (2012) also confirmed the CLASS, which mainly measures teacher-child interactions, demonstrated similar psychometric properties across preschool classrooms serving Latino and DLL children. The CLASS scores positively predicted children's academic and social skills for Latino and DLL children, as well as non-DLLs and non-Latino children. These results are insightful and confirm the applicability of a few quality measurement tools for diverse groups of children. They also illustrate flexibility in the evidence described for quality, as teaching practices are reflective of differing racial and cultural groups.

In a literature review commissioned by the Center for Early Care and Education Research (CECER), Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2014a) examined whether commonly-used tools appropriately measure quality for early childhood education settings that serve DLL populations. Reviewing studies of measurements that assess process quality factors, including the direct experiences of children such as their interactions with caregivers, and materials for learning and instructional practices of the teacher, Peisner-Feinberg and colleagues found that widely used quality measures, including the CLASS, ECERS-R, ELLCO, functioned similarly for DLLs compared to typical populations of children with regard to overall quality, psychometric characteristics, and child outcomes.

Research and use of the ELLCO PreK. The ELLCO PreK is an observation instrument that was used in this study because of its specific design to measure the quality of language and literacy instruction in center-based classrooms for three to five-year-old children (Smith, Brady, & Anastasopoulos, 2008a). The ELLCO PreK has two subscales: 1) the General Classroom Environment that includes the classroom structure, curriculum, and instruction, and 2) the Language and Literacy subscale that includes measurements of the language, book reading, and

early writing environment. As a research-based observation instrument, the ELLCO has been used nationally to assess the quality of early childhood classrooms, reading interventions, and professional development programs.

When the Early Reading First (ERF) was an active program, the U.S. Department of Education adopted the ELLCO as a tool for grant-recipients to use to improve the language and literacy outcomes of the children they serve (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Additionally, the ELLCO PreK has been used to assess numerous state preschool programs, in states such as Georgia (Maxwell et al., 2009), North Carolina (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2014b), South Carolina (SC Education Oversight Committee, 2016), Tennessee (Lipsey, Farran, & Hofer, 2015), Nebraska (Jackson, 2012), and as well as to assess Scholastic's Big Day for PreK learning program in New Haven (Scholastic, 2013) and Minnesota's Reading Corps PreK Program (Diaconis et al., 2015).

In addition to state-wide reports, the ELLCO has been widely used to examine patterns of classroom change that result from improvement efforts and professional development programs. Project REEL used the ELLCO to measure improvements in the literacy practices of early childcare educators in 85 programs in Tennessee; the Early Education Mentoring System employed the ELLCO in a similar fashion to measure the quality of the literacy environment after 157 teachers received mentoring for three years (Sutterby, 2011). Moreover, research conducted for the HeadsUp! Reading professional development intervention, utilizing the ELLCO and ECERS-R, improved teachers' literacy practices and predicted children's literacy development (Jackson et al., 2006), and the Nuestros Niños intervention for teachers of Latino DLLs yielded similar results (Buysse, Castro, & Peisner-Feinberg, 2010). Furthermore, the ELLCO PreK has been used by Mississippi Building Blocks intervention program (MBB, 2016),

by the Children's Literacy Initiative (American Institute for Research, 2015), and was repeatedly applied by Manswell Butty and colleagues (2015) in their study to create high quality early childhood education programs through teacher feedback.

Studies have also shown that the ELLCO explained a significant amount of between-classroom variation in children's receptive vocabulary, early literacy, and social skills (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008). For example, in Cunningham's (2008) research, children's attitudes toward reading and writing became more positive as quality of the literacy environment improved, and their attitudes were strongly associated with their literacy development. Additionally, to examine whether large public pre-K programs could produce measurable benefits for children's kindergarten transition, Ramey, Ramey, and Stokes (2009) used the ECERS-R and ELLCO in the Louisiana and Maryland to affirm that on average these programs provided excellent classroom supports for students, which improved students' language, print, and math skills and led to decreased rates of grade retention and special education placement.

Most of these measurements, although they have been shown to function similarly for diverse populations in early childhood education, are not focused on measuring cultural and linguistic diversity nor the specific developmental characteristics of DLLs. Thus, further research is necessary to understand how culturally responsive care is embedded in our measures and standards for quality (Shivers & Sanders, 2011). To a small degree, the ELLCO PreK (Smith et al., 2008a) contains items that refer to cultural and linguistic diversity. The following items in the ELLCO PreK as described by the tool specify practices that consider diverse children's home culture or backgrounds:

- *Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom* - "children's prior knowledge and personal interests... used as basis for conversations, activities, planned learning about

other cultures and traditions...ongoing efforts by teachers to learn and use information from children's homes and communities... cultural and linguistic diversity is valued and is explicitly addressed... specific strategies to engage English language learners"

- *Item 2 Contents of Classroom* - "child generated work ... reflects their diverse backgrounds, languages, and approaches to classroom tasks"
- *Item 8 Discourse Climate* - "teachers explicitly and appropriate encourage participation of children, including those from differing linguistic, gender, racial and cultural groups. Teachers build on similarities and differences to foster further discussion."
- *Item 13 Characteristics of Books* - "diverse representation ... including people of differing race, gender, ability, and language... reflects that found within the classroom community as well as in the world"

Because there have been only a handful studies using the ELLCO PreK to examine quality from the cultural and linguistic diversity lens (e.g., Buysse, Castro, & Peisner-Feinberg, 2010), this research study will contribute to the literature by exploring how Head Start teachers' practices respond to their children's diversity by using the criteria presented in the ELLCO, as well as through classroom observations and teacher interviews.

Methodology

While recognizing the important developmental advances that all children make during their time in the early childhood classroom, children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds have experiences that are more complex and unique, particularly in the socioemotional, cognitive, and linguistic domains. A critical review of the research reveals a need for greater exploration of specific practices preschool teachers can implement, which will deepen children's understandings of themselves and of others, and encourage children to value those various backgrounds and experiences.

This study aims to investigate and highlight the practices that exemplary teachers in Head Start classrooms use to promote and affirm cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as identify unique themes that may be present across the three classrooms. In the following sections, a summary of the Head Start program is presented to frame the programmatic context of this research. Additionally, the site selection, data collection, and data analysis processes will be outlined, and a discussion of my research positionality and limitations of this study will be included as well.

Head Start Context

Head Start is a federally funded, early childhood education program that serves low-income families by providing educational and comprehensive health services for children. Out of the one million children who were enrolled in Head Start across the United States in 2015, 67% of children were Black or Hispanic (Head Start Program Facts, 2015). Additionally, 29% of children spoke a language other than English at home, and many of these families lived at or below the poverty line (Report to Congress on DLLs in Head Start, 2015). In the state of

Massachusetts, where this study took place, Head Start served approximately 10,900 children in 2015 and about 43% of children were DLLs (National Head Start Association, 2016).

Recently, the Office of Head Start developed a variety of publications and resources to ensure programs and teachers are optimally supporting families by using culturally responsive practices (Multicultural Principles, 2015; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, 2015). Because of the diverse population of children who enroll in Head Start, and because Head Start improves children's school readiness, health status, and parenting education (Head Start Impact Study, 2010), this program serves as a suitable context in which to conduct this empirical research study.

Site Selection and Participants

This qualitative study uses a multiple case study approach, as suggested by Yin (2009), to examine the interactions of a contemporary phenomenon with in-depth data collection. Three Head Start classrooms were selected, with each site serving as a unit of analysis and a case, allowing for a close examination of the teachers who shape the classroom as well as for a comparison across the three cases. The findings from the three classrooms were corroborated and compared to the theoretical frameworks that informed this study.

Schofield believes "it is useful for qualitative researchers interested in the study of educational processes to generalize to three domains: what is, what may be, and what could be" (2002, p. 180). This study takes the "what could be" approach by identifying sites where the teaching practices are expected to be ideal and effective, in order to illustrate practices that are beneficial for diverse learners. A co-constructed definition of "exemplary" classrooms was elicited from interviews with the city Head Start Directors, conducted by Dr. Páez and Dr. Megina Baker, as a part of the previously mentioned, larger research study. Three centers were

recommended by the Directors, and each Head Start center's director was then contacted. In the next step of the nomination process, center directors and parents identified particular classrooms and teachers whom they believed served dual language learners effectively, and those teachers were then asked to participate. As a member of the research team, I was personally involved in the interviews, data collection, and data analysis in these exemplary classrooms, and the three Head Start sites included in the present study.

Informed consent forms were distributed and obtained from the teachers and parents of the children in the classrooms before data collection began. Child assent procedures were also followed when observing children in their classroom activities. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were given to refer to the three classrooms and teachers at the sites. Table 1 conveys the characteristics of each classroom. A total of three sites, six teachers, and 62 children were sampled.

Table 1: Sites and number of participants (pseudonyms were given to each Head Start site)

Classroom Site	Teachers	Children
Jordan Hill	2	20
Heightsville	2	20
Rivertown	2	22
Total	n = 6	n = 62

The three lead teachers and three assistant teachers have all worked in the field of early education for 6-20 years. The lead teachers have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field, and the assistant teachers have either bachelor's or associate's degrees in early childhood education. Furthermore, all three lead teachers have participated in professional development trainings particularly for dual language learners, and all six teachers have worked with children from diverse backgrounds in previous years. As shown in Table 2,

five out of the six teachers speak a language other than English (e.g. Albanian, Arabic, Spanish), and all of the teachers noted they have learned basic words in additional languages from their co-workers or children as they teach in the classroom. The large majority of children in each classroom speak a native language at home and are learning English in Head Start; the Heightsville and Rivertown classrooms are linguistically diverse, whereas the Jordan Hill classroom serves mostly Spanish-speaking children.

Table 2: Backgrounds of teachers and students by site (pseudonyms were given to all teachers)

Teacher and Language Background	Education	Experience/training with diverse children	Languages of children in the classroom
Rivertown Lead Teacher <i>Rose</i> -Arabic (Native Language)	BA Associates in ECE 13 years of experience	Professional Development (PD) for DLLs	Spanish, Albanian, Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Somalian, Ethiopian, and English
Rivertown Assistant Teacher <i>Jan</i> -French and some American Sign Language	BS in Elementary Ed. and Special Ed. Associates in Special Ed. 8 years at center, 20 years of experience total	Children in ESL, Autism Spectrum Disorder, American Sign Language	
Heightsville Lead Teacher <i>Annika</i> -Albanian (Native Language)	BA in Elementary Edu Associates in ECE NAEYC 12 years in US, 19 total	PD for DLLs, managing behaviors, and teamwork	Albanian, Arabic, Spanish, Creole, Portuguese, and English
Heightsville Assistant Teacher <i>Amy</i> -Arabic (Native Language)	Associates in ECE 8 years at center, 10 years total		
Jordan Hill Lead Teacher <i>Kathy</i> -Some Spanish	BA in Human Development 14 years at center, 22 years total	Children with language delays and ELLs; Courses in Reggio and Montessori	Spanish and English
Jordan Hill Assistant Teacher <i>Genny</i> -Spanish (Native Language)	Associates in ECE 6 years of experience		

Data Collection

As a qualitative multiple case study, it is important to use direct observations and interviews with the persons involved in the phenomenon being examined (Yin, 2009). Direct observations conducted using the ELLCO PreK tool, semi-structured interviews with teachers, video observations, and visual evidence from the materials and artifacts in the classroom were utilized as data sources for this study. All of the data was collected by primary co-investigators and two undergraduate students from September of 2014 through June of 2015.

ELLCO. The Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation Pre-K (ELLCO) is an instrument developed by Smith, Brady, and Anastasopoulos (2008a) to assess the quality of instructional practices for young children in center-based classrooms. There are 19 items, each of which can be rated on scale of 1 to 5, with 1 signifying deficient and 5 meaning exemplary in meeting the criteria listed for the item. A maximum score of 95 is thus possible. The items are grouped together into five sections, which are then combined into two subscales. Table 3, listed below, illustrates the categorization of the items with brief descriptions, eventually forming the General Classroom Environment subscale, and the Language and Literacy subscale.

Psychometric analyses of the ELLCO PreK performed on 35 classrooms over three years, with 203 total observations demonstrated the strong reliability, stability, and sensitivity to change of the tool in measuring classroom instructional quality (Smith et al., 2008b). Cronbach's alpha for internal reliability was 0.864 for the General Classroom Environment subscale and 0.922 for the Language and Literacy subscale. Two undergraduate students were trained to use the ELLCO PreK by participating in a training session with the co-investigator, conducting two practice observations, followed by independent scoring and discussion of the decisions. The interrater reliability was established at 95%, 87%, 100%, 96%, and 100% for the five sections,

respectively. When considering the subscales, 97.2% reliability was reached for the General Environment subscale, and 96.7% for the Language and Literacy subscale. A 95.8% interrater reliability for the total ELLCO PreK score was achieved before observations commenced for the study. (Smith et al., 2008b)

Table 3: ELLCO Items, Sections, and Subscales

Items	Sections	Subscales
Item 1: Organization of classroom Item 2: Contents of classroom Item 3: Classroom management Item 4: Personnel	Section I: Classroom Structure (maximum score = 20)	General Classroom Environment (maximum score = 35)
Item 5: Approaches to curriculum Item 6: Opportunities for child choice Item 7: Recognizing diversity in the classroom	Section II: Curriculum (maximum score = 15)	
Item 8: Discourse climate Item 9: Opportunities for extended conversations Item 10: Efforts to build vocabulary Item 11: Phonological awareness	Section III: Language Environment (maximum score = 20)	Language and Literacy (maximum score = 60)
Item 12: Organization of book area Item 13: Characteristics of books Item 14: Books for learning Item 15: Approaches to book reading Item 16: Quality of book reading	Section IV: Books and Book Reading (maximum score = 25)	
Item 17: Early writing environment Item 18: Support for children's writing Item 19: Environmental print	Section V: Print and Early Writing (maximum score = 15)	

Teacher Interviews. Semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted by the co-investigators and transcribed by the research team, using an interview protocol to ensure a systematic process of gathering data. The interview questions were intended to shed light on teachers' approaches to the curriculum, instruction, partnerships with families, and for this present study, particular questions in the interview that demonstrated the teacher's dedication to

promoting and affirming the diverse backgrounds of children were the key interest. A copy of the interview protocol is included in Appendix A and the questions (Question 4, 9-11, 16-20, 22-24) that were of particular relevance to the Research Questions in this study are denoted in bold.

Video observations. The three lead teachers were asked to select a lesson they felt best demonstrated their teaching of dual language learners, and these lessons were videotaped as a part of the observations in each classroom. These video recordings were approximately 30 minutes and captured teacher-child interactions and teaching practices in a whole-class or small-group activity.

Classroom artifacts. General classroom materials and artifacts served as visual evidence for ways that children could be affirmed in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Any posters, forms, or materials that showed partnerships with families was also included as a data source. Thus, visual and textual evidence that demonstrated a clear connection or reference to diversity were photographed and recorded as a fourth data source.

Data Analysis

After the data was recorded electronically and interviews were transcribed, a process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing was applied, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) for qualitative research analysis. An iterative approach to coding was used as data sources were analyzed and patterns were discerned (Saldaña, 2014). The data from the ELLCO were initially coded for items that were relevant to or reflected cultural or linguistic diversity. Certain items, such as *Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom*, *Item 2 Contents of the Classroom*, *Item 8 Discourse Climate*, *Item 13 Characteristics of Books* explicitly referenced diversity in the classroom and were coded as the first iteration within this analysis. Additional items were added from the ELLCO observations if they provided particular insights

for cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom too. A coding manual was created to specify the definitions of each code and was adjusted as needed throughout the coding of the ELLCO observations.

The semi-structured interviews with teachers were examined using the codes that emerged from the first round of coding the ELLCO. With the organic nature of coding, codes were added, revised, or reorganized to more accurately reflect the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Videos were coded in a similar way, denoting moments in lessons where teachers used particular practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. As Walsh, Bakir, Lee, Chung, and Chung (2007) noted, videos can capture the qualitative characteristics and subtleties in social interaction patterns that are difficult to describe in written field notes. The digital video recordings were reviewed in multiple passes, and again, codes were added, revised, or reorganized as novel observations emerged across these different data sources.

Classroom artifacts, collected in the form of photographs capturing the documentation, posters, and children's work from the classrooms, were included as a fourth source with which to corroborate the findings. After the photographs from each site were reviewed, analytic memos were composed for the photos that captured specific elements relevant to the cultures and languages of children in the classroom. The memos containing detailed descriptions were used for visual data analysis, as suggested by Saldaña (2016). This coding process was implemented in order to account for the evidence from a large collection of photos, and also to maintain consistency in the coding process and analysis. A manual of all of the codes and examples of all of the codes are included in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. As a multiple case study, replication logic was used for data analysis, during which the same coding procedure was followed for each classroom (Yin, 2009).

As conveyed by Huberman and Miles (2002) and Yin (2009), triangulation of multiple data sources strengthens the construct validity of case studies as it verifies the convergence of evidence and interpretations. The four data sources (ELLCO, teacher interviews, videos, artifacts) for each site were therefore examined and reviewed for codes that emerged repeatedly or uniquely. The first four rows in Table 4 convey the domains that were investigated as a part of the first research question (RQ1), and columns in the table convey the data sources that were coded to address the corresponding domains of RQ1. The codes were corroborated by multiple data sources and emerged repeatedly from each site were compiled into a list, called “salient” codes. The list of salient codes for each site, along with information on the data sources in which these codes were originally identified, are included in Appendix D.

Table 4: Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Question	ELLCO	Teacher Interviews	Video Observations	Classroom Artifacts
Teachers’ beliefs (RQ1)		x		
Teachers’ instruction and interactions (RQ1)	x	x	x	x
Classroom environment (RQ1)	x		x	x
Family engagement (RQ1)	x	x		x
Variations across classrooms in teaching practices (RQ2)	x	x	x	x

According to Yin (2009), using the same design for each site and seeking to validate results across the three classrooms can make the findings more robust and improve the generalizability and external validity of the study. The second research question (RQ2) was addressed by identifying and analyzing recurring themes across the three Head Start classrooms.

By examining overlapping, salient codes across the domains and across the three sites, key practices were identified and potential relationships were outlined through numerous iterations of cognitive mapping (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Braun and Clarke (2006) note, thematic analysis and thematic mapping requires that themes or patterns be reviewed and refined to capture the meaning of the theme itself and its relation to other themes. The iterative process allowed for a careful analysis of the themes and their relation to others, and a final thematic map was illustrated to display the significant themes that emerged from the data.

Throughout each step of this data analysis, I composed memos to reflect on the data process and document ideas about potential ties among concepts. By using the memoing technique, I expanded on my own interpretations of the data categories and kept track of subjective experiences and biases that might have influenced my analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2014). Thus, with the stages of data reduction, cycles of coding, triangulation, thematic analysis, as well as memo writing, the two research questions were investigated. The themes that were identified across and within the three Head Start sites will be presented in the Findings and Discussion chapters.

Research Positionality

As a sequential English language learner, an immigrant who felt pressured to assimilate to the dominant culture of the United States, and an undergraduate student who has an academic background in education and working with diverse populations of children, my personal and professional experiences motivate me to conduct this research. Inevitably, these individual factors also impact my interpretation and analyses of the data. My involvement in assisting with the larger research study in the field of early childhood education also requires that I acknowledge the potential ways my biases colored my approach to coding and the project as a

whole. Through understanding and acknowledging my background, however, I strive to capture what the data demonstrates in an honest, objective manner to the best of my ability. Through the use of memos and frequent case analysis meetings (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with my thesis advisor, I seek to be open minded about the findings and consider alternate interpretations for the data.

Limitations

In addition to this study being limited by my own background as a researcher, it is also limited by its evaluation of only three exemplary Head Start classrooms. The small number of sites, as well as the existence of the three sites within one, city Head Start program, restricts the generalizability of the findings in terms of possible contextual factors that influenced teachers' practices. Additionally, the Head Start program director, center directors, and parents selected these three classrooms based on their current experiences living in a specific geographic region and time period, which may vary for future studies aiming to identify and explore practices in "exemplary" classrooms.

Furthermore, the data sources analyzed were limited to the ELLCO, teacher interviews, video observations, and classroom visual evidence, whereas other methods such as longitudinal field observations could reveal novel findings. Examining children's beliefs toward their own language and culture, and toward those of their peers, would have also enhanced this research and is a necessary step for future studies to thoroughly address the proposed research questions. In general, this study's limitations in regards to the contextual factors and the data sources utilized for the analysis are due to constraints in time and the scope of this senior thesis. The existing data and analysis, nevertheless, provide important insights and implications for how Head Start teachers are serving diverse children in their classrooms.

Findings

ELLCO PreK

Findings from the ELLCO, teacher interviews, video recordings, and visual artifacts overall align with existing research on exemplary teaching practices that teachers use to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children. The Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation Pre-K (ELLCO PreK), which is a tool that assesses the quality of instructional practices for young children in center-based classrooms, showed that the three classrooms were similar in their use of exemplary practices. As Figure 1 illustrates, all of the classrooms scored close to the maximum for each subscale total (maximum of 35 and 60 for Classroom Environment and Language and Literacy, respectively). A full list of the ELLCO Item scores and Subscale scores are included in Appendix E, along with graphs depicting the scores of all three sites.

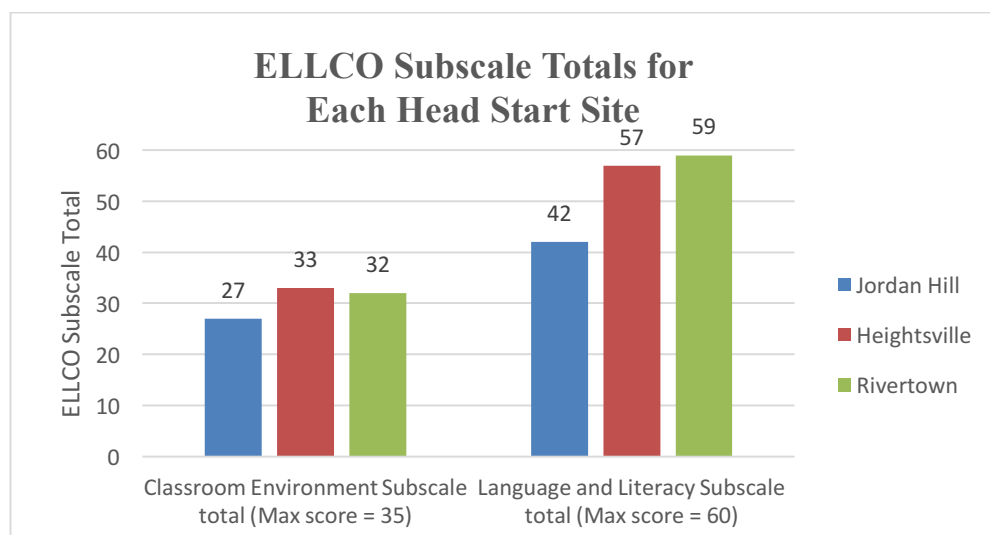


Figure 1: ELLCO Subscale scores for the three Head Start sites

Items that were relevant to cultural or linguistic diversity were analyzed specifically for this study, including Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom, Item 2 Contents of the Classroom, Item 8 Discourse Climate, and Item 13 Characteristics of Books. Among these four

Items that explicitly referenced diversity in their quality measurement descriptions, the three classrooms scored similarly on Item 2 and Item 13, which corresponded with the availability of multicultural materials that reflected and reinforced children's diverse backgrounds.

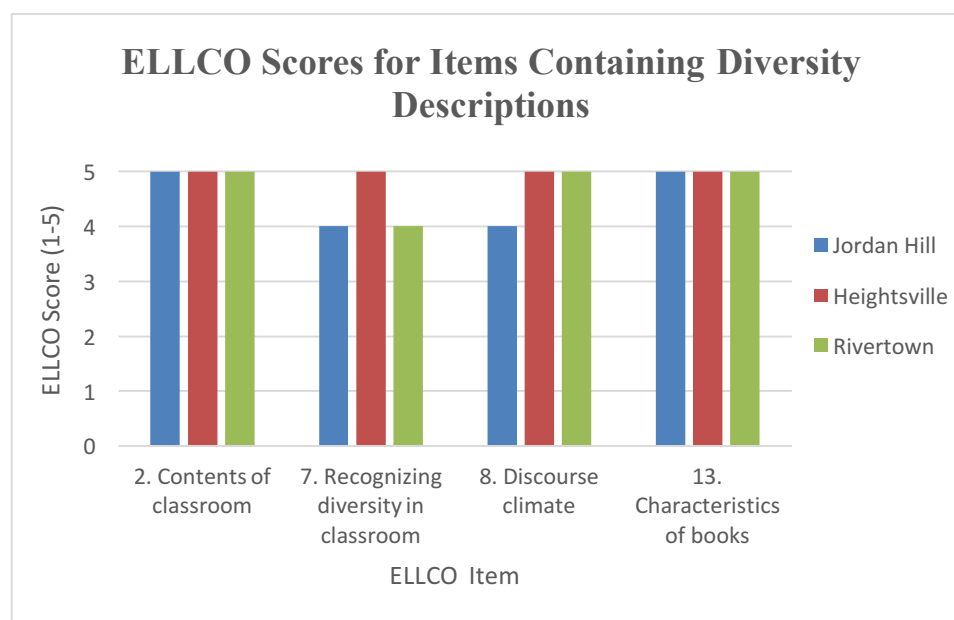


Figure 2: ELLCO scores for Items that were relevant to diversity and analyzed for this study

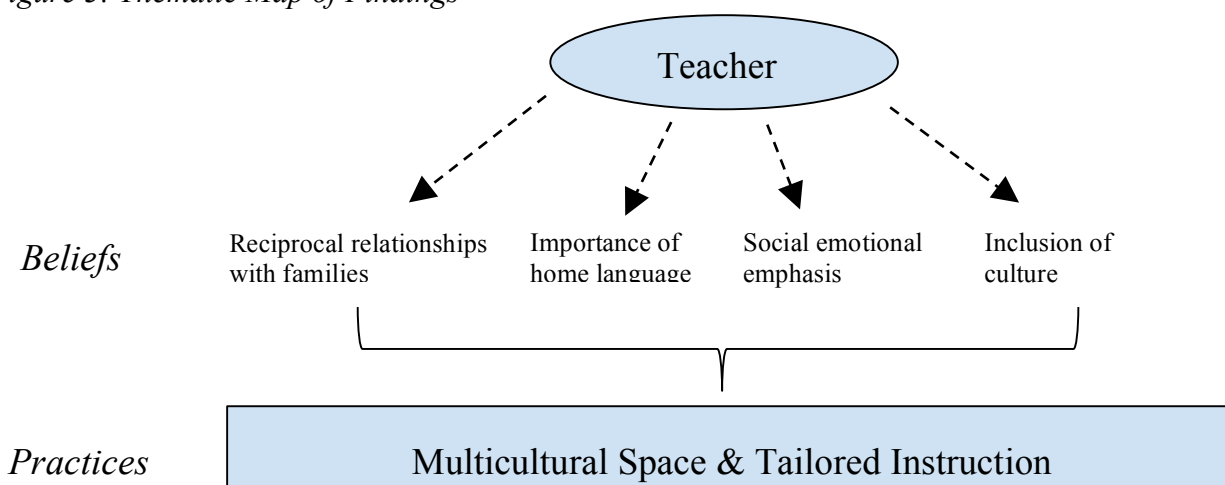
As shown in Figure 2, however, there was a slight variation across the three classrooms on Item 7 and Item 8. Rivertown and Heightsville scored higher on Items 7 and 8, while Jordan Hill scored a 4. This suggests a small variation in the ways that teachers incorporated diversity into the curriculum and classroom discourse. Additional observations from the ELLCO will be presented in combination with the other sources of data to demonstrate the thematic findings for teachers' beliefs and practices.

As mentioned before, the findings overall parallel existing research on developmentally appropriate practices and practices for CLD students in the early childhood classrooms. The four major domains identified through the literature review, as important in describing practices with diverse learners, were found to be relevant in the data analysis as codes emerged for each of the

four major domains – Classroom Environment, Family Engagement, Instruction and Practice, and Teacher Beliefs. This finding in itself validates the approach taken in the methodology and coding process, as well as the identification of these teaching practices in the three diverse classrooms.

After salient codes emerged from the data analysis, potential relationships among the findings were outlined in the form of a thematic map, and common themes evident across all three Head Start sites were identified. As shown in the Figure 3 below, *four* core beliefs shaped teachers' practices in *two* main ways.

Figure 3: Thematic Map of Findings



Across all of the classrooms, teachers held four core beliefs that were connected to their teaching practices. First, four beliefs are presented to bring to light teachers' own descriptions and views on supporting their students. The evidence suggests that these themes represent distinct beliefs and practices that support CLD students in exemplary early childhood education settings. Second, evidence from various data sources will be offered to demonstrate the two main teaching practices observed in the classrooms; the practices cut across the four beliefs reported by teachers. Together, these beliefs and practices respond to the first research question "*What*

practices do exemplary teachers in Head Start classrooms use to promote and affirm cultural and linguistic diversity? The term “practice,” as noted in the introduction of this study, can consist of the following domains: teacher beliefs and attitudes, teacher instruction and interactions, environmental characteristics of the classroom, and engagement with families.

Reciprocal Relationships with Families

During their interviews, teachers frequently conveyed the importance of building reciprocal relationships with children’s families. These exemplary teachers believed that being familiar with a child’s home background and frequently communicating with families can promote better learning and deeper family engagement in the classroom.

To start off the year, teachers aimed to create a strong foundation through their home visits. In her interview, Kathy (Jordan Hill lead teacher) described her purpose during a home visit: *“I get to see their house. I ask them their goals and their expectations for their children and I let them know I’m here, we’re a team. I always stress that we’re a team, we’re going to work together.”* By stressing the importance of working together with the family as a team, Kathy demonstrated her belief that parents are important stakeholders in a child’s education and the value of the family’s views, opinions, and knowledge. Kathy continued on to say, *“So we start off like that, they get to know a little bit more about me, I get to know a little bit more about them. And I think it’s awesome that we do it, because you just feel comfortable.”* A feeling of comfort and an exchange of information between the families and Kathy established a sense of reciprocity in the relationships. Similarly, other teachers at Rivertown and Heightsville also shared their belief that families were valuable partners with whom to collaborate in order to support children’s learning experiences.

Teachers also expressed a strong desire to communicate effectively with families. For example, Rose, whose native language is Arabic, described teachers' efforts to speak the home language with the family if possible: *"For Spanish, [the assistant teacher] goes with me and explains in Spanish. Albanian, I have so far, no problem for Albanian family. But usually, if I have a problem, we have a teacher who speaks Albanian. Arabic, I'm here. Other classrooms, if they need Arabic language, so they ask me if I can do the home visit."* This determination to work together with other teachers and find ways to communicate with a child's family is an extension of the mindset to emphasize familiarity and comfort within relationships with the families.

As relationships continue to grow during the year, teachers believed that family engagement in their children's learning was also important. Rose noted that when she had a partnership with a local radio station that provided iPads for the children in her classroom, she wanted parents to be more informed on their child's learning in school. She stated, *"I think parents they need to see what their children are doing in school, I know they're excited when they hear about the 'iPads, iPads, iPads,' they feel so excited, but they don't really know what their children are learning from those apps, so I said, can we do kind of a workshop for those parents?"* Rose's thought process revealed her dedication to ensure that children's families have opportunities to take part and work together to facilitate children's learning. To facilitate reciprocal relationships, teachers also stated that they frequently invite parents for joint lesson planning, volunteering to read a book, or participating in any other activities during the week, so that they can express their goals for their children, as well as teach in the classroom. Thus, through these comments and descriptions, teachers' persistence and dedication to fostering relationships with parents was a notable theme that emerged through the interviews.

Importance of Home Language

All of the teachers believed that children's home language or native language (L1) could be used as a tool to enrich the teaching process, and some teachers hoped that children maintain their first language while also developing their English skills throughout the year. In thinking about the particular needs of dual language learners (DLLs), Genny believed she could use a child's L1—for example Spanish—as a tool to help him learn in the classroom. She stated that even though they mostly speak English in the classroom, *"If you see that they aren't picking it up, then translate it into Spanish and show them and then repeat it."* This highlighted Genny's mindset to deliberately and readily use a child's home language to advance a child's learning. Other teachers shared similar beliefs and saw the advantage of knowing multiple languages for the children; teachers who were not native speakers of a child's home language even intentionally learned basic vocabulary words to use in the classroom, from other teachers at the site and from families.

Moreover, multiple teachers noted on the importance of maintaining and appreciating other languages besides English. When asked about the goals she had for the bilingual children in her classroom, Rose answered:

"I think to develop language skills. To be where they should be. Improve their communication. But at the same time, I hope they haven't forgotten their own language. It's really important, sometimes parents they say, 'Oh, I speak to them in Spanish, they only prefer English.' I say that's okay but keep your language. One day you're going to hear all the Spanish coming back. Keep your language."

This belief in maintaining L1 was clearly voiced in Rose's answer and confirmed by her willingness to assure parents to continue speaking their language. Similar remarks emphasizing a

personal belief in the necessity to maintain home languages were made by Amy, the assistant teacher at Heightsville, as well.

Annika, the lead teacher at Heightsville, added to this discussion on the importance of home language as she described her efforts to expose children to different languages in the classroom. When asked if she teaches songs in other languages, she said:

“I do teach them in Albanian and Amy does that in her language (Arabic) too. Yeah I know some other songs in Spanish too but this is one of their favorite. S.A., the other teacher next door, she wrote it for me in Spanish. And they like it. [Interviewer: Yeah they were really singing along with that one] The days of the week, I sing them in English and Spanish. And then so the good morning song, [Interviewer: And why do you do more songs in Spanish?] The majority, but I don’t want to leave the other children too, so we do the Albanian and some Arabic.”

As Annika said, even though the majority of children in her classroom know Spanish, she did not want to “leave” the other children’s languages out and she strove to sing songs in multiple languages (Albanian, Arabic, and Spanish). Her description of this practice indicated her deep belief in the importance of exposing children to the languages of their peers and showing children the value of knowing other languages. Through providing examples of how they learn about and support children’s development in their L1, these teachers expressed their belief in the importance of maintaining and appreciating children’s native languages.

Social Emotional Emphasis

Teachers saw that children’s social and emotional well-being in the classroom was crucial to facilitating academic learning and personal growth. As students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds learned in the classroom, numerous teachers mentioned that

they wanted children to feel confident and accepted, and they hoped for children to learn appropriate social and emotional skills, such as regulating their own emotional states and interacting with others appropriately.

Annika's response regarding her goals for DLLs in her classroom illustrated the social emotional emphasis of her beliefs and practices. As she noted, *"I want them to feel confident,"* she expressed that she could generate this sense of confidence even if she and a child did not share a common language. Annika added, *"So you know the smile, maybe I will not talk their language but if I show them my smile, and I show them that I am here for them and using the family pictures and other resources...So it's like, it give them a sense of belonging, so they belong here."* Annika's explanation for why she smiles, uses family pictures, and other resources such as welcome signs in multiple languages highlighted her motivation for creating a classroom where students feel welcomed, safe, and confident.

Additionally, Annika's approach prioritized emotional stability of the children in the classroom before the academic content learning, especially for children who are learning a new culture and language. In the interview, she said: *"Sometimes [children] miss their parents but I want them to feel comfortable in the classroom. After they do that, the goal is for them to follow the routine in their classroom, meet new friends, teach them how to play nicely with each other. And then develop the other skills in the other areas."* For Annika, emotional stability among the children was championed as the initial goal of instruction, followed by children's learning of the social skills and then academic content. The teachers at Rivertown and Jordan Hill conveyed similar beliefs in their interviews as well, noting their goals of creating an inclusive climate that fosters belonging, confidence, and comfort.

At Jordan Hill, Genny described how she utilized the emotional chart in her classroom to model appropriate emotional expression skills for children. She explained that, *“Instead of focusing on the negative that they are doing, I tell the child how I feel. And I try to use the chart most times.... But they know I have been doing this since September, sometimes all I have to do is say, ‘Well, I feel sad because you’re not listening.’”* In this example, Genny depicted the way she consistently points to an image of an emotion on their classroom chart and tells students directly how she is feeling (see Figure 4). Her decision to not focus on the negative behavior and instead employ an “I-statement” to describe how she is feeling, models for children a way to express their emotion in a safe, responsible way. Thus, exemplary Head Start teachers frequently referred to their classroom and their goals for CLD children with a social and emotional emphasis. They felt that engendering a space of safety and warmth, and the usage of healthy coping skills was the first priority for their students.

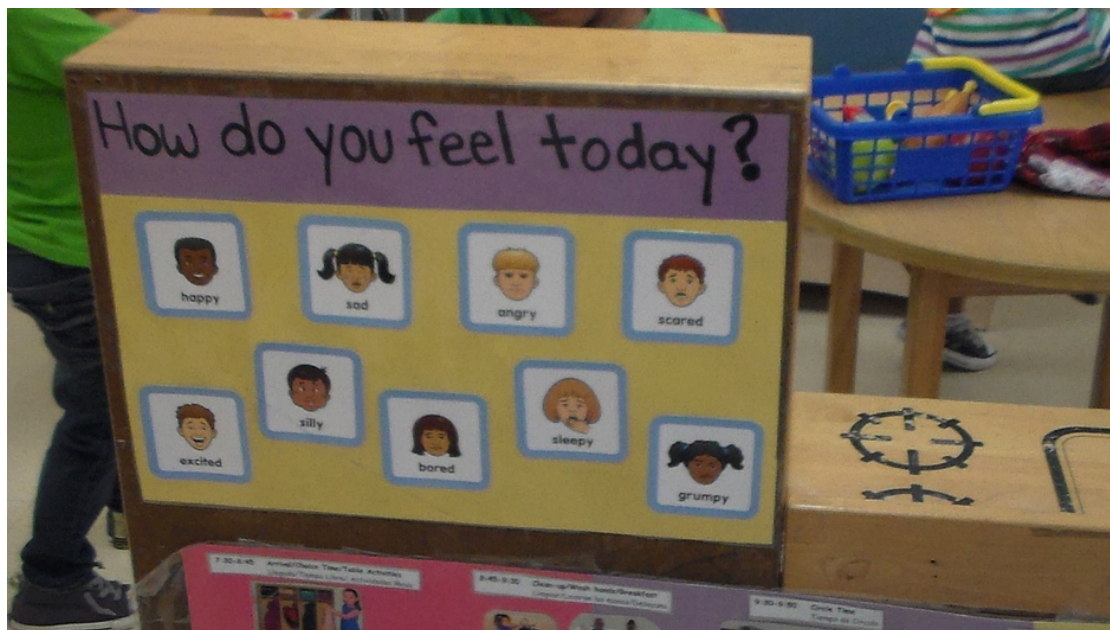


Figure 4: Emotional chart that teachers at Jordan Hill use to help children express their feelings

Inclusion of Culture

Teachers were eager to learn about the cultures and backgrounds of their students, through their home visits and conversations with children and families. This belief in learning as a teacher was especially helpful to encourage additional student learning in the classroom and to support families in culturally appropriate ways.

At many of the sites, teachers described their goals to incorporate materials that reflected the children's cultures, such as books in different languages and cultural clothing in the dramatic play area. Rose described that she hoped to *“also add in books in different languages, as much as I can find, sometimes I ask parents – for Albanian book, so share with the kids, or invite parents to come and read with, I’m not going to be able to read Albanian, but that parents can read it and translate it in English. Summary a little bit. Also, you know the classroom materials reflect on the children’s culture. Like, we try to add diversity. Seeing different cultures.”* This belief in the importance of letting children see and learn about different cultures was a core theme that was present throughout teacher interviews in this study.

A strong desire to learn about the children's home cultures was also evident as Genny described how she had to be careful with Spanish when she spoke with families. She described a sensitivity for the connotations of certain Spanish words in different cultures: *“[I have to] be careful with the words I say, I already know they are not good ... For other cultures [e.g. Puerto Rican, or Dominican]. Because I’m Mexican, so some things do not mean anything for us, but for other cultures is something bad/wrong. So, I have to be very careful.”* Genny's awareness of these cultural differences reflected her belief in the importance of not only learning about families' cultures but also appropriately communicating with families. For other teachers, this

aim to be culturally sensitive and to learn more about the children's cultural backgrounds were also themes that emerged in their interviews.

Although teachers often described their practices as examples, these four core beliefs (reciprocal relationships with families, importance of home language, social emotional emphasis, and inclusion of culture) served as the roots of their motivation and persistence to support CLD children in their classrooms. Elements of these four beliefs permeate through their teaching practices, which were identified through the ELLCO, video observations, and classroom artifacts. Two teaching practices (*creating a multicultural space* and *tailoring instruction*) that support CLD students in particular and are closely connected with the themes of teachers' beliefs will now be presented.

Multicultural Space

Teachers were intentional in creating classroom spaces where children's home cultures and backgrounds were represented and affirmed. As teachers established reciprocal relationships with families and maintained their beliefs in the importance of social emotional development, home language, and cultural inclusion, teachers were able to set up classrooms in which the materials reflected the native heritages and languages of the children. Evidence from the classroom video observations, ELLCO Item 2 and Item 13, and visual artifacts indicated and confirmed ways in which teachers created an inclusive environment of respect and belonging.

At the Heightsville center, welcome signs in multiple languages were hung up to greet families as they walk in. In one room, "welcome" was written in the script of ten languages, which all stemmed the center quote "*One program, many languages...*" The display of "welcome" in Ibo, Spanish, Portuguese, Bosnian, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, allowed all families and children to feel valued as they walked in. As an extension

beyond teacher-implemented displays of language, children's own writings of "hello" in multiple languages were displayed on the wall at Rivertown as well (Figure 5). These instances of multilingual environmental print, seen through visual artifacts and ELLCO (Item 2 Contents of Classroom), demonstrate the ways both teachers and children contributed to a space that was representative of their home language and culture.



Figure 5: Students at Rivertown practiced writing "Hello" in multiple languages

Moreover, dual language books, and books that highlighted and affirmed diversity, were also found through observations using the ELLCO (Item 13 Characteristics of Books). In Jordan Hill, books such as *Working Cotton*, *Diez, Nueve Ocho*, *The Day I was Rich*, *Cora Cooks Pancit*, were displayed in the reading area, and materials in English-Spanish or Arabic-English were seen in the Rivertown book shelves as well. These evidence of multilingual posters and books reflect teachers' beliefs about the importance of the home language in child development, and these displays also help children recognize that there are a variety of languages that are spoken and used among their peers.

Teachers also ensured that their students felt appreciated in the classroom and made efforts to allow each child to express their unique backgrounds. On top of children's lockers at

Jordan Hill, there were picture frames containing photos of children with their parents that created a sense of familiarity and home in the classroom (Figure 6). Additionally, teachers decorated their classrooms with posters that children created to showcase their unique heritages. At Heightsville, for example, each child had an “All About Me” poster that consisted of pictures of his or her family, as well as an illustration of his or her favorite place, color, food, and dream for the future (Figure 7). These and other similar posters (Figure 8) served as compelling evidence for the description of ELLCO Item 2, which notes that posters and child generated work “reinforces children’s sense of their contributions to the learning community and reflects their diverse backgrounds, languages, and approaches to classroom tasks.” This sense of community while maintaining each child’s identity, was clear across all three of the sites and thus all sites received exemplary scores (scores of 5) for Item 2 as well.



Figure 6: Framed photos of students and their families displayed at Jordan Hill



Figure 7: Children’s “All About Me” posters displayed in the Heightsville classroom



Figure 8: Posters of children's ethnic backgrounds hung around the Rivertown classroom

These practices closely align with the social emotional emphasis that multiple teachers conveyed earlier. As Annika summarized in her interview, *“Maybe I will not talk their language but if I show them my smile, and I show them that I am here for them and using the family pictures and other resources...So it's like, it give them a sense of belonging, so they belong here.”* Stemming from this belief, all the teachers described using familiar family pictures and languages to create a sense of emotional stability and belonging for children who may feel uncomfortable at first or experience a language barrier. With strong teacher-family relationships and asset-based perspectives on culture and language, teachers generated classroom environments that honored and reflected the diverse lived experiences of all students.

Tailored Instruction

Recognizing the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students, teachers across the three sites frequently tailored lessons and teaching strategies. With specific attention to DLLs, teachers used children's native languages as tools to help students understand the concepts, and they employed gestures, visuals, and scaffolding to help children learn in the classroom.

Teachers were conscious of and responsive to linguistic development of DLL children. For instance, Annika and Amy worked together at Heightsville to address the language needs of dual language learners in their classroom. During one lesson, Annika addressed one student, M.I., who was just starting to learn English during circle time, and clearly enunciated the words “soil, flower, seed” for him as she pointed to pictures and the plants they had worked with the previous day. In other instances during the day, if Amy asked M.I. a question in English, he felt comfortable answering to Amy in Arabic because they both spoke that language.

When asked about how they chose to use which language, the teachers described they strove to match the developmental progress of the child and were patient in supporting the child’s natural language acquisition process. Annika explained the progression of Amy’s use of Arabic to support M.I. and his twin brother: *“It was Arabic only in the beginning. It was mostly Arabic and now it’s like half and half, some Arabic and some English. Because they understand more now. They are naming pictures on the board. They learn single words, trying to put two words together.”* Annika and Amy saw that using a child’s native language not only made the child more comfortable, but it also helped enhance communication and learning. Annika reiterated that even though she encouraged children to practice using full sentences, *“I can’t expect that from M.I., that just started school, so the goal for M.I. would be for him to, for example, to just put two words together.”*

Teachers’ systematic uses of language were present in other classrooms as well. For example, Kathy explained the importance of pace as she differentiated instruction: *“J.O. would do a book that had words but I would just point out characters to him, and then J.A., who’s like, ‘look this says moon’ I would read to him more of the words. So everybody has an individual plan and maybe three or four of them might be grouped in, like I said, just saying basic words.”*

Kathy, as a native English speaker, also described that she learned Spanish as a new language when she started teaching. Because most students in her classroom speak Spanish, she used Spanish in a combination with gestures in her lessons. Throughout the video observation of a small group lesson at Rivertown, Kathy confirmed the meaning of the English word “horse” using the Spanish word “caballo” to help a young student practice naming the toy animals they were holding.

Many teachers, similar to Kathy, noted that the strong relationships with families and with colleagues helped them to be able to learn commonly used phrases in additional languages in order to communicate with children, especially with dual language learners (DLLs). Moreover, teachers often consulted parents and other staff in order to lead songs in multiple languages. At Heightsville, the “Good Morning” song was sang in Spanish and English, and they sang the “Days of the Week” song in Arabic and Albanian as well. A few teachers, such as Rose and Amy, even expressed a desire to help families and children maintain their home language, which is reflective of their belief that the native language (L1) is important. In all of the classrooms, drawing upon children’s native languages and exhibiting an appreciation of a variety of languages in the classroom was in alignment with Item 7 on the ELLCO, which evaluates for evidence that “diversity that children bring is integrated into ongoing curricular activities.”

Through the use of authentic materials, gestures, pictures, small group and whole group instruction, teachers strove to engage all of the learners in their classroom. In the taped video observation at Heightsville, students were able to see and hold materials bricks, shingles, and wood as they discussed the “types of homes” during the lesson (Figure 9). At the Rivertown classroom, the video session recorded the whole group activity where children acted and

gestured as they went on a “Bear Hunt.” With Rose modeling vocabulary such as “swim, life jacket, goggles,” students made the appropriate movements as the story unfolded.

Visual charts and pictures were also prominent strategies that teachers implemented to help children recall their activities and learning. After a field trip to the arboretum, pictures of the children were posted on the wall, along with a chart of “What we found?” at the arboretum. Moreover, a clear display case containing a budding plant was used to help children learn the locations of its root, stem, and leaf (Figure 10). These materials prompt children to reactivate of their knowledge and experiences after the trip, and they demonstrate the hands-on approach that teachers initiated for children’s learning.



Figure 9 and Figure 10: Hands-on materials used in the Heightsville classroom to support children, especially DLLs, in their learning

Overall, giving students a variety of verbal and visual supports during instruction was possible because the teachers had relationships with children’s parents, asset-based mindsets on cultural and linguistic diversity, and deep knowledge of their students’ developmental progress. The four core beliefs of teachers were instrumental to the ways through which teachers

engendered a welcoming, multicultural space for their students and also crafted lessons that appropriately supported the learning of all children.

Analytic Narratives of Sites

In addition to the exemplary teaching practices seen across all sites, each classroom was also unique in its own way. Analytic narratives of each site are presented below to address the second research question: *How do the three Head Start classrooms vary from one another, and more specifically, in which domains are the classrooms similar or different?* Because similarities and themes across the three sites have been explained previously (i.e., all teachers demonstrated the four shared teaching beliefs and the practices of creating a multicultural classroom environment and tailoring instruction), the analytic narratives will aim to capture some distinct features of each classroom and reveal variations in the domains of family engagement and teacher instruction.

Jordan Hill. At Jordan Hill, Kathy (lead teacher) and Genny (assistant teacher) described ways in which they aim to promote social emotional development among students in the classroom and employ respect when communicating and partnering with families. Almost all of the children in the classroom know a degree of Spanish and English, and this unique language demographic allowed the teachers to intentionally draw on the power and familiarity of Spanish to respond to the cultural backgrounds of children and families.

Genny explained the concept of *cariño* to describe the way she treats students with care and love. She noted her own use of words of endearment like “Mi niño, mi niña, papi, mamita” with the children and the consistent theme of friendship. Frequently communicating “*Todos somos amigos aquí*” (we are all friends here), Genny emphasized the emotional stability and comfort for children. Moreover, Kathy corroborated the importance of friendship and care in the

classroom as she described their emphasis on teamwork throughout the year. She recalled asking children, *“How we care for each other and how we have to – how can you help your friend solve this problem? What do you think we can do?”* She described that *“once they start seeing how we make relationships in the classroom and I see a lot of kids are very very frustrated because they’re not getting that, but we’re going to help each other.”* Using phrases such as care, friendship, teamwork, Kathy and Genny allowed children to think about their own identities, feelings, and choices within the community. These practices point to a strong emphasis on social emotional development, and its prevalence indicates it is a unique aspect of the Jordan Hill classroom.

Working and communicating with families, however, was a challenge that both teachers acknowledged. They explained that some parents wanted to be very involved in setting learning goals for their children, but it was difficult for teachers to convey that those goals may not be developmentally appropriate yet. For example, Genny described *“there are some parents who said they wanted to work on first letters in the name. Then children are not ready for that. They are not ready for that. Then we try to tell them, ‘Well, he is not ready, but he is doing this very well. He’s socializing better or he is...’ - You know? Like telling them about other positive things, but we still do not believe he’s ready to do what they want.”* Respecting the opinions of parents while also explaining their teaching decisions for the child was a necessary but sometimes difficult experience for teachers.

Moreover, being attentive to word choice was another crucial part of communicating clearly with families. When using Spanish, Genny described she was careful to choose her words because she knew that the Spanish vocabulary she uses, coming from her Mexican cultural

background, may mean something different for a family with a Puerto Rican background; she did not want to offend any families or parents when communicating with them.

These insights from Kathy and Genny's interviews indicated the ways Spanish was utilized in the Head Start classroom. Spanish was a powerful tool to help establish a community of care among students, and at the same time teachers noted the importance of recognizing heterogeneity within the language and emphasized the large degree of sensitivity that was needed to work together with families of the children in their classroom.

Despite this acknowledgment of culture and sensitivity in family engagement, Jordan Hill differed from Rivertown and Heightsville's ELLCO scores on Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom and Item 8 Discourse Climate. Scoring 4 on both Items indicated that there was *some* but not *compelling* evidence that teachers incorporated children's home knowledge into the lessons and activities; there was *some* evidence that teachers encouraged participation of all children and built on similarities and differences to foster further discussion. These two scores were still favorable because on the scale ranging from 1 to 5, but the lack of compelling evidence for the explicit incorporation of children's home backgrounds in lessons and discussions on diversity accounted for the score of 4 on both Items.

Thus, teachers at Jordan Hill prioritized social emotional well-being in the classroom, worked closely with parents, and used Spanish as an asset to communicate with families. There was not compelling evidence, however, that children's funds of knowledge and personal cultural backgrounds were incorporated into the instructional activities.

Rivertown. In the Rivertown classroom, a wide range of languages were spoken among children in the classroom, including Spanish, Albanian, Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Somalian, and Ethiopian. The teachers, Rose and Jan, spoke Arabic and French, respectively. The teachers were

able to construct opportunities to explicitly discuss cultural differences in the classroom. By encouraging families to have important roles in their children's learning, teachers were also able to engage parents and reach out to parents to improve the accuracy of student assessments when needed.

Immediately visible on the classroom walls were posters from lessons where children thought about similarities and differences among the many cultures, appearances, languages, nationalities, and traditions of their peers. For instance, one poster (Figure 11) inquired, "How do we look alike?" and "How do we look different?" Student responses were recorded within each column, noting that "Me and R have the same color hair; we are all people and have eyes; we are different colors and we came from different countries; we speak different languages." Similarities and differences are addressed explicitly while being careful not to uphold one as "better" than another. The visual evidence from these discussions correspond with the score of 5 that Rivertown received on the ELLCO for Item 8 Discourse Climate. There was compelling evidence from the ELLCO observation and visual evidence that teachers explicitly and appropriately built on similarities and differences among children in the classroom.

Surrounding this large poster were children's self-portraits, where teachers documented the comments that each child made, such as "My hair makes me special; my shirt makes me special." Adding gestures to a song entitled "I am Special" into this lesson made the theme "We are all alike and we are all different" even more clear. Furthermore, children were asked to consider what they are proud of in their appearance, cultural food, and nationality; the posters all around the room indicated that teachers prompted, validated, and documented their knowledge and comments. Although this lesson was not observed in person, the visual evidence reveals that students at Rivertown have been guided in their thinking about differences and diversity.



Figure 11: Rivertown's explicit discussion of similarities and differences and posters documenting children's thoughts on why "I am Special"

Moreover, other posters contained children's handprints in various skin tone colors, and a chain of small paper dolls that matched the children's skin, hair, eyes, and clothing encircled an illustration of the earth was also displayed in the classroom. These visual artifacts demonstrated how teachers at Rivertown valued diversity and prompted students to see that difference does not indicate inferiority. However, Rivertown received a score of 4 on Item 7 Recognizing Diversity on the ELLCO because there was little evidence of using the children's native languages in the classroom and there was also not compelling evidence that teachers used strategies to engage DLLs during the curriculum activities.

At Rivertown, teachers described that they reached out to parents about what their children were learning in preschool, and provided reports with the family on math, language

skills that their children are working on. Kathy insightfully explained, *“Either like math skills, science skills, language, you need to talk, even at home really to have that, you know, encouragement and do it with your child. All this is stuff, like I do a report with the family. I talk to them about it. I say you need to know what your child is playing, what they are doing. Be aware. Where are they now? What they need to learn next. To help them to move on.”* Kathy’s efforts to invite parents into their children’s learning was also evident in previously-mentioned workshop on iPads that she hosted, where parents could learn what their children were playing and learning through the new technology. With frequent volunteers in the classroom and family participation in children’s learning processes, the teachers and families likely both felt supported in their endeavors to be closely involved in students’ learning.

Information flow in both directions was an important element to the communication channel between families and parents, especially when monitoring children’s progress in their learning. When speaking about the Ages and Stages assessment for children, Kathy noted another way she tailored the assessment for DLLs was to confirm with their parents whether the child had achieved those milestones. She pointed out *“You know, sometimes you say things in English, the child don’t understand it. If the parents speak to the child with their language, to be fair for the child, this cannot be checked, like, “Okay, the child is able to do this. [Interviewer: So when you do that Ages and Stages at home, the parent may act as a translator?]* Yes. In this way, Riverside teachers were responsive to the language needs of children and in a striking way, actually sought to tailor their assessments to children, not just the instruction. Thus, teachers at Rivertown saw difference and diversity as assets that students should feel comfortable discussing, and they treated parents as resources and partners to help with children’s learning and growth.

Heightsville. A variety of languages were also spoken in the Heightsville classroom, such as Albanian, Arabic, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese. Annika and Amy (lead and assistant teacher) knew Albanian and Arabic respectively, and together they have also learned basic words to communicate with children who speak other languages. The teaching practices that promote and affirm diversity were similar to the practices that Rivertown teachers implemented, in regards to incorporating diversity into curriculum, promoting family engagement, and tailoring assessments for CLD students.

During Annika's whole group lesson on "Types of Homes," an inclusion of all students' home backgrounds into the curriculum created an engaging and meaningful activity. Pointing to a picture of an apartment, single home, trailer, and tent, Annika guided children as they came to the front of the circle, and individually taped their nametag onto the column corresponding to the type of home that they lived in (Figure 12). Each child could feel included within the community as he or she completed this activity and watched the chart slowly fill up with the names of peers.



Figure 12: Visual chart used at Heightsville that invited all students to participate during the lesson on "Types of Homes"

For one particular student, M.I., who was new to the classroom and beginning to learn English, Annika used the knowledge she gained from the home visit and pointed to the picture of “house” and “apartment” to help him narrow down the choices in his selection process. The element of diversity that was represented and incorporated in this lesson was the type of home they lived in rather than strictly on focusing on ethnic or linguistic diversity. This lesson exemplified the type of evidence that ELLCO Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom requested. The effort by teachers to learn and use information from children’s homes and communities as a basis for learning experiences and classroom-based literacy activities was more compelling at Heightsville due to lessons like these, in comparison to the lessons seen at Rivertown and Jordan Hill.

Integrating knowledge of children’s home backgrounds into the curriculum in this way helped children be more engaged during the lesson, and ultimately seeing everyone’s names on the chart generated a sense of belonging as well. Moreover, the way lessons at Heightsville invited all students, including students from differing linguistic, racial, and cultural groups, to actively participate and begin conversations based on similarities and differences, was why Heightsville also received a score of 5 on the ELLCO’s Item 8 Discourse Climate.

Families played a uniquely large role in the Heightsville classroom, as parent volunteers would come on a daily basis and complement the instructional practices of teachers. Annika stated that parents were invited to lesson planning meetings to provide any suggestions they have, and sometimes they created a “partner lesson plan” containing activities that families could do with their children for the week. Parents were strong partners *inside* the classroom too, as families often came into organize a dance flashmob, show a special cultural food, or read a book.

Annika affirmed, *“The purpose is just to get them involved in their child’s education and see what’s going on in the classroom. And I think they like it when you get the engaged, when you ask them to do something. When you ask them for ideas, they like it.”*

One instance that exemplified parent involvement in the classroom was observed while conducting the ELLCO. The teacher invited one student’s mother into the classroom to read *Salta, Ranita, Salta, (Jump, Frog, Jump)* in Spanish. Students showed great excitement to hear a story they had been reviewing in class, in a new language, and this brief guest-reader provided an opportunity for students to hear and begin to understand the value of other languages aside from English. Annika explained that they often invite parents to come in to read books, *“Especially related to the theme. Since we’re talking about spring, so for her to come and read the book. The twins’ father read the book in Arabic. And I’ll read in Albanian.”* Of course, this opportunity was not available for all lessons and all books, but Annika strove to do it when possible.

At Heightsville, teachers made an effort to assess children in their native language, if possible, in order to gain an accurate understanding of children’s learning. Amy and Annika said they use their native languages, and reach out to other staff at the center as well, to take observations of children. Moreover, parents also played a unique role in teachers’ ongoing assessments. The passage below described an instance where Annika relied on parents’ insights for instruction and assessment:

“I have this child in my classroom. She’s really smart, really really smart. But she chooses not to verbally communicate in the classroom so I did talk to the parent because we’re lucky we have the parents come everyday, we have daily conversation with them. So he tells me that at home, she sang the song that I taught them one day before! So he video tape her and show it to me ... So when I ask her, she will nod her head, but she will

draw the picture, she will show me, or if she will write... And I know she speaks because I've seen the videos. That way I am not concerned that she's not speaking, I know she does, she just, I need to work on her feeling more comfortable and confident."

The parent's updates on his daughter's progress at home illustrates the way that daily communication and strong relationships can help teachers like Annika to gain insight into children's development in the classroom. With this other source of information, Annika was able to confirm that the child was learning in school and turned to the goal of increasing the student's comfort and confidence in the classroom. Thus, family involvement and relationships with families enhanced the ability of Heightsville teachers to integrate diversity into their lessons and also tailor their assessments throughout the year.

Discussion

ELLCO PreK

As noted in the literature review, the ELLCO PreK has been widely used to evaluate the quality of language and literacy in preschool classrooms (Maxwell et al., 2009; Lipsey, Farran, & Hoffer, 2015; Jackson, 2012), and it is important to examine the application of this instrument in the context of classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2014a). The findings from this study indicate that the ELLCO PreK has the potential to measure and assess the cultural and linguistic responsiveness in the classroom, but additional sources of data are also useful to help capture the unique ways teachers respond to diversity in the classroom.

All three Head Start classrooms clearly demonstrated compelling evidence for specific components of the ELLCO, such as multicultural materials from children's homes and communities. However, because of the small range of scores (1 to 5) that can be assigned for each classroom, merely relying on Item and Subscale scores on the ELLCO does not immediately illustrate the richness of approaches or the differences among classrooms.

For example, the three sites scored similarly on Item 7 Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom (Rivertown 4, Jordan Hill 4, and Heightsville 5) but there were variations in the ways teachers incorporated diversity into the curriculum. Rivertown received a score of 4 because there were few instances of using a child's native language (L1) in the classroom and limited strategies to engage dual language learners in curriculum activities. Jordan Hill, however, *did* frequently employ children's L1 during instruction since a majority of the children spoke Spanish and English. The area where Jordan Hill lacked compelling evidence for (which was also corroborated by the video observation) was the incorporation of children's prior knowledge

and backgrounds into the classroom literacy activities; this different but relevant observation thus explained Jordan Hill's score of 4. These nuances illustrate that the ELLCO scores, although useful, is sometimes limited in conveying detailed information about the classroom practices.

Additional interviews with teachers and extended classroom observations beyond the ELLCO provided more detailed information. For example, interviews showed that Rivertown teachers tailored child assessments with the help of parents who served as translators and that Jordan Hill teachers were responsive to each family's specific ethnicities even though they shared one common home language of Spanish. Multiple sources of data therefore helped to illuminate elements of teaching that were not examined in detail by the ELLCO.

Moreover, the value of utilizing multiple data sources was evident when data from the interviews did not corroborate data from the ELLCO. For example, teachers at Jordan Hill noted during their interviews that they aimed to create an environment where children felt comfortable and safe, allowing them to communicate comfortably within the community. Despite the ways both teachers used verbal and nonverbal strategies to individually support children, there was some but not compelling evidence that *all* children were conversing with teachers to a similar degree (Item 8 Discourse Climate). The contrast between the interview and the ELLCO classroom observation was important to explore, especially because it highlights the importance of studying both teacher beliefs *and* practices.

Using multiple sources of data, therefore, was a useful and valuable methodological approach in order to draw attention the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices in this study. Overall, the findings from the ELLCO confirmed that evidence for exemplary teaching practices was present in all three classrooms, but the findings were enriched by additional sources of data, such as video observations and teacher interviews.

In the future, additional measures of quality aimed at evaluating cultural responsiveness need to be considered, especially for CLD student populations. Burchinal and Cryer (2003), along with Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2014a) concluded that global measurements of quality function similarly with different cultural and linguistic groups, in regards to overall quality, psychometric characteristics, and child outcomes, as long as the teaching practices were sensitive and stimulating. The results from this current study, similarly, show that the ELLCO can be used to measure a range of quality teaching practices that support the needs of diverse groups of children.

However, there is still a call for research to investigate how culturally responsive care is embedded in our standards for quality (Shivers & Sanders, 2011). For example, there have been attempts to develop tools that measure dimensions of anti-bias and culturally responsive teaching, to complement the focus on language and literacy in early childhood classrooms. These promising measures, such as the Anti-Bias Curriculum Measure-4 and the Diversity Orientation Survey, are in the preliminary stages of development and validation (Shivers & Sanders, 2011). Since there are limitations of using one measurement tool, as mentioned earlier, it would also be crucial that future quality measurement tools incorporate a range of data sources, such as parent interviews and perhaps even child questionnaires, that are designed to specifically evaluate the way diversity is recognized and affirmed in the classroom.

Teaching Practices for CLD Students

Given the findings that demonstrate that four core teacher beliefs are closely connected with two teaching practices, the following discussion will present teacher beliefs and practices as they align with the field's research on high quality teaching practices for culturally and linguistically diverse students. First, holding a firm belief in *building reciprocal relationships*

with children's families was an important value for all teachers in this study. Frequent collaboration with families through home visits, newsletters, parent volunteers, and in-person communication in the classroom were ways in which teachers made parents feel valued as partners in their children's education. In alignment with research by Amaro-Jimenez and Semington (2011), Tabors (2008), Adair and Bazzara (2014) on family and teacher communication and collaboration, these practices not only provide teachers with valuable cultural information for developing instruction but they also allow parents to feel respected.

A specific challenge was noted by Riley, Gichuru, and Robertson (2013), Adair and Bazzara (2014), and Heng (2011) was that parents were hesitant to raise questions for teachers or to voice concerns about the way their cultural and social practices were represented in the classroom. Although this current study did not incorporate interviews with the children's families, the frequent dialogue and genuine interest from the teachers in Heightsville, Rivertown, and Jordan Hill to build reciprocal relationships with families likely created numerous opportunities for families to directly influence the way their culture was represented in the classroom. This perhaps reflects the larger goal of the Head Start program of engaging families to support children's learning and growth.

Similar to the teachers in Gilliard and Moore's (2007) study who incorporated local Native American traditions into the classroom, all six Head Start teachers often said they have parent volunteers come to enrich instruction by reading a book in a different language or celebrating different cultural skills. However, contrary to Gichuru et al. (2015) and Tabors' (2008) suggestions for attending events in families' neighborhoods, teachers in this study did not mention that they go to any local community events to learn more about the children's lives and homes. This could be something that teachers do in the future to deepen their understanding of

students and their families. This would also prepare teachers to better construct lessons that draw on students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). This study is also limited in scope since only the perspectives of teachers were observed and analyzed; a more accurate and direct understanding of parents' perceptions of the teachers' actions to promote family engagement is needed in the future to confirm the effectiveness of these strategies.

Teachers' beliefs in the *importance of using children's home language* in the classroom and putting an *emphasis on social emotional development* in the classroom were, in combination, representative of what previous research in the field has identified as high quality teaching strategies for CLD students. Creating a low-anxiety environment, using familiar words in a child's home language, and honoring children's unique cultures every day in the classroom can help children learn more academically, gain social skills, and experience lower levels of peer victimization (Krashen, 1982; Burchinal et al., 2012; Halle et al., 2014). More research is needed, though, since this study did not compare teaching practices with children's social, emotional, or academic outcomes. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that these Head Start teachers showed the same core beliefs that have been identified by research as crucial for enhancing young children's growth and development.

Teachers' fourth belief, *inclusion of culture* in the classroom and curriculum, was also one that is frequently found in research for culturally responsive instruction. Similar to the teachers in David's (2005) study who incorporated local Alaskan traditions in their Head Start center, teachers at Rivertown, Jordan Hill, and Heightsville invited parents to help celebrate different ethnic foods and read, for example, *Salta, Ranita, Salta (Jump, Frog, Jump)* in Spanish. Moreover, decorating the classroom with "All About Me" posters and documenting children's

comments as they described why “I am Special” validated the pride that children should feel for their appearance, cultural foods, and nationality.

However, there was room for improvement in the ways that culture was embedded into the daily curriculum. The “Types of Homes” lesson at Heightsville exemplified this type of intentional inclusion of children’s diverse experiences and funds of knowledge into the curriculum but this was not observed saliently in Rivertown and Jordan Hill, as noted in the ELLCO score discussion earlier as well. Thus, similar to the findings by Gichuru, Riley, Robertson, and Park (2015) that urged the importance of incorporating student culture into the curriculum, the findings of study also indicated that teachers can still strive to improve the ways in which culture is integrated into instructional lessons.

In addition to the practices reflecting teachers’ four core beliefs, this study was also able to identify two specific practices teachers implemented for CLD students. As noted in the findings, *multicultural classroom environments* where teachers intentionally used posters, pictures, books, and dolls that were representative of children’s home backgrounds were found in all of the Head Start classrooms. Gichuru et al. (2015) also identified similar materials in the Head Start classrooms they examined, but they also conveyed that the physical materials in the classrooms were *not* explicitly connected to the curriculum nor used to enhance children’s own understandings of various cultures. In contrast to the latter finding of Gichuru et al. (2015), results in this study show that teachers at Heightsville and Rivertown *did* use these physical materials as a part of lessons that encouraged children to think about diversity and value their peers’ cultures and languages. Through singing songs in multiple languages, reading dual-language books, and responding to lessons on “How do we look alike? How do we look different?” teachers connected children’s diverse backgrounds into classroom experiences.

Lastly, with specific attention to dual language learners (DLLs) in their classrooms, teachers across the three sites frequently *tailored their instruction*. Teachers used children's native languages as tools to help students understand concepts, along with visual aids, hands-on materials, gestures, and scaffolding that was responsive to children's linguistic development. Since research in the field has asserted that a systematic use of languages and the instructional strategies mentioned earlier can promote language and literacy skills among DLLs (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Goldenberg, Hicks, & Lit, 2013), the findings from this study confirm these exemplary Head Start teachers used strategies that are indicative of high quality instruction for students in preschool.

Overall, there was a connection between teachers' beliefs and practices, which was corroborated by multiple data sources. Unlike the teachers described by Soltero-Gonzalez (2008) whose practices did not parallel the beliefs they expressed, teachers in the three Head Start classrooms in this study implemented strategies that were closely linked to their core beliefs. However, it would be important for future studies to investigate teachers' perceptions of their own practices and whether they see a discrepancy between their beliefs and practices.

In the literature, there is an understanding that the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices can be complex (Sawyer et al., 2016) and each teacher's positive attitudes toward cultural and linguistic diversity may be influenced by a number of factors, such as the number of minority students in the classroom, the teacher's ethnic background, the teacher's language proficiency in students' home languages, and exposure to diversity training (Flores and Smith, 2008). Although the relationship between beliefs and practices was not explored quantitatively in this study, the overlap between teachers' beliefs and practices in this study demonstrates teachers were thinking about the dynamic relationship between beliefs and practices. Moreover, since all

of the teachers in this study were proficient in two or more languages, which they used to communicate with young children, it is possible that the teachers' own ethnic backgrounds and language abilities impacted their asset-based approach toward teaching children. A deeper analysis of the factors that impact beliefs of teachers would be required in the future.

As suggested by Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2010), it would also be worthwhile to examine whether teachers engage in a culturally responsive cycle of forming narratives, documenting and interpreting events, and reflecting and learning from students. This type of research would shed more light on responsive instructional practices, clarify the factors that may influence teachers' attitudes toward diverse children, and illustrate the connection between teacher beliefs and practices.

Theoretical Frameworks for Teaching CLD Students

The teaching beliefs and strategies used by Head Start teachers in this study align with the theoretical frameworks of multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy. Multicultural education seeks to convey that diversity is a normal, characteristic, and essential component of the United States and that individuals, through understanding diverse perspectives, can become enriched in their thinking, learning, and functioning in all of the communities to which they belong (Souto-Manning, 2013; Banks, 2014). Similarly, teachers who use culturally relevant pedagogy acquire an in-depth understanding of children's home cultures, values, and lived experiences in order to bridge the community and home with the school (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Elements from both these theories can be seen in the core beliefs and practices of the teachers in this study: all of the teachers strove to learn about and incorporate children's diverse backgrounds into the classroom in ways that honored students' unique identities.

The exemplary beliefs and practices that emerged from the current study provide evidence for how culturally responsive pedagogy comes to life in early childhood classrooms. As outlined by Villegas and Lucas (2002), there are six qualities for culturally responsive teaching: 1) sociocultural consciousness; 2) affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds; 3) seeing himself or herself as agents of social change; 4) having constructivist view of learning; 5) knowing the lives of students; 6) using students' funds of knowledge to design instruction. In the overall themes and findings that emerged from the study, these six qualities are visible and connected to the beliefs and practices that teachers held and implemented in their classrooms.

Furthermore, it is a significant, although perhaps not surprising, that the theoretical frameworks that most closely fit with the teaching practices of Head Start teachers in this study *match* the theoretical framework that is championed by Head Start regulations, standards, and various memoranda (Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2013). Usage of the terms “culturally relevant, cultural responsiveness, culturally appropriate” encourages teachers to see children's cultural, linguistic, ethnic, educational, and ability differences as strengths in the classroom and to strive to promote children's understandings of their own culture and those of others. It is striking that these specific themes and ways of describing beliefs and practices not only emerged from the Head Start teachers' individual interviews but were also found in the classroom observations conducted in this research study.

Although practices that exemplify multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy are optimistic findings for researchers and practitioners, the framework and goals of anti-bias education should be further investigated and encouraged in the future. Anti-bias education places a heavier emphasis on diversity in *multiple aspects* of an individual's identity,

including gender, sexual orientation, race, social class, religion, and disability. Moreover, it aims to provide preschool children with language to express not only their comfort and joy with human diversity *but also to recognize, describe, and react to unfairness* (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010). Designed and published specifically for young children by NAEYC, anti-bias education provides practices that teachers can adopt to prevent and combat types of social biases that may undermine children's academic, social emotional, cognitive, and identity development.

Current teachers who have already adopted multicultural and culturally responsive approaches in their teaching should be affirmed and commended for their persistence and effort. They could serve as mentors and models for other teachers, especially for pre-service teachers and beginning teachers. It would also be important to pursue research that investigates beliefs as connected to practices, especially to help guide teacher education programs and teachers in training. With the growth of diverse student populations, it is important that daily instructional practices continue to reflect these seminal frameworks in education and also aim to enrich children's views on diversity in multiple dimensions.

Limitations and Future Implications

This work is limited in its sample size and types of data collected from families and children. The sample size of three classrooms and six teachers in one geographic area is not representative of the variety of practices that other exemplary teachers could employ in their classrooms to affirm CLD students. Additionally, because this study identified "exemplary" teachers and classrooms to take part in the research, the results are not representative of nor generalizable to Head Start teachers in all other classrooms across the nation. Furthermore, measures of the social, emotional, and academic progress among children were not included in

this study, and parent perceptions of teachers' practices were also not available to use as sources of data that could confirm whether the goal promoting and affirming cultural and linguistic diversity was met. This study also only used the ELLCO as a quality measurement tool, but other instruments such as the CLASS (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) and ECERS-R (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005) could be incorporated because they are widely used tools that measure interactions between teachers and students, as well as the materials and practices that attend to diversity and culture.

Research in the field should continue to examine how teachers are promoting and affirming diversity in classrooms where children's backgrounds are more homogenous than the backgrounds that were present in these three Head Start classrooms. By examining a larger number of Head Start sites in both rural and urban areas across the United States, a more generalizable set of findings could emerge and provide insights for how teachers in a range of contexts enhance children's views on diversity. Moreover, observing teachers who use NAEYC's anti-bias curriculum as a framework would also highlight some ways that teachers could help children recognize and respond to difference and bias. It would be intriguing to explore the prevalence of culturally relevant and anti-bias frameworks among other early childhood education settings, beyond the federally-funded Head Start program.

The impact of programming and policy on teachers responding to cultural and linguistic diversity is important to consider for current and future research. The programs and structures that teachers work within may facilitate or hinder the ways teachers implement these practices. For example, regulations that only permit English as the language of instruction and do not require home visits from teachers would impact the way teachers learn about their students' backgrounds and incorporate students' cultures and languages into the curriculum. Thus, this

work provides implications for program and policy research when examining practices at the classroom level.

As many classrooms experience an increase in diverse student populations, the practices that are beneficial for CLD students will likely be helpful for all children. This research focuses heavily practices for CLD students, but it is worth recognizing that there are also other general techniques and strategies that are effective for all students as well. This study contributes to the field of early childhood education by illustrating a set of exemplary teaching practices that teachers can adopt in their preschool classrooms to respond to the diverse experiences of their students.

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Appendix A

Semi Structured Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol contains questions that were addressed to teachers during their individual interviews. The bolded questions are the elements of the interview that were relevant to this current study on CLD students. Other elements of the interview were not examined closely and were used as a part of a separate, larger research study.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Teacher

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.

I. 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.

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?

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?

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 culturally and linguistically diverse families? 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?

Appendix B

Code Manual

The code manual that was developed and used during the coding process is included below. The codes were grouped by domain and definition of each code is listed under each bullet. The terminology “T” refers to Teachers, “C” refers to Children, and “L1” refers to the home or native language of the children in the classroom.

Classroom environment

- **Explicit discussion of CLD**
 - (Activities and posters that illustrate children were considering similarities, differences, or relationships among different cultures, traditions, backgrounds, languages, foods)
- **Multicultural/multiethnic materials**
 - (Materials such as dolls, toys, books, that represent multiple nationalities, cultures, traditions, or unique lived experiences)
- **Multilingual posters/books**
 - (Posters, signs, labels, books, that are written in various languages to affirm linguistic diversity and encourage awareness and knowledge of other languages)
- **Unique families and home**
 - (Children's personal family backgrounds are valued, discussed, or displayed in the classroom)

Family engagement

- **Build relationships**
 - (Teacher aims to frequently communicate with children’s families and foster familiarity and comfort in the relationship, to work together with families and better support children)
- **Holistic needs and resources**
 - (Teacher considers what the family also needs, in terms of support for food, shelter, taxes etc. and tries to connect them with resources)
- **Home visits**
 - (Teacher goes to visit the homes of students to form a relationship with families and children)
- **Parent Volunteer**
 - (Parent/family takes part in the classroom, in helping children learn or helping the teacher)
- **Parents invited**
 - (T invites parents to come to classroom for variety of activities, reading a book, decorating etc.)
- **Participate in lesson planning**

- (Parent/family participates in lesson planning with teacher)
- **Respect parents' comfort levels**
 - (T respects and accommodates family members who may feel uncomfortable volunteering or reading, with other ways to get involved)
- **Use L1 with family**
 - (T uses or learns the family's native language to communicate with the family)
- **Visual comm/display**
 - (Signs or notes that are meant to communicate with parents, visible in the room through reading)
- **Want engaged parents**
 - (Teacher wants families to be actively engaged and updated on children's learning, beyond merely coming to meetings)

Instruction and practices

- **Consistent routine**
 - (Consistent routines, events, or practices during the day that facilitates transitions and aids DLLs in learning)
- **Culture in curriculum**
 - (Teacher incorporates C's home cultures into the curriculum and lesson)
- **Document children in action**
 - (T takes photos and records the comments/questions of children during activity, then displays documentation so children can refer back to it and reflect. Use for future instruction)
- **Gestures or visual aid for instruction**
 - (T uses gestures, visuals to communicate and to help DLLs learn)
- **Model vocabulary and scaffold**
 - (T uses the vocabulary repeatedly to model its use for children and uses other strategies to gradually guide children in their learning)
- **Peer support and appreciation for lang learning**
 - (Peers use different languages with each other, or teacher *exposes* children to different languages so children hear, learn, and appreciate the variety of languages among their peers)
- **Rely on parent updates for I and P**
 - (Teacher communicates with family on the student's learning, to gain a clearer understanding of student's progress that is maybe unseen in the classroom)
- **Tailor assessment**
 - (Teacher uses L1 to assess children who do not understand in English, or uses other individualized assessments)
- **Tailor instruction**
 - (Individualized plans or small groups for differentiating instructional practices and goals)
- **Teacher learns L1s**
 - (Teacher intentionally learns other languages of children, from children, family, or co-worker)

- **Use L1 with children**
 - (Teacher uses home languages with children and DLLs for instruction or assessment. Promote L1 development, or encourage comfort in classroom)

Teacher beliefs

- **Learn about new cultures**
 - (T is intentional about learning new cultures of the children)
- **Maintain child's L1**
 - T supports the importance of children maintaining their /home languages
- **Need English for future**
 - (T believes it is necessary for children to know English in the future, for kindergarten and later in life)
- **Personal experiences**
 - (T's personal background or experiences impact her view and practices on CLD in classroom)
- **Respect culture**
 - (T believes the variety of cultures of children and their families should be respected)
- **Sense of belonging**
 - (T hopes that children feel they belong in their classroom)
- **Social emotional importance**
 - (T emphasizes children's social and emotional states and development in the classroom)

Child observations

- **Children's acts of care**
 - (Children show consideration of others in the classroom through their actions)
- **Children's use of gestures**
 - (Children use gestures to convey meaning to teacher or peers, if they cannot verbally express it through language)
- **Children's use of new vocabulary**
 - (Children use the new vocabulary that was reviewed or taught during lesson)

Appendix C

Examples of Codes

A selection of examples of all of the codes is included below. Each example includes either a description of the evidence or a direct quote from a teacher interview. Codes are listed in the order they were presented in the code manual.

Classroom environment

- Explicit discussion of CLD
 - Rivertown visual evidence on the wall, posters of “How are we alike, how are we different”
- Multicultural/multiethnic materials
 - Jordan Hill - cultural clothes for dramatic play
 - Heightsville - dolls, flag of children’s home countries, welcome in 10 languages
- Multilingual posters/books
 - Heightsville - *Jump, Frog, Jump* was read by parent volunteer in Spanish *Salta, Ranita, Salta*
 - Heightsville - Alphabet in Arabic, Spanish, Albanian, and books in Hindi given by parents
 - Jordan Hill T1 - “We label things in English and Spanish, so every area has a picture and it says – simple, like “blocks, bloques... muñecas.” And then if we’re playing with them, we’ll say the words in English and Spanish”
- Unique families and home
 - Heightsville T1 interview after describing home visits “Yes it does, because then when I learn about the culture when I learn about the family, I ask them about the family picture, so that I post it 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 give them a sense of belonging, so they belong here.”
 - Rivertown ELLCO - each child’s ethnic culture
 - Rivertown T2 - “I think it’s important that you make the child know that he or she comes from some place important and to feel accepted.”
 - Jordan Hill ELLCO - framed photos of children’s families

Family engagement

- Build relationships
 - Heightsville T1 - “[MB: You sound like you do many many things to build that relationship.] A: Yes so it comes from, it starts from the time you meet that parent and then you just keep them from greeting, from smiling, from making them they belong over here, inviting them to come to the classroom, telling them how the day was for the child, what did they learn. If they learn something new today I make sure I share it to them and this is such and such, and now you see that beautiful picture, and so make them make feel good about their child. Children are different, so they do see and compare them and I said, just be happy and be proud, because they are in different levels. They are still adjusting.”
 - Rivertown T1 - “And Head Start is based also on families too. Like, they believe that family – like when you talk with family because if you don’t work with the family, to have a stronger program, that’s what I’m trying to say, you know? Like to have that strong relationship with family. And this is what Head Start is like, to help family, move on, and encourage them to do this, encourage them to do that.”

- Rivertown T1 Rose - “[What do you think is the most important thing about working with families?] R: Communication, because when you have positive and effective communication with parents, I think this helps both teachers and the child. I believe in strong relationship with family. [MB: How do you communicate with families? You said that you talk to them] R: Like in the morning when they come in. Or if they’re not at the pick-up time, if something happened I have to talk to them over the phone. The most thing is like, when we do home visit, this is a great opportunity -- I will do progress reports, three times a year – we do two home visits during the year.”
- Holistic needs and resources
 - Rivertown T1 discusses what families need in terms of support for food, shelter, taxes etc. and tries to connect them with resources
- Home visits
 - Heightsville T1 interview - “Yes so 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 don’t do that but that’s one thing that I think is very important.”
 - Jordan Hill T1 interview - “Well first we have initial home visit where I have to go to their home and I give them an interview and just basically get to know a little bit more about them and their child. I get to see their house. I ask them their goals and their expectations for their children and I let them know I’m here, we’re a team. I always stress that we’re a team, we’re going to work together. So we start off like that, they get to know a little bit more about me, I get to know a little bit more about them. And I think it’s awesome that we do it, because you just feel comfortable. So when they come to school, like oh I was at your house. And I think that is a good way to start a relationship with the parents. I basically, I mean they get a calendar just to know what’s going on every month. But I’m more about talking.”
- Parent Volunteer
 - Heightsville - T reads in Albanian, father reads in Arabic, mother reads in Spanish
 - Rivertown - “I do have a lot of parents who like to volunteer in the morning and help their child settle and encourage the child to eat, help teachers in the classroom. You know, I have really good communication with parents. They know what to do in the morning with their child and beside that, taking care of other kids as well too. You know, if a child spilled milk, if a child needs help serving, so you see the parents going around. And after that they clean the tables, everything, so the floor, “and bye I’m ready to go.” But they usually, some parents, if they realize they don’t have ___ in the morning, so they ask me, “Do you need help? I will stay with you for a little bit if you want.” So they offer their help”
- Parents invited
 - Heightsville - invited for salad making, leading flash mob. “The purpose is just to get them involved in their child’s education and see what’s going on in the classroom. And I think they like it when you get the engaged, when you ask them to do something. When you ask them for ideas, they like it.”
 - Jordan Hill invited for recipes, open door policy “Just by inviting the parents in to come and eat. To come and read, if they know how to play certain instrument, if they want to share recipes, if they want to”
- Participate in lesson planning
 - Heightsville parents participate, know home activities to do

- Jordan Hill Genny - Challenge though, some goals do not match or are not appropriate
- Respect parents' comfort levels
 - Heightsville T1 - "Even sometimes in the beginning they will be like, say would you like to read the book, and they will be like oh no, I said you can pick the book! And then I don't push them hard I just, I say think about it. I'll just get back to you whenever you have time. So maybe not in the beginning until they build that relationship and they feel comfortable. Some of them will be more outgoing and they'll say no problem. Some of them, I say, ok, I see how their reaction is. I say, ok, maybe you come another time. "
 - Heightsville T1 - "Yes so it comes from, it starts from the time you meet that parent and then you just keep them from greeting, from smiling, from making them they belong over here, inviting them to come to the classroom, telling them how the day was for the child, what did they learn. If they learn something new today I make sure I share it to them and this is such and such, and now you see that beautiful picture, and so make them make feel good about their child. Children are different, so they do see and compare them and I said, just be happy and be proud, because they are in different levels. They are still adjusting."
- Use L1 with family
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "Like for example, Jayel's (spelling?) grandmother picks him up every single day and she doesn't speak English. But I say, "Hola Abuela, cómo estás?" And you know she's very happy and I give them a hug and I say a little bit as much as I can, but I'm always smiling and I'm always trying to be happy and just at least any kind of contact but with those parents, yes I do try, or grandparents, like Jadiel's abuelo, everyday, "Hola Abuelo, cómo estás?" or "have a nice weekend" in Spanish or "Hasta mañana" and I try. "
 - Rivertown T1 Rose - "For Spanish, Raquel goes with me and explains in Spanish. Albanian, I have so far, no problem for Albanian family. But usually, if I have a problem, we have a teacher who speaks Albanian. Arabic, I'm here. Other classrooms, if they need Arabic language, so they ask me if I can do the home visit." Rivertown teachers can translate and communicate with families for each other.
 - Jordan Hill T2 - noted challenge of using Spanish vocabulary, different connotations for Mexican, Dominican, Puerto Rico Spanish words
- Visual comm/display
 - Rivertown - "I try, because I really like when I see children reflecting on their artwork or on their writing, whatever is on the wall and my favorite part is when I see the child that feel really good about himself or herself and proud of what they did. When Mommy come in rush to pick up the child, the child say, "You can't go home, I need to show you something." So take Mommy hand like this, straight to the wall and show their activities, what they did with me."
 - Jordan Hill Kathy T1 - "The center sends it home and occasionally I'll send a newsletter to the parents to let them know what I'm doing for the month. Just reminders, Family Fun Night, we have a Family Game Night. MP: Yeah, I saw you have a Family Game Night. K: I took all those pictures – I'm charge of that, so I love that, I'm the photographer in the classroom, and the school. MP: I saw the pictures, the family game night. K: Oh that's so much fun. It really brings us together."
- Want engaged parents
 - Heightsville T1 - "The purpose is just to get them involved in their child's education and see what's going on in the classroom. And I think they like it when you get the engaged, when you ask them to do something. When you ask them for ideas, they like it."
 - Rivertown T1- "I mean you need you need to give the child that moment to do things on their own but we do have a curriculum, we have to follow a curriculum and to do activities and stuff, we use a lot of materials, toys, to make sure that child is learning something from that activity. Either like math skills, science skills, language, you need to talk, even at home really to have that, you know,

encouragement and do it with your child. All this is stuff, like I do a report with the family. I talk to them about it. Not just give your phone and say here you go, go play. I say you need to know what your child is playing, what they are doing. Be aware. Where are they now? What they need to learn next. To help them to move on.”

Instruction and practices

- Consistent routine
 - Jordan Hill teachers - noted consistent routine that helps DLLs, “Another effective thing that has to happen in the classroom is a clear routine. It has to be the same thing every day. It has to be consistent and I have a visual, the daily schedule for the kids. So you can say, we went to the park, here’s a picture, so next we’re going to have lunch. And it’s written in English and Spanish, so I could say, “Almorzar” I can see the word, so I know how to say it to that child in Spanish too, or whomever is in there on that day could try to say the word in Spanish if that child doesn’t know what we’re saying.”
 - Rivertown - Bear Hunt video of lesson, the lesson was a familiar routine
 - Heightsville whole group video - Good Morning song in a circle
- Document children in action
 - Heightsville T1 ELLCO - Dramatic play area, pictures documented of C ironing and doing dishes
 - Heightsville T1 - Children on their walk, pictures and their questions were put up immediately
- Gestures or visual aid for instruction
 - Jordan Hill T1 - “I think the classroom should be set up with a lot of pictures because it has to be organized for everybody. But if I say to an English speaker, “Can you put the dinosaur back in the box?” and it didn’t have a picture but they saw the dinosaurs, they probably would know what I’m talking about, but for children who don’t know those words and I can point to the picture and what they’re holding, it’s clear, that goes here. So I think the classroom should have lots of pictures.”
 - Rivertown T1 uses gesturing - “they know, if they go to house You see them standing, shy, observing, until you go up and say would you like to play? It’s only one, two, three, you can go – because this area for 4, you show the sign, pointing, labeling. “
- Model vocabulary and scaffold
 - Heightsville T1 - use gestures and visuals, also “Modeling language. Giving them the words. [MB: I saw you doing that this morning.] A: Yes. Not correcting them. When I just want to say did they say it wrong, I don’t want to make them feel bad that they speak because I don’t want to stop them. I just say oh you mean, or just say the right word, but not like make it that...Rephrase. Not correct”
 - Rivertown T1 “Modeling, asking open-ended questions, engaging them in conversation, engaging them in group, engage them because I see sometimes, children who speak second language, English is their second language – for instance, if they painting, how they get my attention many times, because they know if they... I don’t know, they know, if they go to house You see them standing, shy, observing, until you go up and say would you like to play? It’s only one, two, three, you can go – because this area for 4, you show the sign, pointing, labeling.”
 - Rivertown - during Bear Hunt activity with hand gestures
 - Jordan Hill T1 - “We’re just learning right now, like if I say, “wash your hands” -- I mean there’s a universal sign language, the way to do it.”
- Peer support and appreciation for lang learning
 - Heightsville - “T reads in Albanian, father reads in Arabic, mother reads in Spanish, overlap with multilingual books and parent volunteers... And then we have the parents volunteer. [MB: How often do they come?] A: They stay mostly in the morning. They help for breakfast. They help the children do the writing. They read the story. Some of them come back, for example, I have Maxwell’s mom, she’s going to come read to them one of the books in Spanish. [MB: Is that

something that happens often?] A: It happens, yes. Especially related to the theme. Since we're talking about spring, so for her to come and read the book. The twins' father read the book in Arabic. And I'll read in Albanian. [MB: The same book or different ones?] A: I wish I had the same book in all of the languages. Unfortunately I do not have it in all the languages. But I do have a lot of books in Spanish. So I have that in English and in Spanish, *Jump Frog Jump*. So she's going to come and read."

- Heightsville T1 - "Do you do songs in other languages? A: I do teach them in Albanian and Amal does that in her language too. Yeah I know some other songs in Spanish too but this is one of their favorite. One child who is not here today, the "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Saiya, the other teacher next door, she wrote it for me in Spanish. And they like it. [MB: yeah they were really singing along with that one.] A: The days of the week, I sing them in English and Spanish. And then so the good morning song, [MB: And why do you do more songs in Spanish?] A: The majority, but I don't want to leave the other children too, so we do the Albanian and some Arabic."
- Jordan Hill T2 - Genny in interview: encourage children to help each other, show each other, before T shows them how to do something
- Rely on parent updates for I and P
 - Heightsville T1 - receives videos from father of C who is quiet in class but is absorbing knowledge nevertheless "I have this child in my classroom. She's really smart, really really smart. But she chooses not to verbally communicate in the classroom so I did talk to the parent because we're lucky we have the parents come everyday, we have daily conversation with them. So he tells me that at home, she sang the song that I taught them one day before! So he video tape her and show it to me, he said oh did you read this book yesterday? So then she was smiling and I said, yeah - why didn't you sing this song for me? So it's a lot of, it's parents and teachers so they give me a lot of information too."
- Tailor assessment
 - Heightsville T1 - ongoing observation and uses Ages and Stages, TS Gold in English but T can enter notes in home language - "Especially for the dual language learners. If they come with no English, and I, you know if they speak Albanian I will ask them in Albanian. Amal speaks Arabic and she will ask them in Arabic. And she will take the observations as well."
 - Rivertown - parents can act as translators if do Ages and Stages during home visit
- Tailor instruction
 - Heightsville T1 - "For example, if I want a child to speak in a long sentence, I can expect that from M, that just started school, so the goal for M would be for him to, for example, to just put two words together." Rivertown T1 interview: [MB: That's good, because you talked about the next question too, is what strategies you use – so you've mentioned thinking about grouping, individual attention]
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "Like J.A. He was in the classroom last year and he had very limited – it took him a while. It's just helping him with the words more -- how to make a sentence, like a correct grammatical sentence. Because you want to give him the words and I don't correct them at all, I just role model to them and now he's 5 1/2 so I try to fill in a word that I think that he could – now when I give him that word, he's like, "Okay, oh yes, it's a he not a him." And then he's using that in the sentence."
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "Oh, tons of visual cues. It would have, even for choices, "do you want to play at the sand table?" with the picture or "do you want to play with the bears?" Those are two choices that I know that child likes and they don't – sand table, you know, mesa de arena, osos or bears, you know, and they can choose. But now it's like, they're getting the language, they're seeing the pictures, they know what I'm talking about and I think it's easier for them."
 - Rivertown T1 - "R: Maybe three to four works just to get idea because different level of development is hard. I mean, to put all children on the one table and say okay, we're going to do

this... wow. “What I’m gonna do – I have there.” So I need to have kind of understanding, I need to give them the time individually, like maybe 2, 3 children to be together”

- Teacher learns L1s
 - Heightsville T1 speaks Albanian, and also knows basic Spanish, Creole, Arabic... can learn from family too “The parent when I go to the home visit, I ask them to write like, if I see the child does not speak any English, I will ask them to write the basic words for me. “
 - Jordan Hill T1 - learned Spanish for her children when she first began teaching
 - Heightsville T2: “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. So did 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.”
- Use L1 with children
 - Jordan Hill T1 - uses basic Spanish and gestures “And what was a little scary for me was, this is basically, most of the teachers here spoke Spanish and I knew a little – in Lowell there’s some Spanish-speaking children, a lot of Khmer speaking children. So for me I wasn’t fluent so I didn’t know how well I was going to be able to communicate, but I was willing to learn. [MP: I saw you using some Spanish in the classroom, you speak Spanish?] K: Un poquito. MP: Yes, great! K: I have to know – I know all the preschool words. The body parts, the colors, sitting down and standing up and pagan la luz. Ven acá. You know, all those different things. But I really don’t know how to have a conversation. I can understand a lot of Spanish, I’ll chime in in English and I’ll try to use my Spanish, but if I have to speak to the kids that don’t speak English, I’ll use a few common simple words that kind of get to the point with gestures so that they understand and then I’ll say it again in English. So if I say, “Lavarse las manos, wash your hands.” I go, I’ll say it again in English. “Wash your hands.””
 - Heightsville T2 - “I it look to me if you make the child feel comfortable with the first language, it makes him feel very comfortable to keep it. That’s what I am thinking. [Do you want them to also learn English?] A: yeah, of course. They will learn it because they need it here. English is the first language, it is good if they keep the first and learn English. I am telling you English is easy to learn, it’s very easy to learn. But it’s not easy to learn, I don’t know for the other language but Arabic is very, very difficult.”

Teacher beliefs

- Learn about new cultures
 - Jordan Hill T2 Genny - learns about diff cultures even though all Spanish speaking families. She has to be careful of which vocab words to use, Mexican culture and connotation is diff from Puerto Rican etc.
 - Heightsville T1 - “Yes, we have such a diverse children and families in the school, so, you know Head Start is about helping low-income families and respecting all the cultural and traditions. And I would say that Head Start does a lot of that because from what I see when I started as a parent, I felt like I was welcome over here. I was a respected, so I tried to do this with the children. Feel like they have a sense of belonging. That’s why I try to respect, by, you know when you put their flag out they feel like they belong there. When you put their language up, they feel respected, accepted.
- Maintain child’s L1
 - Rivertown T1 - “ [what goals do you have for the bilingual children in your classroom?] I think to develop language skills. To be where they should be. Improve their communication. But at the same time, I hope they haven’t forgotten their own language. It’s really important, sometimes parents they say, “Oh, I speak to them in Spanish, they only prefer English.” I say that’s okay but

keep your language. One day you're going to hear all the Spanish coming back. Keep your language."

- Heightsville T2 - "My experience I see child keep the first language is very important. It's very important then to learn English is easy, for example, English is, I am not saying it's easy but you can learn it because you already you living here, everything in English. But for the second language, nobody practice it, you only I cannot talk to you"
- ELLCO Heightsville: Child says "I know how to say orange in Spanish!" at snack time – teacher asks him to say it
- Need English for future
 - Rivertown T1 - "I think to develop language skills. To be where they should be. Improve their communication. But at the same time, I hope they haven't forgotten their own language. It's really important, sometimes parents they say, "Oh, I speak to them in Spanish, they only prefer English. I say that's okay but keep your language. One day you're going to hear all the Spanish coming back. Keep your language."
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "Yeah, I want them to be able to communicate with English-speakers in the classroom. I want them to be able to name shapes and letters and use words in English in the classroom, because they're going to kindergarten and the expectation is there. I've talked to a few kindergarten teachers, they want the children to be able to speak English. So that's my job, is to help them along the way before they get there."
- Personal experiences
 - Heightsville T1 - "Yes, we have such a diverse children and families in the school, so, you know Head Start is about helping low-income families and respecting all the cultural and traditions. And I would say that Head Start does a lot of that because from what I see when I started as a parent, I felt like I was welcome over here. I was a respected, so I tried to do this with the children. "
 - Heightsville T2 - described her daughters' language learning experiences - "A: it's very important, the ability to keep the first language. If you, you see my daughter the old one, you don't believe she's writing, doing everything in Arabic. [MB Why do you think it's so different?] A: because she lose it in the beginning. The youngest one she don't want to speak in Arabic, she don't want to, you talk to her, she talk back to you in English. But like I am telling you force them it's not good. I wanted her to keep but I keep talking to her, she don't want to talk in Arabic. My experience I see child keep the first language is very important."
- Respect culture
 - Heightsville T1: "Yes so 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 don't do that but that's one thing that I think is very important. [MB: You do that for every child?] A: Yes, and that is before they start school. [MB: So does that influence anything you do in setting up the classroom?] A: Yes it does, because then when I learn about the culture when I learn about the family, I ask them about the family picture, so that I post it 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 give them a sense of belonging, so they belong here."
- Sense of belonging
 - Heightsville T1 - "[MB: So does that influence anything you do in setting up the classroom?] A: Yes it does, because then when I learn about the culture when I learn about the family, I ask them

about the family picture, so that I post it 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 give them a sense of belonging, so they belong here."

- Rivertown T1 - "I try, because I really like when I see children reflecting on their artwork or on their writing, whatever is on the wall and my favorite part is when I see the child that feel really good about himself or herself and proud of what they did. When Mommy come in rush to pick up the child, the child say, "You can't go home, I need to show you something."
- Social emotional importance
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "You don't have to just come to me, I love you, but – Valerie's an expert at -- "I don't know how to clean the paint of the table with the spray bottle, can you show J? And now somebody said to me, "I can tell that you're the family unit about your class, because I've seen them go to each other for help." Or "Are you okay, did you get hurt?" But they're watching us, and that's what I tell the parents too, like they're learning from you, so if I have a relationship with you as a parent, and I'm problem solving with you and your child is there watching this, they're going to learn that we're also a team. You're my team too. You're on my team."
 - Jordan Hill T1 - "And I try to tell them if this is how they're behaving in school – and they do come with a lot of behavior issues, a lot of having to teach them self-regulation and how to calm down. I notice that over the years I've always had to start mostly with self-regulating and social skills and problem solving"
 - Rivertown T2: [What would be the perfect classroom?] "I think – I just think of acceptance. [MB: And what does that look like, when a child is accepted?] I think it gives them confidence."
 - Rivertown T1: "[MB: So you talked about believing that children learn through play, that that's part of your philosophy, but are there any particular skills that you think are important for children to learn in pre-school, like math or literacy or social skill? What do you think is most important?] R: I think socialization is really important. Because when you socialize with other, you communicate with them, I think that the other skills come afterward. I believe in that because you need to be able to communicate to talk in math, you need to be able to sit still, calm down, manage your behavior, regulate, to learn about books, to learn songs. I think this important for 2 years to 4 years old. After that I think everything comes after."

Children

- C's acts of care
 - Heightsville video - Boy extends hand to girl during Good Morning singing circle
- C's use of gestures
 - Jordan Hill T2 interview - Child who could not convey his hurt with words used gestures to show teacher what happened. And children are encouraged to show each other first, before having T explain how to do something.
- C's use of new vocabulary
 - Jordan Hill video recording - Child in the back repeats "lion" as he places the toy lion onto the picture of the lion on the table. Other children also show their knowledge of the animals as they repeat them while matching them to the pictures
 - Heightsville video recording - Child uses new vocabulary "bricks" after T talks about the parts of buildings and the materials used to build buildings. C says "And you remember my house is made out of bricks too?" and T confirms her comment too.

Appendix D

Salient Codes

Below is a list of the salient codes that repeatedly emerged for each site, along with a list of the sources of evidence that corroborated the codes. These salient codes were used in the thematic analysis process. Two asterisks ** represented codes that emerged repeatedly or were uniquely dominant for this site. One asterisk * signified questionable significance or uniqueness for the particular site at the time of data analysis.

Heightsville

Classroom Environment

1. ****Multicultural, multilingual materials** (posters, signs, dolls, books)
 - a. ELLCO and visual evidence
 - b. Corresponds to Teacher Beliefs – respect culture, social emotional
2. ****Unique families and homes** (posters, flags)
 - a. ELLCO, and visual evidence
 - b. Video – children live in different types of homes
 - c. Corresponds to I/P Culture in curriculum

Family engagement

1. ****Communication** (visual displays, home visits, in classroom, use L1 with family)
 - a. ELLCO, Interview, Visual evidence
2. ****Relationship building** (comfort levels, home visits, display work, lessons, engagement)
 - a. Interview
 - b. Corresponds to Teacher Beliefs on respecting culture
3. ****Parent volunteers** (invitation and respect comfort levels)
 - a. ELLCO, Interview

Child Actions – both seen from video.

1. New vocabulary use
2. *** Acts of care** (child reaching out during circle)

Teacher Instruction and Practice

1. **** Tailored instruction and tailored assessment** (includes modeling, gestures, visuals, using L1s, translate assessment)
 - a. ELLCO, Interview, Video
 - b. Corresponds to Teacher Beliefs – Social Emotional stability if use L1
2. Peer support and appreciation (using multiple L1s)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Video.
 - b. Corresponds to Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Environment.
3. **** Culture in curriculum**
 - a. Video.
4. Consistent routine – small part, in video only.
5. *** Parent updates** – described in Interview. Correspond with communication with family.

Teacher beliefs

1. Eager to learn and respect for other cultures (can include personal experiences)

- a. Interview.
- 2. **** Sense of belonging and social emotional importance** (T's goals and expectations)
 - a. Interviews. Video.
- 3. Maintenance of children's L1s
 - a. Interview T2. Personal experience.

Jordan Hill

Classroom Environment

- 1. Multilingual and multicultural materials (books, posters, labels)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Visual evidence.
 - b. Corresponds to teacher beliefs.
- 2. Unique families and homes (picture frames) – weak compared to other two sites
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Visual evidence.
 - b. Corresponds to teacher beliefs.

Family engagement

- 1. Communication (newsletter, home visits, use L1 with family)
 - a. Interview.
- 2. Build relationships (goals, together, engage parents, invite parents, respect comfort levels, home visits)
 - a. Interview.
 - b. **** Challenge of working together on goals; ethnicity diff from language**
 - c. Corresponds with Teacher Beliefs on respect culture
- 3. Parent volunteer (not that big of presence)
 - a. Interview.

Teacher Instruction and Practices

- 1. **** Tailored instruction** (Use L1, T learns other L1, gestures, visuals)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Video.
- 2. * Consistent routine
 - a. Interview – from both teachers (not applicable in video)
- 3. Peer support (teacher peers for effective learning)
 - a. Interview. (Not seen in video, maybe should code as a belief)

Teacher beliefs

- 1. Eager to learn about new cultures (home visits)
 - a. Interviews – from both teachers.
 - b. * Caveat – challenge of different cultures even though same language
- 2. **** Social emotional importance** (carino care and love, emotional chart)
 - a. Interviews.
 - b. Corresponds to I/P for tailor instruction
- 3. * Need English for future (goals for bilingual students) (no mention of maintaining L1)
 - a. Interview.

Child's actions

- 1. Use of new vocabulary
 - a. Video.

(no curriculum with culture, no maintain for L1, in comparison to others)

Rivertown

Classroom environment

1. Multilingual and multicultural materials (books, posters, labels) – check how strong?
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Visual evidence.
2. Unique families and homes (children's posters, cut outs)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Visual evidence.
 - b. Corresponds with Teacher Beliefs - sense of belonging, respect culture.
3. **** Explicit discussion of CLD** - discussions examples of food, flags, handprints
 - a. Visual evidence.

Family engagement

1. **Communication and build relationships** (child work, home visits, use L1 with family or translator, volunteer sheets, lesson plans)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview.
 - b. Corresponds with Classroom materials.
2. Volunteer (breakfast, reading)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview.
3. * Holistic resources
 - a. Interview.
4. **** Parent engagement** in child's learning (learn about activities, ipads)
 - a. Interview.

Instruction and Practice

1. **** Tailored instruction and assessment** (use L1 with children, learns L1, gestures, assess in L1, step by step)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview. Video.
2. Peer support and appreciation (T asks students how to say words in L1)
 - a. ELLCO. Interview
3. **** Culture in curriculum** (posters from previous lessons)
 - a. Visual evidence.
 - b. Corresponds with Explicit CLD in classroom environment.
4. Consistent routine
 - a. Video.

Teacher Beliefs

1. **** Social emotional** importance and sense of belonging (socialization, behaviors, acceptance)
 - a. Interview.
 - b. Corresponds with classroom materials.
2. Maintain L1 but ALSO need English in future (goal for bilingual children)
 - a. Interview

Child Actions

1. Use of vocab (not strong evidence though)
 - a. Video (bear hunt)

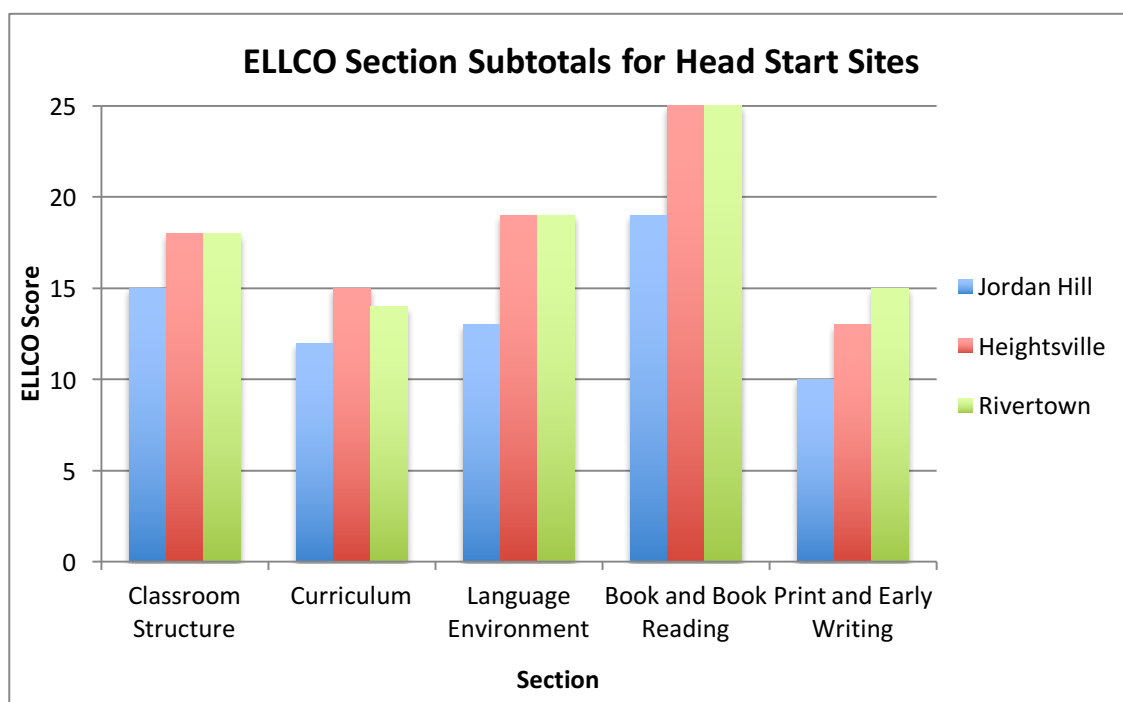
Appendix E

ELLCO Scores and Graphs

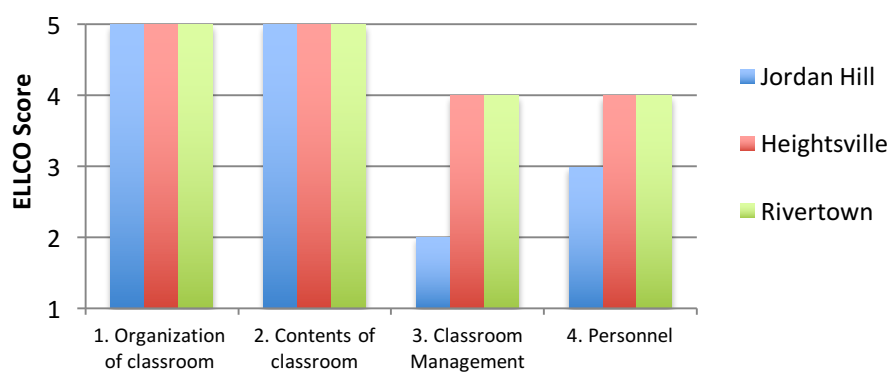
A full list of ELLCO Item scores and Section Subtotals (sum of the Items that make up each Section), as well as graphs for all of the Head Start sites, are included below.

ELLCO Item Scores	Jordan Hill	Heightsville	Rivertown
Section I: Classroom Structure			
1. Organization of classroom	5	5	5
2. Contents of classroom	5	5	5
3. Classroom Management	2	4	4
4. Personnel	3	4	4
Section II: Curriculum			
5. Approaches to curriculum	3	5	5
6. Opportunities for child choice and initiative	5	5	5
7. Recognizing diversity in classroom	4	5	4
Section III: Language Environment			
8. Discourse climate	4	5	5
9. Opportunities for extended conversations	3	5	4
10. Efforts to build vocabulary	4	5	5
11. Phonological awareness	2	4	5
Section IV: Book and Book Reading			
12. Organization of book area	4	5	5
13. Characteristics of books	5	5	5
14. Books for learning	4	5	5
15. Approaches to book reading	3	5	5
16. Quality of book reading	3	5	5
Section V: Print and Early Writing			
17. Early writing environment	5	4	5
18. Support for children's writing	2	4	5
19. Environmental print	3	5	5
Classroom Environment Subscale Score (Section I and II; Maximum score = 35)	27	33	32
Language and Literacy Subscale Score (Section III, IV, and V; Maximum score = 60)	42	57	59
Total ELLCO Score (Maximum score = 95)	69	90	91

<u>Subtotals for each Section</u>	Jordan Hill	Heightsville	Rivertown
Section I: Classroom Structure	15	18	18
Section II: Curriculum	12	15	14
Section III: Language Environment	13	19	19
Section IV: Book and Book Reading	19	25	25
Section V: Print and Early Writing	10	13	15

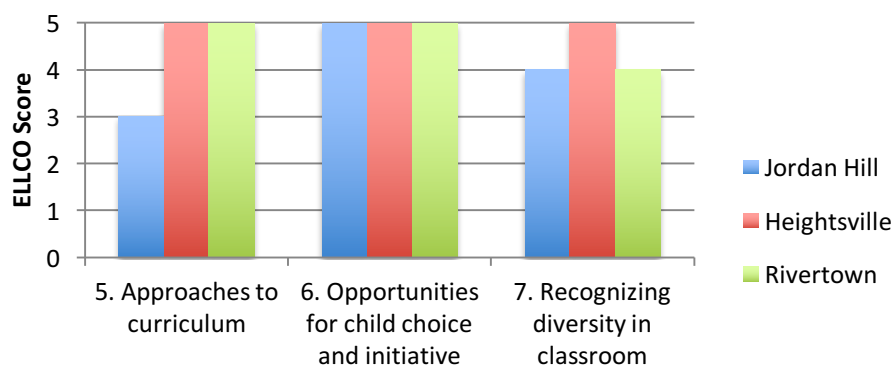


ELLCO Item Scores for Head Start Sites



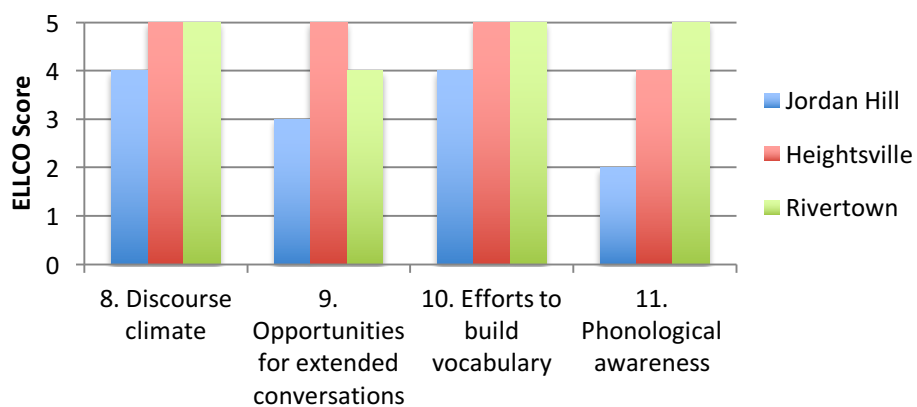
Section I: Classroom Structure (Items 1-4)

ELLCO Item Scores for Head Start Sites



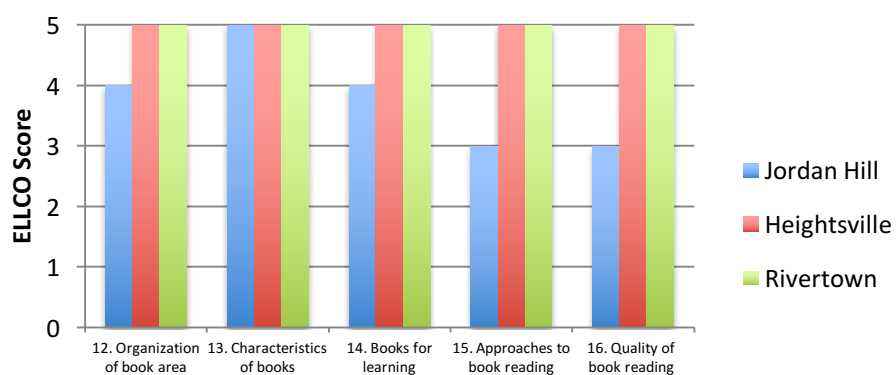
Section II: Curriculum (Items 5-7)

ELLCO Item Scores for Head Start Sites



Section III: The Language Environment (Items 8-11)

ELLCO Item Scores for Head Start Sites



Section IV: Books and Book Reading (Items 12-16)

