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A Cultural Communities Approach to Teacher Early Literacy Practices

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Sarah M. Garrity

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2011

The Dissertation of Sarah M. Garrity is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

California State University, San Marcos

2011

DEDICATION

To my husband and children.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Cultural Communities Approach to Teacher Early Literacy Practices

by

Sarah M. Garrity

Professor Alison Wishard Guerra, Chair

University of California, San Diego
California State University, San Marcos
2011

Increased awareness of the school readiness gap, particularly for students from

ethnic and linguistically diverse backgrounds, has led policy makers, researchers, and

practitioners to examine the quality of language and literacy experiences of low income

preschoolers. This nested case study used a mixed methods design to describe teacher

language and literacy practices in a Head Start program serving predominantly dual

language Mexican heritage children. Adopting a sociocultural perspective on literacy

development, the research used the construct of cultural communities to examine the role

of teacher beliefs, values and goals for children on espoused and enacted early literacy

practices. Findings indicated a complex relationship between espoused and enacted

practices that could be traced to teachers' participation in various and overlapping

cultural communities. Teachers in the study struggled to name research based practices

and while effective strategies were observed, they did not occur with sufficient frequency or duration to lead to improved educational outcomes for children at risk. Physical, cultural, and linguistic context mediated teacher practices in complex and multifaceted ways, which emerged as a major finding of the study. In addition, data pointed to a lack of intentional teaching and deep understanding of early childhood development in general and early language and literacy in particular. Important implication for practice emerged, including the need to continue to explore pre-service education, the role of leadership in early childhood education, and the affect of teacher beliefs on practices, including those for dual language learners.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Development in Context

On a daily basis, preschool teachers must interact with children with different temperaments, learning styles, life experiences, cultural backgrounds and languages. In addition, the preschool years are a time during which children are developing and refining key social-emotional and cognitive skills that will lay the foundation for their later experiences in school and in life. During this developmental stage, children are learning to self regulate their behavior, use their words to solve problems, and engage in increasingly complex peer play. They are learning how to make and keep friends and conform to social norms about how to act with other children and adults in a school setting. Because preschool age children are naturally curious about the world around them, this developmental period is an opportune time to teach children how to ask questions and generate solutions to issues or problems they encounter in their environment. In addition, because preschool children are increasingly able to think abstractly, they are developmentally ready to learn key early literacy and math skills that will lay the foundation for their later success.

Just as children come to the preschool setting with different temperaments, learning styles, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds, so too do teachers. My current role as an Area Director and the Director of Educational Services at a large Head Start program, as well as my experiences as a preschool teacher, site supervisor, and literacy coach have allowed me to work with many different teachers in many different settings. These experiences have been instrumental in the formation of the research questions and

methodological design of this dissertation, as they have led me to question why teachers do what they do in the classroom and how teacher early literacy practices vary across settings. My interest in literacy is a result of my time as a literacy coach for an Early Reading First grant, where I came to understand both the beneficial impact of high quality language and literacy instruction and that in order for a literacy curriculum to be successful it must be meaningful and relevant to the children and teachers. Unfortunately, I found that the curriculum called for in our grant was not child centered, was highly decontextualized, and was far removed from the everyday experiences of the classroom and community in which the preschool was located. My experiences in the classroom and now as a provider of professional development to Head Start teachers, have led me to adopt a contextual view of development that questions the use of standardized early literacy curriculum and instruction. Willis (2009) has proposed that classroom literacy instruction, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse schools, is a complex undertaking that requires an understanding of communities, schools, and classroom contexts. In keeping with this line of thinking, the overall goal of my research is to explore teacher practices via a theoretical framework that assumes that culture, setting, beliefs, and values are key variables affecting classroom practices. Numerous theories of development in context are widely used across disciplines such as education, anthropology, psychology and sociology (eg. Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole, 1996, 1998; Cole & Engestrom, 1993; Rogoff, 1990; 2003; Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan 1988) and a contextual paradigm situates my understanding of how children develop early literacy skills and how teacher practices support children in their early literacy development.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical evidence abounds as to the benefits of high quality early childhood education programs, especially with regard to early literacy practices. Three recent National Research Council (NRC) reports highlight the impact of early childhood experiences on school achievement. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (NRC, 1998), *Eager to Learn* (NRC, 2001), and *From Neurons to Neighborhoods,* (NRC and Institute of Medicine 2002), established the significance of early experiences on later development and the positive effect these experiences have on school success, especially for low income and at risk populations. The terms *at risk for academic failure* or *at risk for reading difficulties* are used to describe children who are at risk for school failure due to a combination of familial and environmental factors, including socioeconomic status (Connell & Prinz, 2002; Gutman, Sameroff, & Cole, 2003; Zaslow, Oldham, Moore, & Magenheim, 1998; Zill & West, 2001), maternal education level (Connell & Prinz, 2002; Gutman et al., 2003; Pelletier & Corter, 2005; Zaslow et al., 1998; Zill & West, 2001), English language proficiency (Pelletier & Corter, 2005; Sayeski, Burgess, Pianta, & Lloyd, 2001; Zill & West, 2001), and racial or ethnic background (Gutman et al., 2003; Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004).

Over the past 10 years, almost 40% of the nation's fourth grade students and 60% of children growing up in poverty have failed to meet basic literacy standards (National Assessment of Education Progress, 2003). Researchers have made the case that if the American early education system does not do something dramatically different, 13 million more children will not realize their potential in the next decade (Juel, 1988; West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000).   In their seminal report, *Preventing Reading*

Difficulties in Young Children, Snow, Burns, & Griffin (1998) asserted that quality preschool programs represent an effective and largely underutilized resource in preventing reading failure, and stated that the majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents & adults could have been avoided or resolved in the early years of childhood.

School Readiness Gap

Differences in academic achievement are evident prior to kindergarten entry, and numerous studies have documented a school readiness gap that exists for low income and racial/language minority preschoolers. Hart and Risley (1995) found that by the age of 3, children in families receiving welfare had vocabularies that were half as large as those of their more affluent peers, and that these disparities persisted throughout childhood. Lee and Burkham (2002) analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Kindergarten cohort (ECLS-K), a nationally representative sample of over 21,000 kindergarteners, and reported that children from low income backgrounds scored almost half a standard deviation (.47) lower on the reading skills test at the start of kindergarten than their middle-class peers, and 1.17 standard deviations below high-SES children. Similarly, results from the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), in which researchers assessed children entering Head Start on key school readiness measures, indicated that that these children, who were disproportionately from minority and low income families, scored one standard deviation (1.0) below national norms on pre-reading and math skills, (U.S. DHHS, 2003).

The awareness that this gap exists had lead to school readiness becoming a national priority. In the early 1990's, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP, 1991)

set the goal that by the year 2000 all children should begin school "ready to learn", and school readiness has emerged as the primary justification for public investment in preschool programs (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995). This increased attention to school readiness has been accompanied by debates regarding not only the skills and competencies children need upon school entry but also the types of pedagogical strategies most effective in ensuring these outcomes. Because of the abundance of research documenting the association between developmentally appropriate early literacy experiences and school success (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001), particular attention has been paid in recent years to the language and literacy skills children need prior to kindergarten entry.

High quality preschool with rich language and literacy experiences is especially important for children growing up in poverty. Children living in poverty are at increased risk for reading difficulties because they are less likely to be exposed to reading experiences with caregivers or quality interactions that enhance language and literacy development (Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Sameroff, Seifer, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 1993; Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994). Research has shown that children from low income backgrounds enter kindergarten significantly behind their peers in critical emerging literacy skills, including knowledge of print awareness, letter recognition, and the sound structure of language (Lyon, 1997; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003b). Because ethnic and linguistic minorities are over-represented among families living in poverty in the United States (August & Hakuta, 1997; Timberlake, 2003), the investigation of early language and literacy practices in preschools serving low income, English learners imperative. Dickinson (2001) noted that the investigation of

early literacy has important implications for social policy, as these differences mirror many of the divisions in our society.

Meeting the Needs of Dual Language Learners

The U.S. census bureau estimates that by the year 2010 Hispanics will be the largest minority group in the United States and that by 2050, the majority of the U.S population will be non-White. Hispanic children account for more than 20% of all children under five (Collins & Ribeiro, 2004) and are more highly represented in programs such as Head Start because they are most often income eligible for public preschool programs. These shifting demographics have major implications not only for the entire educational system, but for the preschool setting as well. Tabors, Paez, and Lopez (2003) noted that the vast majority of children who are English Language Learners are from homes in which Spanish is the primary language and in California, where 25% of children in kindergarten through grade 12 are English learners (California Department of Education, 2006), the issue of how preschool programs can help children develop the skills needed to become successful readers is critical. Vaughn and colleagues (2006) noted that despite an awareness of the urgent need to identify pedagogical strategies that meet the needs of English Learners, there is a conspicuous lack of attention paid to the needs of these children in such seminal reports as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) and Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. In addition, little attention is paid to within group variability, and Gutiérrez (2006) called attention to how "the problem of putting people into boxes in which we link culture to group membership minimizes the tremendous diversity within groups that may share a common social or linguistic history" (p. 44). This construct has been validated by my

own experiences working with diverse populations for almost twenty years. The Mexican Heritage families I worked with in northern San Diego County, for example, were significantly different that those I have worked with in southeast San Diego, and to assume that an educational intervention or program will work with both groups simply because they are Hispanic reflects a reductive view of both culture and research.

The study site under investigation in this dissertation is located 20 minutes from the Mexican border, with 75% of the families being of Mexican heritage. The Head Start program uses the term dual language learners to refer to children who are learning a second language while still developing basic skills in their home language (Ballantyne, Sanderman, D'Emilio, & McLaughlin, 2008), and Espinoza (2010) noted that this term is being used more frequently to refer to young English learners. As a result, the term dual language learners will be used throughout this dissertation to describe the children, families, and in some cases teachers, that live and work in the community in which the preschool is located.

Espinosa and Lopez (2007) highlighted the need to design curriculum, assessment and accountability systems that accurately and fairly represent the capabilities and educational needs of *all* children, while other researchers call for the examination of practices that are effective for children from linguistically diverse families, including those who have recently immigrated to the United States (Buriel and DeMent, 1997; Valdez, 1996). Gutierrez, Zepeda, and Castro (2010) noted that because dual language learners are often subsumed under the broad "at risk" category and are frequently excluded from studies of early learning, they are not well understood from a policy perspective. As accountability for ensuring positive developmental outcomes for

children at risk increases, identifying instructional strategies that meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds is imperative.

Increased Accountability for Early Literacy Outcomes

The acceptance that quality preschool experiences mitigate risk for low income children and dual language learners and promotes children's academic success (Brendekemp & Copple, 1997; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001; Zill & West, 2001) has resulted in urgent national mandates to develop effective early literacy interventions for children at risk. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and recent changes to the Head Start program have redefined early childhood education in the first decade of the 21st century. A focus on cognitive skill development, experimental pre-post designs to evaluate program effectiveness, and teacher directed instruction have dominated the field of early literacy over the last decade and program funding has followed suit.

The shift in federal priorities about early education began with the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start which changed the focus of the Head Start program from the development of social competence to the development of school readiness and stressed the need for highly qualified teachers who could implement scientifically based emerging literacy skill instruction (Coats Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998). As the government's largest preschool program for low income children and one of the most enduring programs remaining from Johnson's war on poverty, this switch in program focus foreshadowed the preoccupation with cognitively based early reading programs that have dominated the first decade of the 21st century. Originally, Head Start was conceived as a comprehensive program designed to address all areas of children's

development, including physical health and nutrition, social and emotional development, family development, and community and parental involvement. The founders of Head Start valued the holistic nature of child development and believed that preparing children who live in poverty for school required meeting all of their needs rather than a narrow focus on academic skills (Zigler & Bishop-Joseph, 2004).

Policy mandates at the federal level continue to focus on program and curricular practices that support children at risk for academic failure. The Early Reading First (ERF) Program, funded by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2002) is another example of a federal program designed to support children at risk for reading failure. ERF provided competitive grants to school districts and preschool programs, including Head Start, to support practices based on scientifically based reading research and to create early childhood centers of excellence that prepare young children to enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills for learning success (Jackson et al., 2007). In addition to policy mandates at the federal level, many states are adopting early learning standards and increasing accountability for publicly funded preschool programs, and the most recent reauthorization of the Head Start program, the "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007" codified the notion Head Start is a school readiness program.

Educational Research

This shift in the conceptualization of the role of early childhood education was accompanied by changes to the focus of educational research, creating a unique political context. Educational research during the past ten years has been characterized by an emphasis on the use of rigorous experimental designs that are highly generalizable. The

term scientifically based research is used 110 times in NCLB (Slavin, 2002), which calls

for research that employs random assignment and employs experimental or quasi-

experimental designs. The term scientifically based reading research has been used to

define research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid

and reliable knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading

difficulties (Jackson et al., 2007). The focus of policy initiatives and funding has become

identifying "what works" in education (Feuer, Towne, & Shavelson, 2002) via

scientifically based research. This focus on identifying interventions that work and

applying them on a grand scale is captured by Slavin's (2002) call for a new paradigm in

educational research in which researchers develop educational interventions, rigorously

evaluate their effectiveness, replicate the findings, and disseminate the program on a

large scale.

Others counter that the treatments inherent in experimental design and

methodology cannot be defined objectively, but are affected by the beliefs, goals, and

intentions of those involved in the treatment (Olson, 2004). In this view, the context in

which the research takes place is a key variable that cannot be controlled for as required

by a true experimental design. Olson and Katz (2001), for example, noted that in the

intervention model, teachers and students know what is being done to them and may hold

beliefs about whether what is being done is worthwhile. As such, these beliefs ultimately

affect the implementation of the treatment as there is no way to randomize or control for

beliefs (Olson, 2004). Olson (2004) noted that treatments in education are rich and

diverse and that the addition or subtraction of a word has the potential to alter the

treatment. As such, causal relations cannot exist between teaching and learning, because

interactions are filtered through the goals, beliefs and intentions of both teachers and learners (Olson, 2004). In contrast to the experimental model that assumes that a successful intervention can be replicated in any environment, this view proposes that it is essential to consider the different contextual variables, including characteristics of teachers, classrooms, parents, and the physical environment in which teaching and learning occur. Qualitative research designs have highlighted the importance of these variables. Erikson and Gutiérrez (2002) in response to the question "what works" asked researchers to define what "it" is and proposed that this can be accomplished only through qualitative methodology. For example, Goldenberg's (1992) stated in a case study analysis of how teacher behavior affected the reading progress of two students that to view reading progress and teacher behavior as divorced from context is to risk "distorting the role that they actually play" (p. 540). When reviewing the work of Goldenberg, Maxwell (2004) noted that for the social sciences understanding causal mechanisms is dependent on understanding the social and cultural contexts of the phenomenon under investigation. An example of this from the early childhood literature is found in the work of Pianta and colleagues (2005) who used data from the National Center for Early Development and Learning's Multi-State Pre-Kindergarten Study to examine how program, classroom, and teacher attributes of the program setting predicted observed quality and teacher–child interactions (Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, Early, & Barbarin, 2005). In the sample of 238 state funded preschool classrooms, these researchers found that quality was lower in classrooms where more than 60% of the children came from homes below the poverty line and where teachers lacked formal training or a degree in early childhood education, and held less child

centered beliefs. Clearly, in these settings, contextual variables including child, teacher, and program characteristics had an impact on the experiences of children and the quality of care that they received. Similarly, Aikens and Barbarin (2008) studied the contribution of family, neighborhood, and school context to socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories, and reported that multiple contexts interact to account for the relationship between socioeconomic status and reading outcomes. This research typifies the contention of scholars such as Maxwell (2004), Olson (2004), and Erickson and Gutiérrez (2002), who assert that the context in which an intervention occurs will most definitely affect outcomes. In this view, a one size fits all approach to early literacy intervention will not be successful given the variety of contexts in which these interventions will be implemented.

Policy Mandates

As the academic disparity between minority and disadvantaged students and their white English speaking peers continues to grow at an alarming rate, the exploration of what constitutes effective early literacy is imperative. The fact that in 2005, nearly half (47%) of all 3- to 5-year-old children from low-income families were enrolled in either part-day or full-day early childhood programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), has made the investigation of what constitutes effective early literacy instruction an urgent national priority. The increase in government funding for school readiness programs has led to the adoption of cognitively based early literacy curricula and a call for more rigorous evidence based practice into what programs and interventions yield positive results for children. These policy shifts have led to increasing debate about specific early literacy content and associated instructional strategies (VanDerHeyden, Snyder,

Broussard, & Ramsdell, 2007). How instruction is designed and delivered has prompted some early childhood educators to express concerns about the direct instruction approaches called for in many early literacy programs, asserting that they are decontextualized strategies that are too highly structured and scripted (Zigler, Singer, & Bishop-Joseph, 2004). The use of decontextualized strategies is especially harmful for dual language learners who rely on contextual cues to make sense of new information and integrate new words and ideas into existing schemas about the world. Scripted curricula leave little room for checking for understanding, reading children's cues, scaffolding, and other strategies that are effective with dual language learners. Shonkoff (2004) has cautioned against placing too much instructional emphasis on early literacy skills at the expense of other areas of development, such as social emotional foundations of early learning, while others have expressed concerns over the lack of play in the preschool curriculum as the focus on explicit language and literacy instruction increases (Morrow & Schickendanz, 2006). This view argues that an intense focus on school readiness and cognitive skill development denies the holistic nature of children's development (the intersection of the physical, cognitive and social) and the ecological contexts of relationships, communities and culture. An additional concern is that these practices and instructional guidelines may further segregate dual language learners who benefit from the integration of social emotional skills, art, music, and physical movement into cognitive activities. A decontextualized approach does not focus on children's strengths or background knowledge, and this approach can be particularly harmful to children who are learning a new language and require numerous scaffolds to build on prior knowledge.

In addition to concerns about its efficacy for children, the use of scripted curricula has been criticized for placing teachers "on the level of deskilled technicians" (Hasset, 2008). Since the passage of NCLB, a plethora of scope and sequence curricula with predetermined themes of the week, scripted lessons, and prescribed story books and vocabulary lessons have flooded the market with the promise that if the teacher simply follows the formula provided the children will develop the skills they need to be successful readers. This assumption denies a critical component of early learning that is inherent to the contextual paradigm: that all children learn within the context relationships with warm, caring adults who are able to read their cues and respond appropriately. According to Ostrosky, Gaffney, & Thomas (2006) a key aspect of children's emerging literacy skills is the development of rapport and the building of relationships with adults and peers via interactions with literacy related materials and experiences. In their seminal longitudinal study of language and literacy development in low-income preschoolers, Dickinson and Tabors (2001) reported that the development of ongoing relationships with adults who engaged children in authentic conversations about real world experiences enabled children to build meaningful literacy connections. A key feature of being a successful preschool teacher is the ability to read children's cues and respond in warm and sensitive ways, something that cannot be scripted by curriculum developers. Because of the key role that oral language plays in the development of literacy, the use of a child's home language not only allows for higher level conversations but also helps children develop relationships with their teachers. The *Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (August and Shanahan, 2006) highlights that fact that strong skills in the child's first language form

the foundation for literacy skills in the child's second language and that "language-minority students instructed in their native language develop as well as in English perform better, on average, on measures of English reading proficiency than language-minority students instructed only in English" (p.5).

Research on the effectiveness of programs designed to improve early literacy skill development in children at risk for reading failure, including dual language learners, illustrate the complexity of early literacy development. Two national research efforts have assessed the effectiveness of the scientifically based early literacy intervention efforts that have been called for by NCLB and Good Start Grow Start. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) conducted an evaluation of the efficacy of current preschool curricula, many of which were used in programs funded by Early Reading First. The PCER program was created to address the scarcity of rigorous, systemic evaluations of available preschool curricula, and conducted a multi site efficacy evaluation of 14 preschool curricula using a common assessment protocol and a randomized experimental design (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The results from this evaluation indicate that only two of the 14 intervention curricula had impacts on the student-level outcomes for the pre-kindergarten year. In kindergarten, four of the curricula had impacts on the student-level outcomes, although three of these did not have impacts during the pre-kindergarten year. Clearly, in this large-scale efficacy study, the promise improved outcomes for children via large-scale interventions was not realized.

Adopting a similar methodological approach as the PCERS evaluation, the national evaluation of ERF focused on the second cohort of grantees to receive funding.

In the final report to congress, Jackson et al. (2007) reported that ERF had a pervasive impact on the quality of ERF classrooms, including the language environment, materials, teaching practices in support of early literacy and child assessment practices. Despite these pervasive effects, child outcome measures showed a statistically significant positive effect on two of the four targeted areas of intervention, children's print and letter knowledge, while there was no statistically significant impact of phonological awareness or oral language. While dual language learners were included in both the ERF and PCERS studies, there was little attention paid to how instruction was differentiated to meet the needs of these children.

The methodological approach underlying these two studies exemplifies the focus on random experimental or quasi-experimental designs that have dominated the field of early literacy research since the passage of NCLB. These studies give little insight into what actually took place in the classrooms under investigation, and are based on the assumption that an intervention, as long as it is based on reading research, will improve outcomes for children. This approach assumes that all children are the same, that all teachers are the same, and that they all will respond to a curricular intervention in the same way. This approach to early literacy research, coupled with the narrow focus on cognitive skill development, denies the social and cultural aspects of early learning and the variation of experiences, beliefs, and practices that affect early learning.

Theoretical Framework

Rogoff's (2003) concept of cultural communities will be used to highlight the cultural aspect of human development, as this construct proposes that people develop as participants in cultural communities. Rather than being based solely on membership to a

particular racial or ethnic group, participation in cultural communities is based on the notion that shared experiences, practices, and goals lead to groups of individuals with common beliefs, values, and ideologies. Central to the concept of cultural communities is the recognition that communities change over time and represent variation within and among different cultural groups. As such, this construct provides an appropriate framework for looking at the diverse students and teachers that spend their days in preschool programs for low income children, including dual language learners. Dual language learners often participate in cultural and linguistic communities that differ from those of the dominant culture and this mismatch between home and school is often cited as a contributing factor to poor academic outcomes for language minority children (Ogbu, 1982; Osborne, 1996) The notion of cultural communities calls into question a one size fits all approach to early literacy curriculum and encourages researchers to examine the cultural processes and events that support children in the development of early literacy skills. In a nation as diverse as the United States, it is critical to develop early literacy interventions that are culturally responsive and take into consideration the context in which the intervention is being implemented. A key assumption of my research will be that given the complex, transactional nature of child development, the simple pre-post experimental methodology that has dominated the field of early literacy research is one dimensional and can only provide limited insight into the complicated processes involved in developing the skills children need to be successful readers.

Given my focus on interfacing systems and processes, I will also draw on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological model to explain how contexts interact in complex and dynamic ways to impact teacher practices and children's language and

literacy development. My research is in stark contrast to that which has dominated the field of late by employing a qualitative approach that takes an in-depth look at literacy experiences and practices in a Head Start center. A qualitative methodology allowed for description and analysis of the processes that occur in a classroom setting as well as the unique contextual factors that influence outcomes. As Maxwell (2004) noted, a qualitative approach uncovers the role of participants' beliefs and values in shaping outcomes, considerations that have been conspicuously absent from current early literacy research. In addition to my qualitative data, quantitative data was used to employ a mixed methods approach that allowed for a deeper examination of a complex educational setting.

A secondary assumption of my research is that learning to read is ultimately a social endeavor that takes place in specific, culturally bound settings. Sociocultural theorists (Gee, 1991; 2000; Street, 1995, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978) propose that learning to read is a social process rather than the isolated acquisition of discrete skills. Researchers in this tradition examine the ways in which people acquire and understand meaning through their interaction in social groups and assert that knowledge is transmitted though interaction in social institutions. Whitmore, Martens, Goodman, and Owocki (2004) proposed that literacy is an individual act, a social act, and a cultural act, and that these levels of literacy learning interact in complex and dynamic ways to influence how children become literate. Dyson (2001) encouraged us to envision literacy development not as a movement along a linear road, but as increasingly deliberate movement among expanding social spheres, and I argue that the preschool setting represents a critical and until recently overlooked sphere of literacy development. A cultural communities lens

reflects the sociocultural tradition by highlighting the social and cultural nature of early literacy development by situating it within the context of the child's family, the preschool classroom, and the community in which the preschool is located. Because its focus on the social and cultural aspects of development, a cultural communities framework was an appropriate lens through which to examine the language and literacy development of dual language learners from the vantage point of teacher early literacy practices. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' early literacy practices within a cultural communities framework by asking the following research questions:

1. What are the espoused and enacted early literacy practices of teachers in a Head Start classroom?

    a. Do the early literacy practices enacted differ for English learner and English only students? How?

2. What is the relationship between espoused and enacted practices?

3. How do teacher practices relate to program practices called for by the program's curriculum?

4. What is the relationship between teachers' experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom?

Significance of the Study

Increasing the understanding of curriculum and pedagogy that can result in positive developmental outcomes for children at risk has become an urgent national priority, and the investigation of how teacher practices influence early literacy instruction is of critical importance for social policy.

My research has added to the practical and theoretical knowledge base in the field of early literacy and child development in several ways. First, the research questions and qualitative research design filled a gap in the research by exploring actual early literacy experiences and teacher practices in a Head Start center. As Gutiérrez (2006) stated, educators know little about how to account for variations in cultural communities in the classroom, and there is a dearth of empirical work illustrating how to document and use data about variation in students' experiences. My research addressed this gap by focusing on the experiences of low income, language minority children and their teachers by adopting a theoretical lens and research methodology that was in stark contrast to that which has dominated the field of early literacy research since the passage of NCLB. Rather than focusing solely on child outcome measures, this dissertation focused on the classroom processes and teacher practices that lead to child outcomes by painting a detailed picture of a particular context.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature: Cultural Communities, Early Literacy, and Teacher Practices

This chapter consists of four sections, beginning with a review of the theoretical framework used to guide the research, followed by a review of the construct of practices and how it has been applied to early childhood settings, with specific attention to early literacy practices. The third section is a review of the research on the skills and instructional support children, including dual language learners, need to become successful readers and an examination of the early language and literacy experiences provided to children in publicly funded preschool programs. The chapter concludes with a critical examination of empirical research on teacher beliefs about early language and literacy. Increased accountability at all levels of the educational system coupled with a school readiness gap clearly demarcated along racial lines makes a critical analysis of teacher early literacy practices in publicly funded preschool programs imperative.

Theoretical Frameworks

Rogoff's (2003) construct of cultural communities, coupled with Gutiérrez (2006) and Gutiérrez and Rogoff's (2003) construct of repertoires of practice, will be presented as a powerful lens to assist in the understanding of teacher early literacy practices and children's early literacy experiences in a Head Start program. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological systems model will also be used to conceptualize how teachers' early literacy practices are impacted by context, both distal and immediate, and how these contexts converge in the preschool classroom to create a unique setting that impacts teacher practices and children's early literacy experiences.

Cultural Communities

In the socio-cultural tradition, Gutiérrez (2006) and Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) call for educators to adopt a cultural-historical view of learning to provide a process orientated conceptualization of culture that takes into consideration the social and historical forces that shape development. This view recognizes that learning is embedded in the relationship between the individual learner and the environment and requires the educator and researcher to recognize how children are culturally and socially shaped via their participation in cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003). Cultural communities are defined as a coordinated group of people who share common traditions and understandings that extend over several generations (Rogoff, 2003). This concept of cultural communities propels researchers to consider how teacher and children's participation in daily activities, including language use, contributes to learning. In this view, community held beliefs about the role of education, how education should be delivered, and the goals of education are part of a belief system developed through participation in a cultural community. This theoretical framework is particularly suited to the study of children from non-dominant cultures and dual language learners, as it proposes that community goals for children influence practices. An example of this is found in the work of Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler (2007), who examined African American child care directors' beliefs about child care. The researchers reported that director's beliefs about the role of early childhood education reflected the notion that academic instruction was necessary to prepare the children in their care for participation in a society affected by racism and discrimination. These beliefs led to specific practices used on a daily basis to administer their child care center. These practices involved how they

dealt with parents, the staff they hired, and the pedagogical strategies used in the classrooms. My theoretical framework assumes that teacher beliefs, including beliefs about dual language learning, influence classroom language and literacy practices, and that these beliefs have been shaped by teacher's participation in cultural communities.

Gutiérrez (2006) noted that educational policy is frequently enacted for cultural communities without consideration for the history, practices, and variation within these communities. This statement is especially timely given that it reflects current educational policy and a search for interventions that are successful across cultural communities, despite the different values, beliefs, and practices these cultural communities may embody. As Maxwell (2004) stated, "to develop adequate explanations of educational phenomena, and to understand the operation of educational interventions, we need to use methods that can investigate the involvement of particular contexts in the processes that generate these phenomena and outcomes" (p. 7). The application of a cultural communities framework to the study of teacher early literacy practices will contribute to the field by providing insight into how the nuances of beliefs, practices, and intentions influence classroom early literacy practices. The application of the contextual paradigm to early literacy development and teacher practices is especially timely given the focus on isolated, cognitive skill building and large scale, standardized interventions that have dominated the field of early literacy in recent years. In addition, increasing our understanding of the role of contextual variables, including teacher beliefs about how to best meet the needs of dual language learners and how these beliefs affect practices, is critical if we are to close the school readiness gap.

Repertoires of Practice

Participation in cultural communities leads to the development of practices, which are routines or ways of doing things that reflect the goals and ideologies of the community. Practices and are adaptive and make sense for that community based on its values and beliefs, which have been developed via common experiences. Gutiérrez (2006) defined repertoires of practice as "proclivities of people with certain histories of engagement with specific cultural activities" (p. 46). My research argues that these repertoires of practice represent unique contextual variables that must be considered when designing and implementing any type of educational program or intervention. Maxwell (2004) used the term realist social scientists to describe those who see the meanings, beliefs, values, and intentions of study participants as essential parts of causal mechanism (Huberman & Miles, 1985; House, 1991). Similarly, Sayer (1992) contended that social phenomena are concept-dependent and what the "practices, institutions, rules, roles, or relations are depends on what they mean in society and to its members" (p. 30). In accordance with this line of thinking, I hypothesized that the meaning given to early literacy activities by teachers would impact both their espoused and enacted early literacy practices, which would in turn affect the experiences with literacy afforded to the children in their classroom. The concept of repertoires of practice was used in my research to explore why teachers do what they do with regards to early literacy instruction by situating practices within the construct of cultural communities. Because of the role that language plays in the transmittal of goals and values for children's learning, an examination of teacher beliefs about dual language learning is an important first step towards identifying interventions that are both effective and culturally relevant.

The Bio-ecological Model

The bio-ecological model proposed by Brofenbrenner and Morris (1997) recognizes five levels of developmental systems, embedded or "nested" within one another. This model places development in context and provides a useful framework for the examination of how contextual variables interact with each other and the developing child to influence teacher practices and early literacy skill development. Brofenbrenner (1979) described the microsystem as the system closest to the child that represents the child's family, peers, school, and neighborhood. The mesosystem is primary system of interest in my research as it represents the system in which various microsystem variables interact to influence teacher practices and children's early literacy experiences and opportunities. My research questions seek to describe the mesosystem environment by exploring how teacher practices connect (or don't connect) to the program curriculum and how teachers' participation in cultural communities influences the language and literacy processes that take place in their classrooms. It is in this system that language is the most salient, as the language of home often intersects with the language of the dominant society for the first time in the preschool setting. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stressed the importance of ecological transitions, especially important in preschool as oftentimes this is the first time that children are moving to a new setting that may be very different (or similar) from home. The exosystem is the next system in this nested model and represents systems such as the parents' workplace that do not directly affect the child, but still assert influence on the microsystem setting. Because I argue that teacher practices are linked to the participation in cultural communities, the two most distal contexts, the macrosystem and chronosystem are important in terms of my research. The

macrosystem reflects the possibilities and options for individual development that are available in a given culture at a given point in history. The poverty or wealth of a child's family, the neighborhood in which the child lives, and the child's ethnicity are all macrosystem variables that can either enhance or constrain individual development. Brofenbrenner (1993) noted that due to the undeniable influence of macrosystem variables on all other systems, it is essential that culture, or any other relevant macrosystem variable, be included in research models that explore developmental processes or outcomes. Recent changes to the Head Start program and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) are current examples of macrosystem variables that influence teacher practices and the early literacy experiences available to children. The chronosystem represents changes that occur over time in the various environments in which the child develops and exerts its influence on the family environment through past conditions and circumstances that affect the family in the present. Chronosystem events often result in societal norms, values, and expectations that influence interfamilial and community processes. Chronosystem variables are inextricably linked to cultural communities as family and community histories help shape repertoires of practice used by communities and individuals adapt to and make sense of events. As such, a central hypothesis of my research was that chronosystem influences, embodied as repertoires of practice in cultural communities, influence teacher early literacy practices in complex and fluid ways.

Socio-cultural Understanding of Literacy Development

Socio-cultural theorists propose that learning to read is a social process, and researchers in this tradition examine the ways in which people acquire and understand meaning through their interaction in social groups (Gee, 1991, 2000; Street, 1995, 2005;

Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, learning occurs in the context of meaningful relationships as children's ideas are scaffolded to the next level of development through interactions with peers, parents, and teachers who ask questions, add new ideas, or respond in a warm and responsive way to children's inquiries (Bruner, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978). As such, learning in general, and literacy development in particular, is firmly embedded in culture and cannot be divorced from children's everyday experiences. Language, as a vehicle for learning and the transmittal of knowledge, is a key component of the socio-cultural approach, making it imperative to explore teacher beliefs about and goals for language use in the preschool classroom.

Adopting a socio-cultural approach, Heath (1983), in her seminal study of working class, African American children struggling in school, reported that the verbal strategies used by African American families differed from those used in school. By designing an intervention in which teachers incorporated community based strategies into their classrooms, teachers changed the social context of instruction and improved student outcomes. Similarly, Moll, Velez-Ibanez, and Greenberg's (1990) ethnographic analysis of a Hispanic, working class community in Tucson, AZ found an abundance of knowledge both within and among the households studied and that these households created strategic social ties that facilitated the transmission of knowledge needed to survive in difficult economic times. Moll and colleagues' description of this cultural community exemplifies how repertoires of practice serve as adaptive mechanisms to help groups of individuals make sense of their surroundings and circumstances. With respect to language and literacy, the authors discuss the importance of the social and cultural aspect of learning in which children take an active part in learning and the manipulation

of knowledge. According to Moll, Velez-Ibanez, and Greenberg (1990), because most classrooms function in isolation from the social worlds of the students and their community, they leave little opportunity for students to use literacy to obtain or communicate information of personal or intellectual interest. This finding supports my argument, based on my personal experience implementing a standardized literacy curriculum, that in order for literacy intervention to be successful it must be context specific and meaningful to the teachers and children involved. Making the classroom relevant to children, especially dual language learners who cannot participate fully in the shared language of the classroom, is essential if learning is to occur. Working from this socio-cultural framework of language and literacy acquisition, my research will explore how participation in cultural communities influences teacher practices and the language and literacy experiences experienced by children in a Head Start setting.

Practices in Early Childhood Education

The use of practices has been suggested as a new way of looking at children's experiences in early childhood programs and as way to capture the role of culture in shaping children's experiences and development (Wishard et al., 2003). In terms of educational research, and recalling the mesosystem described by Bronfenbrenner, these practices must be recognized as a powerful contextual variable that interacts with other individual, classroom, family, and community variables in a complex way to affect outcomes in educational settings. Because practices are highly dependent on the values and belief systems teachers bring with them to the classroom, increasing understanding of teacher's early language and literacy practices can shed light on the variability of cultural

communities and how this variability affects classroom experiences and ultimately child outcomes.

The terms "best practices" and "developmentally appropriate practice" are commonly used by early childhood practitioners and include a set of guidelines promoted as universal methods and procedures essential for the provision of quality child care (Bredekamp, 1987, 1991; Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997; Shepard & Smith, 1988). This set of assumptions has been endorsed by professional organizations such as the National Association for Young Children (NAEYC) who provide overarching guidelines for early childhood professionals and the development of the field. Commonly referred to as DAP, these guidelines form the basis of many quality measures of early childhood programs, including NAEYC accreditation.

The construct of cultural communities calls into question the universality of practices, and some researchers, such as Lubek (1996), have criticized DAP for failing to incorporate the contexts in which practices occur. Whereas DAP polarizes practices as appropriate or inappropriate, practices that develop from participation in cultural communities can be both appropriate and adaptive in that they serve a particular purpose for the community in question. Although the most recent edition of DAP addresses the role that culture plays in development and states that practices cannot be appropriate unless they are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity (Bredekamp & Copple, 1996), there is little empirical evidence as to what this looks like (Gutiérrez, 2006).

The most comprehensive examination of child care practices comes from Wishard, Shivers, Howes, and Ritchie (2003). In their multi-faceted exploratory study of how practices influence children's experiences in child care, practices were

operationalized as ways of doing things that are based on beliefs about what to teach and why. In this definition, practices are not isolated behaviors but rather part of a larger belief system that reflects community goals for children. The authors reported that program and teacher articulated practices varied across programs and that these differences were deeply rooted in ethnicity. The authors identified diverse practices at the individual teacher and program level, despite the fact that they were all rated as being of high quality. In addition, practices and quality contributed differently to their predictive model, suggesting that practices are a distinct construct from quality.

The authors argued that the modest magnitudes of some of their findings related to ethnicity and children's experience not as a weakness, but rather an indication of the complexity of the cultural nature of development. The fact that the relationships between ethnicity and practices were not strong was viewed by the authors as further support of the notion that many variables interact to determine children's child care experiences. From this perspective, to view the ethnicity of the children or teacher as an isolated variable is to deny the complexity of development. The authors pointed out that "children's experiences in child care are deeply rooted in the social, cultural, and historical values of the specific community, and that ethnicity, while not a causal mechanism, may instead be representative of the community goals for children that are based on socio-cultural and socio-historical history of the community." (p. 92). This research highlighted the dangers of placing students in "boxes" based solely on ethnicity or social class. Viewing constructs such as race, ethnicity, and language as static constructs inhibits our ability to see the complexities that reside within cultural communities.

With regards to language and literacy experiences, Wishard et al. (2003) reported that teachers articulated three mutually exclusive practices regarding literacy and numeracy skills: child initiated learning, scaffolding, and directly teaching children basic skills. In the child initiated group, the primary belief articulated was that the role of the teacher is to expose children to wide variety of experiences and activities because children learn if opportunities for play are provided. In this view, the role of the teacher to provide direction or scaffolding is limited. The second set of belief systems involved the use of scaffolding as a teaching technique and viewed the role of the teacher as providing hands on activities for children, monitoring their behavior and using teachable moments to scaffold knowledge. The third mutually exclusive category was more teacher directed as the role of the teacher was viewed as the teaching of basic skills. Teachers with this belief system had a predetermined set of academic skills children needed to learn while in their class. The role of teacher, then, was to deliver instruction so that children would be successful in school. Teachers representing this view felt that they, as teachers, had the knowledge and that it was their duty to share this knowledge with the children.

The research of Wishard et al. (2003) made great contributions to the field in that it highlighted how teachers in classrooms with similar quality ratings may enact very different practices. Similarly, Burchinal and Cryer (2003) reported that standard measures of quality were reliable for African-American and English speaking Latino children compared to White children, and that all three groups benefited from sensitive caregiving. The authors noted, however, that what this caregiving looked like depended on practices rooted in cultural differences. These findings are in support of my hypothesis

that early literacy practices are very context specific and depend on the experiences, beliefs and values that teachers bring with them to the preschool classroom. Smagorinsky (2009) referred to the need for researchers and practitioners to embrace a situated notion of best practices, in which there is no one right way to do things in the classroom. According to Smagorinsky, skilled teachers are those that can observe, reflect, intervene and teach in very context dependent ways.

Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler (2007) further exemplified how culture affects beliefs and practices in a preschool setting via an in-depth case study of child care practices of six African American directors of subsidized child care centers in a low income, traditionally African American area of Los Angeles. The theoretical framework guiding this research was Garcia-Coll's integrative framework for children of color (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996), which places racial ethnicity in the center of children's experiences and assumes that social position is a dominant feature of the developmental experience of children of color. The authors explored whether the construct of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is applicable to children of color and reported that the programs they studied altered DAP in unique ways based on their understanding and participation in the community, highlighting the multidimensional nature of cultural communities. Preparing the children for participation in a society plagued by racial and social class stratification was a key influence on the pedagogical strategies used by the programs. The authors stated that even in programs in which the directors strongly endorsed the play based, child directed approach to learning promoted by DAP, many of the activities provided for children had a strong academic focus and relied on teacher directed, didactic teaching methods. Teachers presented these activities in a fun and

engaging way and the children appeared attentive and engaged, a reflection of how teaching staff modified the DAP philosophy to meet the unique needs of their community. The program practices articulated and enacted in these programs reflected the belief that children need to be prepared for kindergarten by learning letters, numbers, and how to write their names, but that these skills can be taught in a manner that makes "academics fun for kids" (p. 399). The focus on academic preparation reflected the directors' beliefs that they need to prepare children for the bias that they will face in their future and the need for them to "buffer against the future injustices that their children will experience due to their status as a racial ethnic minority" (p. 400).

Another finding from this study that is important from a cultural communities framework is how the directors and teachers enacted sensitive and responsive caregiving, an important practice central to quality child care (Howes & Sanders, 2006) and a variable under consideration in Wishard et al. (2003) and Burchinal and Cryer (2003). Sanders, Deihl and Kyler (2007) noted that a distinguishing characteristic of the programs they studied was the "infusion of religiosity into their practices" (p. 399) as a means of sensitive caregiving and reflecting a central aspect of African American communities (Haight, 1998, Mattis, 2005, Mattis Fontenont, & Hatcher-Kay, 2003). Community mothering was another key part of sensitive caregiving discussed by the directors, who took very strongly their responsibility to help and give advice to the families at their center. Collins (2000) asserted that the practice of community mothering is a reflection of the African American experience in which African American communities neared extinction because of historical and social forces. This concept of community mothering exemplifies my contention that chronosystem influences are

played out in school settings via repertoires of practice enacted by members of cultural communities. Similar findings were also reported by Wishard and colleagues, who found that African American teachers of African American children articulated practices that had a strong focus on home culture, serving the community and direct instruction. These teachers held strong beliefs about the value of didactic learning practices in the place of the role of scaffolding or the initiation of positive interactions.

Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler (2007) concluded that the directors took DAP and made it meaningful and relevant for their context as they shared "an intuitive understanding of the needs and conditions affecting the children in their community and adapted DAP to accommodate those needs" (p. 403). This research is important because it highlights how practices may change over time as the community and individuals in the community adapt to shifting contextual variables. Because of shifting demographics in their community, the directors witnessed an increase in the enrollment of Latino students in their centers. Sanders, Deihl and Kyler (20007) highlighted the directors' struggle to integrate these children into their centers, their belief systems, and their practices, and how the introduction of these students forced the directors to re-think their long held ways of doing things. This research also highlighted the bi-directional nature of cultural communities, in that the families of the Latino children also had to adjust their ways of thinking to accommodate their children's participation in a child care center in which the director did not come from their cultural background. One director in the study, for example, spoke of a Latino father who began speaking to her only after his child had attended the center for three years. Not only did the directors have to adjust their ways of thinking and acting in response to a change in the community, so too did the families.

Although not explicitly discussed in the research, one could assume that the children and teachers also had to adjust their practices in response to the shifting environment. It is important to note that "community for these directors transcends racial and ethnic boundaries and encompasses the needs and values of the neighborhoods" (p. 404). This statement truly reflects the cultural communities and cultural-historical framework espoused by Rogoff (2003) and Rogoff and Gutiérrez (2006) as placing children, families, and teachers in the static categories of race or ethnicity fails to capture the complexity of development and the shifting nature of cultural communities. This concept recalls the findings of Wishard et al. (2003) who documented the different practices enacted by African American teachers with their African American and Latino students. While African American teachers focused on the role of the community and didactic, academic instruction with their African American students, when working with their Latino students their focus was more on acculturation and learning English. From a practice focused perspective, the child care staff studied by Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler (2007) and Wishard et al. (2003) changed their practices to reflect their beliefs about what children from different ethnic groups need to be successful. It is important to note that both of these studies took place in the Los Angeles area, and the similar findings and conclusions increase the validity and generalizability of both studies. These findings highlight variations within and across different cultural groups, a key assumption of my argument that standardized approaches to early literacy instruction and intervention fail to consider the complexity and nuance of teacher practices.

The research of McGill-Franzen, Lanford, and Adams (2002) provided significant insight into how participation in cultural communities can affect children's early literacy

experiences. Using qualitative methods, the authors examined how five urban preschools socialized children to be literate through the exploration of practices at both the teacher and program level. Three of the preschools, one of which was a Head Start, were specifically designed to serve low income families meeting the federal poverty guidelines and were located in low-income, African American communities. The other two settings were a religious affiliated nursery school serving a religious community and a preschool located at and administered by a university; these programs were selected because they served both low and middle income families.

The researchers reported that each program initiated children into the literate practices and rituals of their respective classroom communities in unique and context specific ways that reflected the goals and values of the larger community. At the university preschool for example, classroom libraries reflected the program's multicultural, nonviolent, nonsexist and environmentally aware philosophy. Classroom activities with writing and literacy also reflected this philosophy as children wrote down their ideas and studied the rainforest through activities rich with language and literacy. At the program level, the materials provided to parents about the center clearly reflected the goals of the program, and the researchers observed that teacher practices, the classroom and center environment and the resources made available were congruent with the stated goals and values of the program. In addition, the program director clearly articulated these goals and the practices used to achieve them.

Similarly, the researchers observed literacy activities and practices that were specific to the community in which the Head Start center was located. All staff working at the Head Start center lived in the same African American neighborhood as the children

and had been employed by the program for many years. McGill and colleagues reported that it was common practice for community members, including teachers, parents, foster grandparents, cooks, and bus drivers to share community news as they dropped off children, arrived for work, and prepared for the beginning of the school day. In this particular community, the newspaper represented an important literacy tool and conversations often revolved around the day's news. The authors noted that the teachers, parents, and staff routinely discussed and editorialized on aspects of the news that touched their community. In this setting teachers and members of the larger community modeled for the children how print can be used to be a valuable member of society. The researchers described the Head Start teachers "avid readers" who shared their love of reading with the children by taking weekly walks to the library. During these visit, the children and teachers spent time looking through books and later checked them out with their library cards. The teachers always selected books for themselves, again modeling for the children an important community value. With regards to program policies, teachers in the Head Start program stated that they "taught by the book", using a curriculum prescribed by the agency receiving funding. Although this curriculum was not highly focused on language and literacy, the teachers shared with the children their own repertoires of practice around literacy that they had developed as part of a cultural community. The teachers and other community members, including the librarian, socialized the children into the literate practices of their community. In this preschool center, many systems converged to engender literacy outcomes, reflecting the mesosystem influence.

The religion-affiliated school also had clear links to the larger religious community in which it was embedded. Children recited the alphabet in Hebrew and English and engaged in literacy activities that revolved around the religious life of the community, such as creating stories and drawings based on the Torah. The authors reported that in this setting there were seamless connections made between the literate rituals of the home, the school, and the religious community via teacher and program practices.

Both the child development center and the state preschool centers had program policies prohibiting the teaching of letters, and this was reflected in the impoverished language and literacy environments provided in these programs. In fact, in the state preschool program, the department of education denied budget requests for items it deemed too academic and developmentally inappropriate. According to the authors, classroom practices and environments at these sites reflected a limited view of the ability of poor children to learn and become part of a literate culture. McGill and colleagues concluded by stating that different communities use and value literacy differently, and the children they observed were socialized into the literacy practices of the preschool communities to which they belonged. What is interesting about this study in terms of my research is the analysis of program level and teacher level practices and the relationship between them. One of the research questions addressed in my dissertation was whether or not observed teacher practices are commensurate with those called for in the program curriculum. In the research study described above, program philosophy served to either inhibit or constrain the literacy practices of the classroom. In the case of the Head Start program, however, the teachers were able to infuse their classrooms with rich and

meaningful literacy activities despite a lack of attention to literacy at the program level, illuminating the role that teachers play in altering program level guidelines.

The research reviewed in this section highlights the fact that children's experiences in child care are affected by many variables, including beliefs and practices, which are firmly rooted in culture. These belief systems and practices are related to the type of caregiving children receive as well as to the type of early literacy instruction provided to children. The following section will examine this further by reviewing empirical data on the instructional strategies that have been found to increase children's early literacy development. This will be followed by a review of the research on children's language and literacy experiences in publicly funded preschool programs.

High Quality Language and Literacy Practices

The recognition of the importance of early childhood experiences on literacy development has resulted in the convergence of two formerly unrelated fields: reading research and early childhood education (Dickinson, 2001). Researchers have identified key foundational skills that children must have if they are to enter kindergarten ready to learn to read. The development of oral language, phonological awareness, print knowledge (Dickinson & Smith 1994; Frede, 1995; Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony, 2000; Scarborough, 1998; Whitehurst et al., 1994; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), vocabulary (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Blatchford, Burke, Farquhar, Plewis, & Tizard, 1987; Frijters, Barron, & Brunello, 2000), alphabetic knowledge and concepts of print (Adams, 1990; Bond & Dykstra, 1997; Chall, 1967; Wasik, 2001), has been shown to predict later reading success. Reading experts estimate that if children receive proper exposure in these foundational skills during early childhood, as few as 5 % of them may

experience serious reading difficulty in contrast to the current level of 20% to 30% (Snow et al., 1998), and a great deal of research has focused on specific techniques and strategies that support children in their attainment of these skills. Researchers have identified two separate but complementary skill sets that contribute to children's reading success: language skills and literacy skills, and each of them comes with a distinct set of instructional support strategies that have been shown to increase children's skills.

High Quality Language Instruction

In their seminal longitudinal study, the Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development, Dickinson and Tabors (2001) highlighted the importance of beginning literacy with language. The research on language development is based on social–interactionist theories of language acquisition (Baumwell, Tamis-LeMonda, & Bornstein, 1997; Chapman, 2000; Landry, Miller-Loncar, Smith, & Swank, 1997) which views language acquisition as a psychobiological process to which "frequent, relatively well-tuned affectively positive verbal interactions" are critical for supporting language growth in early childhood (Chapman, 2000, p. 43). A great deal of research supports the notion that adult's use of responsive communication with children, particularly the use of open-ended questions, expansions, advanced linguistic models, and recasts result in positive outcomes for children (Baker & Nelson, 1984; Nelson, 1977; Vasilyeva, Huttenlocher, & Waterfall, 2006; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006; Yoder, Spruytenburg, Edwards, & Davies, 1995).

Recently, the social–interactionist theories of language development have been used to develop classroom interventions designed to accelerate children's language development (Vasilyeva et al., 2006; Wasik et al., 2006; Whitehurst et al., 1988;

Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) and has focused on both typical and at risk children. A primary goal of these interventions has been to train preschool teachers to engage in specific language-facilitation techniques in their conversations with children, both formal and informal. In addition, teachers are trained to use techniques that are responsive to children's linguistic abilities and scaffold children's learning to the next level. This is done by asking questions, adding new vocabulary that builds on children's prior knowledge and by providing language rich activities that are meaningful and engaging. Interventions consist of teachers using techniques, such as open-ended questions, expansions, and recasts, throughout the day and across a variety of classroom contexts, such as center time, storybook reading, and meal time (Bunce, 1995; Dickinson, 2006; Girolametto &Weitzman, 2002; Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2002; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Wasik et al., 2006); these interventions have been causally associated with improved language outcomes in preschool children.

High Quality Literacy Instruction

The features of high quality language instructions differ from the instructional strategies that define high quality literacy instruction. Research indicates that in order to bring about positive gains in literacy related skills, literacy instruction must be both systematic and explicit. Literacy instruction requires a fairly teacher directed approach that focuses on the code-based characteristics of written language, including phonological and print structures to ensure the systematicity and explicitness of literacy instruction (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989; Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan, & Colton, 2003; van Kleeck, Gillam, & McFadden, 1998). Adams (2002) defined systematicity as the teachers' organization and sequencing of lessons so they "reveal the logic of the

alphabetic system" (p. 74), while explicitness requires the use of clear terminology that focuses children's attention on the concepts being learned (Adams, 2002). Another key feature of high-quality literacy instruction is that it must be purposeful in that teachers must attach decontextualized, code-based aspects of literacy instruction to meaning and comprehension (Ukrainetz, 2005). Applied research on preschool literacy intervention has shown that when children participate in systemic, explicit, and purposeful experiences with print and sound, literacy development is enhanced (Justice, Chow, et al., 2003; van Kleeck et al., 1998; Whitehurst et al., 1988).

Effective Language and Literacy Instruction for Dual Language Learners

Espinoza (2010) noted that a quality, comprehensive curriculum for all children, especially dual language learners, is essential for positive language and literacy outcomes. Goldenberg (2006) identified specific strategies shown to improve language and literacy development in dual language learners, including: 1.) the strategic use of the home language, 2.) consistent expectations, instructions and routines, 3.) extended explanations and opportunities for practice, and 4.) the use of physical gestures, including visual cues. In addition, Goldenberg recommended that teachers focus on the similarities and differences between English and the home language and discuss these with children, using objects and props to concretize their learning. Goldenberg also encouraged teachers to focus on vocabulary development, check frequently for understanding, and paraphrase children's language while encouraging them to expand their language use and thought processes.

Cummins (1984) noted that children's first language skills must become well developed to ensure that their academic and linguistic performance in the second

language is maximized, and his developmental interdependence theory proposed that growth in a second language is dependent upon a well-developed first language. Additionally, two recent reports published by The National Literacy Panel (2006) and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (2006) concluded that dual language learners benefit from having oral proficiency in their home language as well as instruction that emphasizes the key components of reading.

Gutiérrez, Zepeda, and Castro (2010) highlighted the importance of the relationship between socioemotional development and dual language and literacy development and noted that understanding language development in young dual language learners involves the understanding of the mechanics of language transfer as well as the social contexts in which children learn. Similarly, when discussing the needs of dual language learners, Espinoza (2010) noted that comprehensive curricula do not focus only on cognitive skills and literacy development, but rather on meeting the needs of the whole child, reflecting the socio-cultural perspective on early literacy development adopted by my research. Because language is a tool through which interactions are mediated, language use in schools can send powerful messages about the value of the home language and culture. Espinosa (2009) noted that the language learning context in school can result in negative emotions including anxiety and self-consciousness, which may interfere with learning and limit children's ability to benefit from school.

An additional concern surrounding dual language learners is the loss of the child's first language, which may occur when second language skills become more established (Anderson, 2004; Fase, Jaspaert, & Kroon, 1992; Schiff-Myers, 1992; Sharwood, Smith & Van Buren, 1991) and children begin to acquire a second language before they have

had the opportunity to master or fully develop their first language (Cummins, 1979; Schiff-Meyers, 1992; Tabors, 1997; Wong Fillmore, 1991). For young dual language learners, learning English means learning the dominant, mainstream language associated with White culture and its dominance in classrooms in the United States. Genesee et al. (2004) cautioned that dual language learners are at risk for cultural and linguistic identity displacement:

> Erasing a child's language or cultural patterns of language use is a great loss for the child. Children's identities and sense of self are inextricably linked to the language they speak and to the culture to which they have been socialized. They are, even at an early age, speakers of their languages and members of their cultures. Language and culture are essential to children's identities. (p. 33).

Because of my interest in the sociocultural aspects of early literacy development, particular attention will be paid throughout my dissertation to the language environment at Montgomery Head Start and the espoused and enacted language and literacy practices for dual language learners.

A review of the research cited in the sections above on effective strategies for improving language and literacy skills of at risk students, including dual language learners, highlights specific practices related to the development of these skills. Implementing these practices requires intentional teaching and for teachers to make decisions "in the moment" about which instructional strategies to employ to support and scaffold children's learning. Whether or not teachers engage in these practices is of critical importance to the study of early literacy programs for children at risk, and research on the language and literacy programs provided to children in these programs is reviewed in the following section.

Language and Literacy Practices in Preschool Classrooms

Research has pointed to the low quality of language and literacy instruction provided to children in publicly funded preschool programs (Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta 2007, Powell, Burchinal, File, & Kontos, 2007, Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006). Powell, Burchinal, File and Kontos (2007) reported that teacher behavior in classrooms funded to provide services to at risk children emphasized primarily verbal instructions, demonstrations, and giving directions, which did not predict active child engagement, a critical factor in children's learning, especially for dual language learners. Teachers in these classrooms did not initiate conversation, ask children questions, or facilitate other types of active engagement. The authors concluded by stating that children had few opportunities to improve their representational competence, language use, and social development, important precursors to school success, and that from the child's perspective, interactions with the teacher commonly involved receiving instruction and direction. In order to view teacher early literacy practices from the vantage point of the child, my study used quantitative methodology to obtain descriptive statistics about how children experience teacher early literacy practices and explored the connection between teacher practices and children's' experiences. This type of investigation is in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model, which proposes that many variables and systems intersect to influence children's development, including the child herself.

Wasik, Bond, and Hindman (2006) reported that oftentimes the culture of Head Start classrooms specifically, and preschool classrooms in general, is to keep order and manage the classroom, a goal that is often translated into teachers communicating with

children in ways that do not encourage children to talk. Likewise, Howes et al. (2008) found in their analysis of almost 3000 children attending state funded preschool programs designed to promote school readiness that the majority of the pre-K programs under consideration failed to provide the kinds of instructional support that children need to be successful in school. The small school readiness gains they observed reflected the poor quality of the classrooms studied, suggesting that the poor quality of the classrooms seriously inhibited potential school readiness gains. Similarly, when discussing the results of the Harvard Home-School Study of Literacy Development, Dickinson (2001) concluded that the research team encountered very few instances of high quality teaching and that teachers failed to make intentional efforts to stretch children's thinking and support their literacy development via conversations, the content of the curriculum, and the organization of their classrooms. These findings on the quality of language and literacy experiences provided to preschoolers in publicly funded programs requires that researchers take a closer look at teacher practices that contribute to these low quality ratings.

Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta's (2007) examination of the language and literacy experiences of children at risk provides insight into actual experiences in 135 publicly funded preschool classrooms. Similar to other research on teacher beliefs (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009; Hawkin, Johnson, & McDonnell, 2005, Hindman & Wasik, 2008; McCutchen et. al. 2002), the researchers did not examine teacher's cultural background as a possible predictor of their beliefs or practices but relied on static measurements of teacher background variables, including educational experiences (advanced degree, major, number of language and literacy workshops, years

of teaching experience) and perceptions of teaching (level of self-efficacy, adult-centered ideas). The curriculum under investigation was designed specifically to provide instruction in language and literacy via a 36 week scope and sequence of instructional targets based on reading research and provided teachers with both materials and lesson plans. This type of curriculum exemplifies those called for by recent funding opportunities and policy mandates.

The researchers were also interested in the relationship between curriculum fidelity and program quality and whether or not a tightly scripted curriculum would lead to positive outcomes for children. Procedural fidelity measures determine whether teachers are using adopted programs as intended, and have become increasingly important as the use of "scientifically based" curriculum has increased and for which procedural fidelity might be a key moderator of pupil outcomes (Glenn, 2006). The authors noted that despite the increase of scientifically based preschool language and literacy curricula, little is known about whether implementation of a curriculum is associated with high levels of instructional quality. Building on prior research, the authors defined instructional quality as the dynamic features of the classroom, including how teachers provide socio-emotional support to students, manage the classroom, relate to students, and deliver instruction within the selected classroom curriculum (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004; NICHD ECCRN, 2000). From a cultural communities perspective, these behaviors represent teacher practices, and are the routines and strategies teachers regularly engage in to teach children.

The researchers concluded that across the 135 lessons observed, instruction was characteristically of low quality, with only 8% of the language lessons and 6% of the

literacy lessons coded as high quality. These scores indicated that teachers implementing a language lesson rarely used such strategies as asking open-ended questions, repeating and extending student utterances, or introducing advanced vocabulary and that during literacy lessons teachers rarely used research based strategies such as explicitly using terminology to describe the units of oral and written language. In addition, teachers "seldom specified the goals of the lesson or its relationship to previous concepts learned, and did not emphasize the relationship between elements of the code and the broader purpose of written or spoken language." (p. 61). Despite the overall low ratings of the quality of language and literacy instruction during these language and literacy lessons, there was considerable variability in instructional quality across teachers, as shown by the standard deviations. The variability is interesting given that all teachers were implementing a highly scripted curriculum, suggesting that other variables were at play. When viewed through the lens of repertoires of practice, one could assume that a highly scripted curriculum may require teachers to engage in practices that do not fall within their normally used repertoire, resulting in teacher-child interactions that are forced and/or inauthentic.

The quality of language instruction was associated with only two teacher characteristics. Holding an advanced degree (61% of the advanced degrees were in a field other than early childhood) was a negative predictor and the number of language and literacy development workshops teachers had attended was a positive predictor. No other variables, including teachers' psychological characteristics (self-efficacy, ideas about children), professional demographics (field of study, years of experience) and classroom characteristics (characteristics of children enrolled, curriculum type), were associated

with the quality of language instruction. The quality of literacy instruction, while not

associated with teachers' professional demographic characteristics (level of education,

field of study, participation in professional development workshops or trainings, or years

of experience), was associated with teacher beliefs. Results showed that teachers who

reported a higher sense of self-efficacy and held more adult-centered ideas received

higher ratings for quality of literacy instruction. Justice et al. (2003) proposed that this

finding illustrated a potentially important linkage between teachers' beliefs and their

scale used to measure high quality literacy instruction valued instruction that was

systematic and explicit, it made sense that teachers with adult centered views would

receive higher scores than teachers with more child centered values. The authors

hypothesized that teachers who value more child directed approaches to learning may not

feel comfortable providing instruction they feel may be overly teacher-directed and

didactic. This conclusion typifies my contention that teacher beliefs and goals for early

childhood development impede the provision of standardized curriculum as envisioned

by educational researchers who believe that an effective intervention can be replicated

across settings and exemplifies Maxwell's (2004) statement that the addition of a single

word can alter treatment in an educational setting. In addition, this research illustrates

how teachers take a standard, tightly scripted curriculum and adapt it to meet their own

beliefs about how children should learn early language and literacy skills.

In sum, the research reviewed in this section points to the fact that although much is

known about high quality language and literacy practices, these practices are not being

utilized in many publicly funded programs for children at risk. It is important to note that

the research reviewed above relied on standardized measures of classroom quality

commonly used in educational research. Smagorinsky (2009) cautioned us to be aware of the "assessment apparatus" that surrounds our work with children and how it frames what researchers and practitioners see and don't see. This is a critical factor when studying the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse children and neighborhoods, a fact highlighted by Predergast (2002) whose research suggested that in the United States literacy is equated with Whiteness and by Gutiérrez (2001) who noted that many programs designed for low income children of color continue to reflect deficit thinking. Recalling the contention of Vaughn and colleagues (2006) concerning the lack of attention to the needs of dual language learners in recent research, the research described above did not take into account the cultural nature of learning or the specific needs and strengths of dual language learners. My research, though the use of multiple, qualitative research methods coupled with a quantitative component, will paint a more detailed portrait of what actually occurs in a preschool classroom serving low income and dual language learners without being exclusively bound by preconceived ideas about what I should see.

Teacher Beliefs

Several researchers have sought to identify teacher's beliefs regarding language and literacy practices and related instructional strategies for English only students. Hawkin, Johnson, and McDonnell (2005) surveyed fifty-four Head Start teachers to identify their views on emerging literacy instruction and to identify the practices and strategies used to address literacy in the classroom. The authors reported that seven of the 10 most used strategies targeted print awareness and book knowledge skills, while phonological awareness strategies were not cited among the 10 strategies most frequently

used. Although over 90% of respondents said that literacy instruction should occur daily, repeated book reading was underused strategy and the majority of strategies reported being used did not involve direct teaching or teacher-child interaction. Although teachers in the study created opportunities for children to interact with literacy related materials, direct literacy instruction was limited.

Similarly, Hindman and Wasik (2008) examined the relationship between teacher beliefs and evidence based practices and how teacher background variables, including education and experience, were related to beliefs. The authors reported that teachers varied in their beliefs on all dimensions, with the greatest degree of agreement on the book reading and oral language dimensions and the greatest variation on the code-related and writing subscales. The authors noted that the teachers had greater agreement with best practices regarding classroom procedures, i.e., what they should do, than with the research based questions on code-related and oral language skills. The only background variables related to teacher beliefs were teacher's beliefs about oral language and vocabulary, which were related to years of experience, with more experienced teachers agreeing with more evidence based practices.

When looking at these findings through a cultural communities lens, the static nature of the design and research methodology, along with the assumptions that underlie this methodology become apparent. By looking at teacher background variables related only to education and experience, the authors deny the cultural aspect of learning and how participation in cultural communities can impact teacher beliefs and practices. Rather, teachers' experiences are captured as the number of years teaching and or the number of years spent in college and type of degree. The authors take a static view of

teacher beliefs and practices, one in which they are divorced from both the immediate context of the classroom and the more distal context of their participation in cultural communities as former students and community members. Although this research and that of Hawkin, Johnson, and McDonnell (2006) reveal useful information about what teachers believe literacy instruction should be, little else is revealed. The use of a survey alone results in a flat and one-dimensional understanding of the phenomena under investigation, and little is known about why teachers believe what they do. Other researchers interested in teacher early literacy beliefs, such as Cunningham, Zibulsky, and Callahan (2009) and McCutchen et. al. (2002), have focused only on preschool teacher's content knowledge of early literacy skill development, rather than what teachers do in the classroom and why they do it. Additionally, research on teacher's early beliefs often falls in the realm of professional development, and how teacher's beliefs can be changed to accommodate scientifically based reading research (Adger, Hoyle, & Dickinson, 2004; Landry, Swank, Smith, Assel, &. Gunnewig, 2006). Again, the focus is not on the actual experience as the unit of analysis but rather on an outcome or goal that does not take into consideration what is actually going on the in classroom and why. By examining teacher practices through a cultural communities framework, my research will add to the complexity and depth of our understanding of teacher beliefs by equating them with more than education level or the number of workshops attended.

McMullen et al. (2006) advanced the understanding of how beliefs are related to practice through their examination of the relationship between what preschool teachers say their beliefs are related to DAP and what they actually do in the classroom. The authors reported that teacher beliefs and practices reflected the DAP philosophy of

having these activities take place within a playful, child directed context. This is important given the research indicating that literacy skills need to be taught in an explicit, systematic and purposeful way and supports the findings reported by Hawkin, Johnson, McDonnell (2005) that teachers do not engage in direct literacy instruction.

Conclusion

What is missing from the extant literature on early literacy practices in preschool is an examination of why teachers engage in the early literacy practices that they do, with a central hypothesis being that these practices are the result of their participation in cultural communities. A cultural communities framework suggests that teachers bring with them experiences that may affect what language and literacy practices look like in their classroom. As Wishard et al. (2003) point out, a practice focused perspective requires a different approach to studying children than that which has been prevalent in research on child development in general and early language and literacy in particular. A practice focused review of the literature on the quality of early language and literacy experiences provided to children in publicly funded preschool programs indicates that in many instances teachers are not implementing instructional strategies that have been empirically shown to improve outcomes in children at risk for reading failure. Conspicuously absent from the extant literature is the examination of teacher practices for dual language learners as well as the role that teacher beliefs and goals for dual language students relate to enacted classroom practices.

Several questions arose from this review of research, and formed the basis for the research questions and methodological design identified in Chapter One. Specifically, I was interested in describing the espoused and enacted early literacy practices of teachers

in a Head Start classroom and exploring the relationship between espoused and enacted practices for both English only and dual language learners. Because these practices may or may not support the stated goals of the program, I examined how espoused and enacted practices related to practices called for by the program's curriculum as well as the relationship between teacher's experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom. My research took a practice focused approach to understanding the early literacy experiences of children in a Head Start center by examining the actual experiences of children and teachers in this program. My hope was that by doing so, my study would identify gaps in the literature and contribute to the small yet growing body of research investigating how classroom processes and teacher practices contribute to preschooler's language and literacy experiences.

The application of a cultural communities lens has added to the extant literature in the field by examining teacher early literacy practices in a new way. Because a cultural communities framework challenges the notion that early literacy interventions can be systematically and effectively applied across program settings and populations, my research highlighted the complex processes that affect how children become literate members not only of society, but of their particular cultural community. This is particularly important as the number of dual language learners participating in preschool setting increases, and understanding teacher literacy practices for this population is critical if we are to address the school readiness gap.

In addition, my research adds to the growing body of research (Wishard et al., 2003, Burchinal & Cryer, 2003) that suggests that there is no one definitive definition of quality childcare, but that quality may look quite different depending on the goals of the

community in which it is embedded. Because of the critical importance of preschool language and literacy experiences on future school success, the application of the cultural communities framework to early literacy has implications for social policy and will hopefully provide insight into why so many of our nation's children, including dual language learners, continue to have unsuccessful experiences in public education.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

This dissertation was part of a larger, longitudinal research project entitled
*Cultural community participation of preschool teachers: Unpacking experiences with
immigration, language practices, and beliefs about teaching and learning and school
readiness.* The principal investigator of this ongoing study is Alison Wishard Guerra,
PhD. The goal of this research is to understand the factors that contribute to school
readiness and related developmental outcomes of Mexican Heritage children through the
examination of relationships between social pretend play and narrative development. The
primary hypothesis is that the context of social pretend play, with familiar scripts and
roles, can serve as a scaffold to support English Learners to engage in more complex oral
language and social pretend play, both independently linked to positive school readiness
outcomes. The initial phase of this study examined specific cultural practices held by
teachers and how they relate to school readiness through the investigation of teacher
beliefs, values and practices around language use, pretend play, and school readiness.

Research was conducted at a Head Start center located in an urban area of San
Diego. This study will add to the literature by exploring an important intersection
between social and linguistic development for a significantly under-studied and at-risk
population. In addition, examining children's development from a cultural communities
framework situates child's development and school outcomes within the articulated
cultural values and practices of their preschool teachers, a largely unexplored area of
research.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

This dissertation expanded on themes of larger study through the examination of teachers' espoused and enacted early literacy practices in a Head Start classroom from a cultural communities perspective. Both research studies share a common theoretical framework and the belief that development occurs via the interaction between the individual and various contextual variables that are fluid and dynamic. While the larger study is concerned specifically with children's pretend play and oral language development, this dissertation focused solely on teacher practices related to language and literacy by asking the following research questions:

1. What are the espoused and enacted early literacy practices of teachers in a Head Start classroom?

    a. Do the early literacy practices enacted differ for English learner and English only students? How?

2. What is the relationship between espoused and enacted practices?

3. How do teacher practices relate to program practices called for by the program's curriculum?

4. What is the relationship between teacher's experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom?

The overall goal of this case study was to provide insight into how the concept of cultural communities can inform early literacy theory and practice. A mixed methods approach was used to answer the research questions. A mixed methods approach has been proposed as a powerful research design that blends the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and the use of this design

added to the robustness of the study. In keeping with Brofenbrenner's model, this nested

case study included four preschool teachers nested within 4 classrooms in one Head Start

center and one community. Preschool teacher early literacy practices were the unit of

analysis.

A case study was an appropriate research method in that case studies help

researchers to "understand complex social phenomenon" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). A case study

approach was particularly suited to my research questions as they seek to understand

"how" and "why" a phenomenon occurs. A nested design allowed for the exploration of

how children's experiences are impacted by the contexts in which they develop. In this

case, nesting accounted for the classroom and program environments that the children

participated in while in preschool. Qualitative data was gathered using a variety of

methods including interview, naturalistic observation, document analysis and

observational measures of classroom quality. Quantitative data was gathered using a child

snapshot procedure that yielded descriptive statistics on teacher practices as well as

children's experiences in the program.

Study Site/Participants

Montgomery Head Start

The study site was a Head Start center located in an urban area of San Diego

serving a primarily Mexican heritage community. This center was selected because of its

long standing presence in the community and for its proximity to an elementary, middle,

and high school as well as the fact that it is co-located on the campus of a boys and girls

club. As such, this center is part of a larger network of community organizations designed

to serve the community. The center has four classrooms, twelve teaching staff, and one

site supervisor. The children attending this center were identified as being 75% Latino, 20% African American, and 5% other. Of the 80 children that attended the classrooms under investigation, 64 were dual language learners from Mexican heritage backgrounds. Two of the teachers two were bilingual in Spanish and English, one was a monolingual English speaker, and one spoke English and Hmong. All associate teachers were bilingual in English and Spanish, and the site supervisor spoke English only.

Site Supervisor and Teacher Profiles

Margaret. Margaret has been the site supervisor at Montgomery Head Start for 25 years and began working for the Head Start grantee in 1979. Margaret's leadership and presence at the center are a contextual variable that make Montgomery Head Start unique, and her profile is being included to give additional insight into the center context. Margaret was a well known fixture at the agency responsible for operating Montgomery Head Start as well as in the larger community of Lincoln Heights where the center is located. Although she lives in a neighboring community, Margaret often visited Lincoln Heights on the weekends to participate in community events or watch her students and former students play soccer at the fields adjacent to the center. Some of the parents of the children currently attending Montgomery Head Start were former students of Margaret's, and she is a respected and much loved member of the community. Born in Louisiana, Margaret is of African American and American Indian descent and has a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development from a for profit university with a satellite campus in San Diego.

Pamela. Pamela was a teacher in one of the full day classrooms. Born in Mississippi, she was of African American descent and had lived in California for over 20

years. Pamela had attended Head Start as a child, and her oldest daughter attended Montgomery Head Start when it was housed in a different location. Highlighting the longstanding presence of Montgomery Head Start in the community, Margaret was the site supervisor when Pamela's daughter attended the program, and Pamela credits Margaret as the person responsible for encouraging her to become a teacher. Pamela took coursework in early childhood education at the local community colleges and had a Bachelor's degree in Human Development from a for profit university. Pamela's status as a former Head Start child and parent were evident in her interviews, as she was the teacher that spoke most frequently about involving parents in their children's education. Pamela had worked at Montgomery Head Start for five years, and had worked at several different centers during her eighteen years with the agency. Pamela clearly enjoyed the children in her care and she frequently shared stories with me about the funny things that they would say to her or something interesting they had done.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth is of Hmong descent and immigrated to the United States with her family when she was 13 years old. Elizabeth's family settled in a Hmong community of San Diego after fleeing from Laos and spending a year in a refugee camp in Thailand. A mother of three, Elizabeth has a degree in child development from a local public four year university. Elizabeth was the teacher in the part day AM classroom, which ran from 7:30 until 12:30. This was Elizabeth's first year at Montgomery Head Start, although she had worked for the agency for 16 years. Elizabeth was very quiet and often struggled to articulate her ideas and practices.

Claudia. Claudia was born in Tijuana, Mexico and moved to San Diego with her family when she was six years old. A mother of four, her interest in child development

began when she volunteered in her youngest daughter's kindergarten class. Claudia had an Associate of Arts degree in child development from a local community college and taught in the afternoon class, which began at 1:00 and ended at 5:00. Claudia had worked in for profit centers but shared that she enjoyed working with the population served by Head Start. Claudia had been working at Montgomery Head Start for three years.

Carla. Carla had been a teacher for 17 years and entered the field when her son was two years old as a way to both work and be with her son. Born in Tijuana, she came to the United States when she was 21. Carla moved to different states while her children were young, working alternately as a preschool teacher and an accountant and frequently did both. This was Carla's first year at Montgomery Head Start, having worked at a neighboring Head Start program for the past six years. Carla earned an Associate's of Arts degree from a local community college and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in human development from the same university that Margaret and Pamela attended. Carla was very engaging and creative and her love of the children was evident in her interactions with them.

Target Children

Target children from each classroom (n=16) were selected based on the following criteria: 1.) they were of Mexican heritage, 2.) they were going to kindergarten in the fall, and 3.) their teachers and families identified them as dual language learners. Two girls and two boys from each classroom were selected, with the exception of Elizabeth's classroom in which there was only one girl who fit the above criteria, resulting in three boys being selected as target children. The children's ages ranged from 4.3 to 5.2, with a mean age of 4 years 8 months. Three of the children were in Head Start for their first

year, 12 were enrolled in Head Start for a second year, and one child was attending for her third year.

Demographic records obtained from the program indicated that all parents of target children identified Spanish as their first language. When describing their English abilities three families said that they spoke English not at all, six said they spoke English not well, and five spoke English well and two families very well.

Measures and Procedures

Multiple data sources were used to better understand the cultural values and practices that guided the teachers' early literacy practices. Data was triangulated to increase the trustworthiness of the study and to identify any gaps or additional questions that may have needed to be addressed. Data was collected during winter 2010, with data analysis beginning in spring 2010.   Sources of data included ethnographic and video elicited interviews, naturalistic observations, document analysis, observational measures of classroom quality, and a child snapshot procedure.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (La Paro, Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2002), the Emergent Academics Snapshot Scale (Ritchie, Howes, Kraft-Sayre, Weiser, 2001), and the Treatment of Native Languages (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). These tools quantify observational data by providing numerical scores on a 1-7 point scale (CLASS), frequency counts (Emergent Academics Snapshot Scale) and percentages (Treatment of Native Languages). These tools were instrumental in validating or discrediting interview data on espoused practices and were used to triangulate my field notes and videotapes of

classroom practices. In addition, the quantitative data served as a check and balance to my positionality as it provided concrete, numerical data that made me think deeply about my interpretation of both espoused (interview) and enacted (observation) classroom practices. The Emergent Academics Snapshot Scale and Treatment of Native Languages were conducted by Dr. Wishard Guerra, who was unfamiliar with the inner workings of the center, providing an additional perspective to counter potential bias that my positionality and prior relationships with the site supervisor and two of the teachers may have caused.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Measures of classroom quality in general, and language and literacy practices in particular, were obtained using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)-Pre-K version (La Paro, Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2002). The CLASS is an observational tool designed to measure the quality of classroom interactional processes, and is organized to assess three broad domains of interactions among teachers and children: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The CLASS was developed following extensive classroom observation work and focuses almost exclusively on dynamic aspects of the classroom, particularly the interactions between teachers and students. Each domain includes several dimensions that assess the extent to which teachers are effectively supporting children's social and academic development. The CLASS scoring is completed at the dimension level using a 7-point scale, with the low range being a score of 1-2, the middle range 3-5, and the high range 6-7. The CLASS requires the observer to derive a score for each dimension per observation cycle based on the extent to which behavioral markers characterize the classroom during the observation cycle. Because the CLASS is designed

to assess the teacher's role in the classroom, this was an appropriate tool to aide in my analysis of teacher practices. I observed each classroom for four, twenty minute cycles during the busiest part of the day (the morning for the full day and morning classrooms, and the afternoon in the afternoon classroom). The CLASS was not done during outdoor time in accordance with the guidelines provided in the implementation manual.

The Emergent Academics Snapshot Scale. The Emergent Academics Snapshot Scale (Ritchie, Howes, Kraft-Sayre, Weiser, 2001) is a time-sampling procedure used to capture salient features of the classroom experience from the child's perspective. Observation categories include: 1.) activity setting (meals/snacks, large group/circle, routine, outdoors, free choice/centers, and small group), 2.) peer language use, 3.) children's engagement in pre-academic/academics (pre-reading, letter sound learning, oral language development, pre-writing, math, science, aesthetics, and computer, 4.) adult child engagement (organization, encourages, scaffolds, reads, instructs, 5.) the language used and teacher involved in the adult child engagement, and 6.) adult interaction (monitor, routine, minimal, simple, elaborated, elaborated group, and intense. Dr. Wishard Guerra completed the snapshot procedure on the four target children in each class (n=16) over a two month period of time, and observations took place during the course of a program morning, or in the case of the afternoon class, when the children arrived at 1:00. The four target children were observed in sequential order for 20 seconds and every cycle was repeated in four minute blocks of time, resulting in between 156 and 162 observations per child. The snapshot procedure gave insight into child's experiences and allowed for descriptive analysis of children's classroom experiences from the vantage point of the child. . This snapshot data was used to compare espoused vs. enacted

teacher practices, as it captured actual teacher behavior that was compared with teacher espoused practices.

Treatment of Native Languages (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). This global observational instrument was designed to assess the overall use and treatment of the native languages of children learning English. Items include the overall frequency of home language use in the classroom as well as the specific contexts when the home language was used, including conversation, instruction and occasional greetings. The tool also measured the extent to which the native language was used to manage behavior and encourage critical thinking, who speaks to the children in their native language (teacher vs. teacher assistants), and whether the use of the native language is encouraged and reflected in the environment in terms of the availability of books and environmental print. The tool also captured the use of simultaneous translation and whether it was done by the teacher or an assistant. The Treatment of Native Languages was completed by Dr. Wishard Guerra and was based on observations of language in each classroom for at least 3 days over a period of several weeks.

Qualitative Data

Several sources of qualitative data were collected, including interviews, document analysis, and naturalistic observations. Data was collected over a three month period. Qualitative data was triangulated with quantitative data to identify or discount emerging themes and to provide additional data on espoused and enacted practices as well as those called for by the program curriculum.

Ethnographic interviews. Seidman (2006) proposed that interviews give us a way to hear people's stories and that access to these stories gives the researcher insight into

"the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people" (p.7). Because my research is interested in the experiences of children and teachers in a preschool classroom, interviews gave me insight into these experiences and the meaning behind them, a concept central to cultural communities research. Siedman further noted that at the heart of interviewing is interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of these experiences. In order to better understand the cultural values and practices that guide preschool teachers' classroom practices, four preschool teachers were interviewed using a modified version of the Cultural Change Interview (Rosenblatt, Garza-Mourino, & Howes, 2004). This tool focused on teachers' perception of their cultural background, their pathways to becoming a teacher, their espoused and enacted language and literacy practices, and socialization goals for the children. Specific questions based on the research on high quality language and literacy experiences were developed by the researcher to gain information about teacher's beliefs regarding language and literacy in the preschool classroom. This tool has been used by other researchers (Howes & Wishard Guerra & Zucker, 2007) and has proven to be a valid and reliable indicator of experiences and beliefs resulting from participation in cultural communities. These interviews were conducted by a member of the research team in a conversational manner in a place convenient to the teacher. Pseudonyms were given to all interviewees to ensure confidentiality.

Video elicited interviews. A 20 minute literacy lesson selected by the teacher was videotaped and was viewed with the teacher in order to have the teacher describe what the video from her point of view. This technique was selected because of its potential to

elicit feedback as to why each teacher planned the specific lesson, her desired outcome of the lesson, and what worked and what didn't work.

Naturalistic observation. Several methods of naturalistic observation were used in the study. Because teacher classroom practices were the unit of analysis, obtaining multiple measures of classroom activities, experiences, and practices was essential. Creswell (2008) defined observation as the "process of gathering open ended, firsthand information by observing people and places as a research site" (p. 221). Naturalistic classroom observations were used to observe classroom language and literacy practices as well as to record the language and literacy experiences of children. These experiences were loosely defined as any activity or interaction that has to do with the development of skills essential to early language and literacy development including oral language, vocabulary, concepts of print, alphabet knowledge, and comprehension. Descriptive field notes (Creswell, 2008) were used to record a description of the events, activities and people and what took place during the visit. The researcher kept notes as a running record. Reflective field notes (Creswell, 2008) were used to record thoughts, insights, and intuitions related to the visit. Observations took place at various times of the day in order to gain insight into language and literacy practices that occurred throughout the day. Each classroom was observed a minimum of two hours throughout the course of data collection using these methods.

Document analysis. Document analysis has been proposed as a powerful tool to corroborate and augment data from other sources (Yin, 2009). Target children's portfolios and the curriculum used by the program, The Creative Curriculum (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2004).) were reviewed as part of the document analysis.

Teachers at the study site are required to keep portfolios of children's work, including drawings, art work, writing samples and pictures to document children's progress towards meeting state assessment standards. Portfolios were used as evidence of early language and literacy practices in the classroom and to glean additional insight into classroom processes and the meaning behind them. In addition, were used to check the veracity of teachers articulated beliefs and practices and determine how these articulated practices related to actual classroom experiences and activities.

Portfolios are defined by the California Department of Education (CDE, 2006) as "a folder or binder that chronologically displays a child's developmental progress through observation notes, work samples, daily journal, parent information, checklists, developmental profile and summary of developmental progress" (p. 40). Information contained in the portfolio is used by teachers to complete the Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R) (CDE, 2007), California's observation based assessment tool for preschoolers. Because many Head Start programs receive state funding, the DRDP-R is the child assessment tool used by the majority of Head Start programs in California. The DRDP-R is composed of 39 measures that are individual assessment items representing the developmental continuum along which a child's observed behavior is assessed (CDE, 2001). Portfolios include anecdotal observations for each DRDP-R measure, as well as work samples, which are "example of children's work that provide evidence of knowledge, behavior or skills" (CDE, 2006, p. 40). To complete, teachers observe children's developmental progress during their normal daily activities, and include in the portfolios a variety of documentation that provides sequential, chronological evidence of children's achievement and performance. In

addition to being used to complete developmental assessments, information contained in

children's portfolios is used to get to know each individual child's interests, strengths,

and areas of needed improvement and should be an integral part of the planning process.

It is important to note that until the tool was revised in July 2010, the DRDP-R

contained no measures designed to measure children's progress towards learning English,

reflecting a macrosystem influence on teacher practices. Because the Head Start Child

Outcomes Framework (2000) requires grantees to report non-English speaking children's

progress in listening to and understanding English, Head Start programs in California

English. The DRDP-R measures related to language and literacy, including the measures

related to English Learners can be found in Table 1:

Table 1: DRDP-R Measures Related to Language and Literacy

Indicator: Developmental Dimension	Measure: Developmental Continuum	Definition
Language	Comprehends meaning	Child receives, understands, and responds to oral language that uses increasingly complex words, phrases, and ideas
	Follows increasingly complex instructions	Child understands and responds to increasingly complex directions and requests
	Expresses self through language	Child uses language to communicate with increasingly complex words and sentences
	Uses language in conversation	Child engages in increasingly extended conversations following the appropriate social use of language
English Learner	Listens to and understands English	No description available
	Speaks English	No description available
Literacy	Interest in literacy	Child shows interest in books, songs, rhymes, stories, writing, and other literacy activities
	Letter and word knowledge	Child shows increasing awareness of symbols, letters, and words in the environment and their relationship to sound
	Emerging writing	Child shows increasing ability to write using scribbles, symbols, letters and words to represent meaning
	Concepts of print	Child shows increasing understanding of the conventions and physical organization of print material and that print carries meaning
	Phonological awareness	Child shows an awareness of the sounds that make up language, including the segmentation of sounds in words and recognition of word rhyming and alliteration

Although there are some very specific program guidelines as to how portfolios are to be put together, the program encourages teachers to use their creativity when developing them. As a result, portfolios often reflect the unique classroom community of the teacher, children, and parents, the development of which is a major goal of the program curriculum.

The program curriculum, The Creative Curriculum (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2004) was also part of the document analysis, with attention paid to curricular guidelines and expectations for language and literacy instruction and experiences. Curricular guidelines were used to juxtapose teacher beliefs and practices with the stated goals and practices of the curriculum.

Informed Consent

Site Supervisor, teacher and parent informed consent was obtained via consent forms developed as part of a larger research study. These consent forms were presented to staff during a staff meeting, during which time the researchers explained the purpose of the study and what participants could expect from their participation, including the time commitment involved and the nature of the data collection. Although the purpose of the study was to primarily focus on teacher literacy practice, because these practices occur in the context of teacher-child interactions, parent consent was obtained for their child(ren) to be observed in these literacy interactions. Parent consent forms were presented during a parent meeting, and the researchers were available during that time to answer any questions the parents had about the study. Parent consent letters were in both Spanish and English and included the researcher's contact information so parents could

contact the researcher should any concerns arise. The voluntary nature of the study, as well as confidentiality guidelines, was explained in detail to both teachers and parents.

Data Analysis

A mixed methods design allowed for the inspection of teacher practices from several different vantage points to increase understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of teaching and learning in educational settings. Data analysis was conducted using naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and case study contrasts (Yin, 1984) to analyze data for patterns of both variation and consistency across classrooms. Qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed concurrently as data was triangulated to gain a deeper understanding of emerging patterns and themes. Data from all sources was triangulated to identify "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 2003, p 98) and to verify consistencies and patterns among the sources. Yin (2009) noted that because case studies investigate current phenomenon within its real-life context, they must employ multiple sources of evidence. The data analysis techniques used for the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study are described in the following sections.

Quantitative Data

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data from the CLASS, Emerging Academics Snapshot, and Treatment of Native Languages. The descriptive nature of the quantitative data proved invaluable as it helped confirm or disprove emerging patterns and themes that emerged from my qualitative data. Additionally, my quantitative data served as an important check against my positionality when analyzing interviews, documents, and observation because it quantified the experiences and activities children were engaged in throughout the day.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data consisted of interviews, document analysis and naturalistic observation. Two ethnographic interviews were completed: the Cultural Change Interview (CCI) (Rosenblatt, Garza-Mourino, & Howes, 2004)and a video elicited interview responding to a videotaped literacy lesson selected by the teacher. The Cultural Change Interviews were conducted by Dr Wishard Guerra, further protecting the data from contamination due to my insider status and role as Director of Educational Services. These interviews were conducted at a time selected by the teacher and took about one hour to complete. I transcribed all interviews but one, providing the preliminary layer of data analysis. Polland (2002) noted that the centrality of transcription in qualitative research and that the process of transcription affects how participants are understood, the information shared, and the conclusions drawn by the researcher. The transcription process supported the person centered focus of my study as it allowed me to gain insight into each teacher's philosophy of teaching, goals for children, and how her experiences helped shape her teaching practices. Additionally, transcription allowed me to hear, in the teacher's own words, their stories about how they came to San Diego, their pathway to becoming a teacher, and what brought them to Montgomery Head Start. This data was instrumental in helping me analyze my data from a cultural communities perspective.

The original intent of the video elicited interviews was to have the teachers select a literacy lesson for me to videotape. The thinking behind the selection of this method of data collection was that the teachers would pick a lesson that would showcase their language and literacy practices because they knew they would be videotaped. My intention was for the video elicited interview to provide a forum where the teachers could

discuss the strategies and practices they intentionally used during the lesson to help develop the children's language and literacy skills. It became clear during the interview, however, that the teachers had limited practices they could name. For example, they knew that reading to the children was important, but they could not articulate instructional strategies used during read-alouds. This lack of intentional use of research based strategies emerged as a major theme in the overall data analysis and was supported by the CCI interviews, the portfolio reviews, naturalistic observations and CLASS scores, all of which will be discussed in the following chapter. Although the video elicited interviews corroborated information on the teacher's school readiness goals obtained from the CCI interview, the videos themselves provided more insight into practices used by the teachers. These videos were transcribed using Inqscribe and when triangulated with other data sources proved instrumental in answering my research questions.

HyperResearch was used to code interview data from both sources using a set of apriori codes based on the literature on effective early literacy practices. However, because the teachers provided relatively simple answers to interview questions and struggled to name or reflect on their practices, this coding scheme and method provided unexpected results. As noted above in the section on the video elicited interviews, the teachers rarely named evidence based practices in response to interview questions, and as a result, the absence of coding based on my a priori codes was a significant finding of my research which will be discussed in greater detail when considering implications for practice. Specific interview responses in support of my statement regarding teacher's inability to name research based strategies will be provided throughout the following chapters in response to my research question regarding teacher's espoused and enacted

early literacy practices. Following my initial coding of interview data using HyperResearch, I compared the interview responses across questions to identify similarities, differences, and patterns, across teachers. These responses were used to triangulate findings from my quantitative data.

Document analysis was conducted on the portfolios of the 16 target children. Portfolios were coded for the presence or absence of observations related to the language and literacy measures of the Desired Results Developmental Profile. Additionally, I examined children's work samples for evidence of the type of language and literacy activities being provided to the children as work samples reflect the experiences planned for the children by the teachers. Document analysis was also conducted on curriculum used by the program, the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2004), to obtain information about the language and literacy goals of the curriculum and how they are to be implemented in practice. Information on curricular guidance regarding the learning environment, activity settings, and strategies for dual language learners was also reviewed.

During data analysis, naturalistic observations were used to highlight or verify patterns and themes that emerged from interview data and document analysis. Naturalistic observations took place at various times for a three month period, and photographs, video, and running records were used to document every day practices as well as classroom interactions and processes. A typology used by Dickinson and Tabors (2001) in their seminal Home-School Language and Literacy study was used to organize the abundant observational data and to frame the responses to my research questions.

The Role of the Researcher

My positionality was considered in the design of this study and was addressed in a reflective manner as the study progressed via communication with Dr. Wishard Guerra and other faculty members. My insider status as a long time employee of the organization at which the study took place gave me unique access to not only the research site, but also the shared norms, values, and culture of the organization. Having worked for the program since 1991, I have experienced first hand how federal policy has impacted teacher practices at a local level. I have also been with the program as it has undergone curricular and leadership changes and, recalling Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem, I have a historical perspective of how concepts of early literacy and teacher practices have evolved over time. In addition, as a provider of professional development to teachers, I am intimately familiar with the program goals for early literacy and teacher practices and this firsthand knowledge provided additional insight as I analyzed my data.

Because of my role as an Area Director responsible for supervising site supervisors and ensuring program compliance, a center under the supervision of another Area Director was selected for this research. However, the dual role as the Director of Educational Services and provider of professional development posed potential threats to internal validity. In order to control for this, teacher and director interviews were collected by another member of the research team.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study. This research provided a limited snapshot of a particular time frame and cannot be generalized to other populations.An

additional limitation of the research is that no other factors other than participation in

cultural communities was considered as a variable affecting the literacy practices and

experiences observed in the classrooms under investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

A primary assumption of this dissertation is that children develop social and cognitive competencies, including learning to read, via participation in cultural communities that are fluid and dynamic. My interest in increasing the understanding of language and literacy practices among Head Start teachers is based on the assumption that the historical, cultural, and physical contexts in which teaching and learning occur must be considered when discussing early literacy approaches for children at risk for reading failure. This study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the espoused and enacted early literacy practices of teachers in a Head Start classroom?

   a. Do the early literacy practices enacted differ for dual language learner and English only students? How?

2. What is the relationship between espoused and enacted practices?

3. How do teacher practices relate to program practices called for by the program's curriculum?

4. What is the relationship between teacher's experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom?

In keeping the arguments made in Chapter One regarding the role of context in both development and educational research, this chapter will begin with a presentation of my descriptive data to highlight the various contexts influencing early literacy development in preschoolers attending at a Head Start center. Because a primary assumption of my

research is that the development of literacy is a culturally situated process, I will describe in detail the contexts in which the study took place, beginning with the community in which the center is located. This will be followed by a detailed description of the Head Start center and the agency responsible for administration of the Head Start program. I will also describe key components of the program curriculum, the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2004), in preparation for discussion of my third research question on how espoused and enacted early literacy practices relate to those called for by the program curriculum. This will be followed by a description of the literacy environment of each classroom because what teachers place on bulletin boards, on book shelves and in writing areas gives insight into their values and beliefs about literacy learning as well as the type of instruction given to children. This chapter will conclude with the presentation of quantitative data.

Throughout each section of this chapter, I will include interview data to describe espoused practices and explore the relationship between espoused and enacted practices. In doing so, I will answer my relational questions by discussing: 1.) the relationship between espoused and enacted practices, and 2.) how these practices relate to those proposed by the Creative Curriculum. An examination of this relational data will enable me to more fully explore the complex relationships between context, teacher practices, and the experiences of children. Rogoff (2003) noted that in order to understand development, it is essential to figure out in "what ways human development in different communities is alike, and in what ways it differs" (p. 65) and the purpose of this chapter is to present my results in such a way. Throughout my presentation of data and discussion of my research questions, quantitative and qualitative data will be triangulated

to increase the validity of my data and support significant findings and conclusions drawn.

<div align="center">*Context*</div>

In keeping with my contextual paradigm, the following section will describe the community in which the study took place, the agency responsibility for the operation of the Head Start program, and the physical layout of the center. The literacy environment, described in terms of environmental print and the availability of books and other literacy materials and artifacts, will also be presented.

Lincoln Heights

Montgomery Head Start is located in Lincoln Heights, an inner city San Diego community covering a total of 1.193 square miles and with a population of 14, 376 (www.citydata.com). Located approximately 15 miles from the U.S. Mexico border, the area is one of the oldest in San Diego and is known for its large Latino population, dating back to 1910 when refugees fleeing the Mexican Revolution settled in the area. Current demographic information indicates that of the 43.5% of residents that are foreign born, 91% are from Mexico (http://www.city-data.com/zips/92113.html). The southern part of the neighborhood is referred to as Barrio Lincoln, and is well known for its role in the Chicano movement of the 1970's and for its murals depicting famous Chicano Leaders including Cesar Chavez, Che Guevara, Benito Juarez, Frida Kahlo, and Emiliano Zapata. The city of San Diego website (http://www.sandiego.gov/) describes Lincoln Heights as "rich in character……you can travel along the King Avenue Corridor and witness the cultural influence, as many commute miles to eat Mexican food in La Finca restaurant and devour the famous "mulitas." Despite its long history and unique cultural heritage,

Lincoln Heights is an area known for its poverty. Table 2 details key demographic

variables of the area.

Table 2: Demographic Variables of Lincoln Heights

	% of Population below poverty level	Population density	% of residents that speak English not well or not at all	% of foreign born residents	Average estimated value of detached houses in 2008
Lincoln Heights	40.4%	12, 054 per sq. mile	30.1%	45.3%	$270,997
San Diego	14.6%	3,772 per sq. mile	8.2%	25.7%	$685,455

Retrieved from http://www.city-data.com/city/San-Diego-California.html

Demographic data from the K-6 elementary school located closest to Montgomery

Head Start indicates that of the 561 students enrolled in the 2008-2009 school year,

94.5% were Hispanic, 77.5% were English learners, and 95% were eligible for free or

reduced lunch. While the target API score for the state is 800, API results for students

attending the local elementary school during the 2008-2009 school year were 738, with

the API score for Hispanics and English learners being 740 and 726 respectively.

(http://studata.sandi.net/accountability/PDF_API/API_177.pdf)

Montgomery Head Start

Montgomery Head Start is operated by a large, non-profit social services agency

that originated in 1914 as a settlement house assisting immigrants transitioning into the

San Diego Community. The grantee currently serves over 8,000 children and is

recognized as one of the few supergrantees in the nation because of its size.

Approximately four years ago, the agency had a major leadership change, both at the

CEO and Head Start director level, resulting in the reorganization of the program, staff changes, and the implementation of a new curriculum. These changes have impacted teacher practices at both distal and proximal levels, and, in keeping with my theoretical framework, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Montgomery Head Start shares a building with the Lincoln Heights Boys and Girls Club and is surrounded by Independence Park and Recreation Center, a large outdoor/indoor sports complex operated by the city of San Diego. Its facilities include soccer and baseball fields, basketball courts, an Olympic size pool, and a skate park. A new, $14.5 million, two story library opened in 2009 and is within walking distance to the center. In addition, Lincoln Elementary School and the Independence Charter Middle School are both visible from the center, and along with the park, library, and Head Start center, form a network of community organizations designed to meet the needs of families living in the area. Montgomery Head Start is one of the oldest Head Start Centers in San Diego, and several of the parents of children enrolled in the site attended Montgomery Head Start when they were preschoolers.

The center has four classrooms, twelve teaching staff, one director, two home visitors, a custodian, an office assistant, and two family service workers. Two of the classrooms are full day classrooms operating from 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM daily, while the other two are part day classrooms, operating from 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM and 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM respectively. The children attending this center are identified as being 87% Latino, 10% African American, and 3% other. The site supervisor of the site is African American, two of the teachers were born in Mexico, one is African American, and one is Hmong. Three of the teachers are English learners themselves, a contextual variable that

is extremely important from a cultural communities perspective and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Physical Environment

The physical layout of Montgomery Head Start influenced teacher practices on several levels. In keeping with the Head Start philosophy of providing community based services that reflect and meet the needs of local participants, many centers are located in buildings not originally designed as child care centers. This has been noted by other researchers, including Dickinson and Tabors (2001) who reported that one of the centers they investigated was located in an underused junior high school building and that "very few modifications had been made to the building to meet the needs of its young residents" (p.152). Similarly, in another classroom under investigation by these researchers, the small size of the classrooms dictated the number of children assigned to each teacher, while Pianta et al. (2005) found that classrooms located in school buildings offered less time in free choice activities and more time in whole group settings than preschool classrooms located in community settings (Pianta et al., 2005). Of the 28 centers directly operated by the Neighborhood House Association, none are in buildings originally designed as child development centers. Because of the need to serve the communities with the highest need, grantees must find existing buildings within well established communities to house Head Start centers, and Head Start centers are typically found in churches, community centers, modular units, and elementary school classrooms. Because of community care licensing regulations and the square footage of the rooms, Montgomery Head Start had a unique schedule and rotation system in place to ensure that the center was always in compliance with licensing regulations. Teachers moved

throughout the rooms during the day to accommodate the varying schedules of the full

day and part day programs. The physical layout of the center can be found in Figure 1.
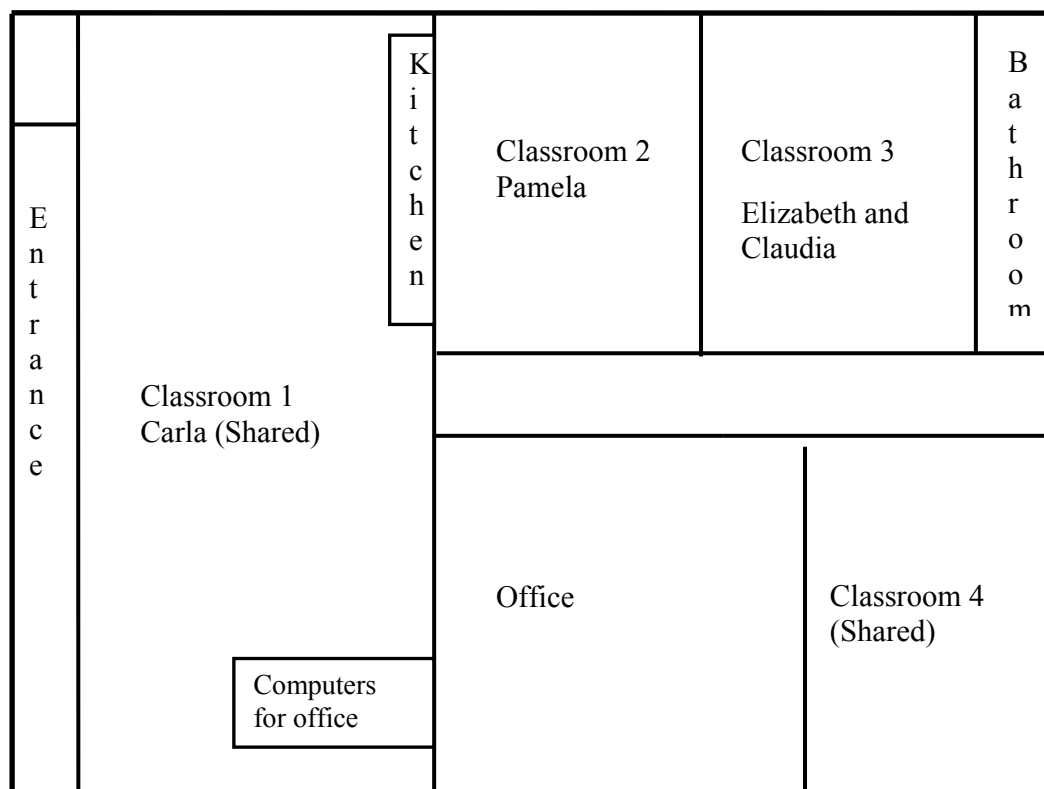
Figure 1: Montgomery Head Start

The large room in the front of the center was used by each classroom at various points

throughout the day and also served as one of the full day classrooms. This room had

tables arranged in the back close to the kitchen and were used by all classrooms

throughout the day for meals and table work. There were also two computers in the far

right corner of the large room that were used by home visitors and family support staff

throughout the day, and the fact that this room was a classroom, an office, and was shared

by all teachers, created a unique setting that placed ecological constraints on the teachers.

Examples of these constraints will be provided throughout my discussion of espoused and enacted practices and the relationship between them.

The location of the bathrooms was another variable that affected center operations and classroom practices. Because both the adult and children's bathroom were located in room 3, activities in room 3 were often interrupted as adults and/or groups of children used the rest room. In addition, children in rooms 1, 2, and 4 could not use the restroom on their own because of supervision issues, which increased the amount of time children were engaged in routines and transitions. To address some of the constraints of the physical space, plans were in place during the data collection period to build a new bathroom and open up some of the walls. In order for this to take place, 40 of the children assigned to an AM (20 children)/PM (20 children) classroom were relocated to an empty classroom in a community 15 miles from Montgomery Head Start. Children were transported by bus to the other site, and while this was initially a temporary situation that was only to last 30 days, delays in the permit process, negotiations with the boys and girls club, and other factors typically affecting major construction on older buildings caused the children to be at the other site for the entire school year. While these children were not included in data collection, the situation highlights contextual variables related to the physical environment that can influence the services children receive. Carla, the teacher who used the large room as her classroom, described the physical environment at Montgomery Head Start and how it affected her teaching during the CCI interview:

> CARLA: Well this center is hard. I don't have a classroom. So this year has been a little hectic. I like to have my own space and my own classroom. I like to have a lot of props for everything I do. And here I just

don't have the space. I have a lot of things in my garage. So I do feel a little frustrated. So, hopefully, supposedly in June or July, they are going to open these walls and then I am going to move back to my classroom and I think that will make a difference. Because this, for me, this room is too big and noisy, too much going on and it distracts the children. So that's my only disappointment. I mean I get along with everybody; everyone is so sweet, but that it's just that I don't have the right room.

The physical environment at Montgomery Head Start and the size of the classrooms severely limited the teacher's ability to fully implement the Creative Curriculum. A key component of this curriculum is the use of the environment to develop 10 interest areas, and the size of the classrooms and the need to serve meals in a cafeteria style prevented the teachers from implementing all interest areas and from using the environment as a learning tool in the way intended by the curriculum. In addition, the strong social emotional foundation of the Creative Curriculum requires teachers to create spaces and facilitate interactions that lead to the development of a classroom community, and the fact that teachers had to move from room to room throughout the day impeded this process. According to the curriculum, the arrangement of furniture and materials should subdivide the classroom into spaces that accommodate a few children at a time, with tables dispersed throughout the classroom to encourage intimate, small group environments that encourage conversation and collaboration. The small size of the other three classrooms did not allow for all of the interest areas to be included, and children and classrooms moved from room to room in order to experience different interest areas.

It is important to note that despite the limitations of the physical space, the teachers seemed to make it work and staff appeared to work well together. During an informal conversation, one of the teachers shared that visitors always comment on how well they manage to run the program despite the limitations of the facility. In fact, this

site is one of several consistently selected by the grantee to show to visitors during agency tours. The frequency of these visits was evidenced by the children's practice of welcoming visitors with a robust "Welcome to Montgomery Head Start!" upon arrival.

Literacy Environment

This section describes the literacy environment at Montgomery Head Start, including the use of environmental print, the display of children's literacy related work, the availability of books, and a description of any other literacy artifacts in the environment. Morrow (1990) proposed that "by purposefully arranging the environment, teachers can use physical setting as an active and pervasive influence on their own activities and attitudes as well as on those of their students" (p.538). The environment is often recognized as the third teacher in a preschool classroom, and the description of the literacy environment at Montgomery Head Start added another layer of insight into the language and literacy practices of the teachers.

Literacy materials and artifacts were located throughout the center and reflected the program's goals for children's learning. Although the big room was used by all of the teachers at some point during the day, Carla's touch was evident in this room and she was able to display her children's work and arrange the classroom in a way that reflected her goals for children. Upon entering Montgomery Head Start, all guests are required to sign in on the visitor's log, which is placed on top of a cubby in the large classroom. Also displayed on this cubby is a book made by Carla to document a garden study that her class had done. The book was entitled Our Children Enjoy Our Beautiful Garden, They Chose to Study Plants and documented her children's work. When asked about her garden study, Carla explained:

CARLA: Well that week um that was one of our goals, well the kids you know wanted to clean the garden and help us because they said "oh teacher all the tomatoes died, all the corn died, every time we go outside we go through the garden and so um then we, Ms. Margaret says "oh yeah it is time to do new planting since it is spring is coming and all that"

INTERVIEWER: So you started this in the spring?

CARLA: Yeah, so we sit down with the children explaining to them like you know when spring comes a lot of plants start growing and flowers and all that so I asked them what they knew about planting so some of them told me they helped their parents at home, things like that and um we got into planting and Ms. Margaret went and got the seeds and you know shovels and stuff like that so like ok so this week we are going to be talking about plants and seeds we read a lot of books about you know how plants grow, what do they need, um you know some plants grow tall, some are small, you know things like that so like for a week we started working on the garden- we got the soil ready, we got the seeds, we got started watering and I was taking pictures during that week and then at the end the children were bringing rulers to measure to see which ones were taller.........so they had a lot of fun.

Carla's comments reflect an understanding of the studies, which is to build on the natural curiosity and interest of the children. The book documenting the study was spiral bound, laminated, and had pictures and captions of the activities that took place during the study. The book was displayed on an iron book stand, which was aesthetically pleasing and sent an important message about how the center values books and the work of the children. When asked about this book, Carla explained:

CARLA: I made the book so that way children, you know, remember what they did, what they were working on and, you know, it is a good memory for them and also for the parents. The children were telling the parents you know we're planting at the school and stuff like that so it is a good way to show parents too and see what the children are doing in school because they are not here all day they just drop them off and pick them up so it is a good way that they can see their, their....

Across from the cubby where the visitors sign in was a documentation board of

Carla's garden project, which displayed pictures of the children engaged in various

gardening activities. Carla related these activities to the developmental assessment tool

used by the program, the Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R)

(California Department of Education, 2005) by writing the name of the developmental

skill that the children were using underneath each picture. For example, a picture of

Margaret showing a small group of children how to get a plant out of the pot was

accompanied by the caption:

> DR1-13: Follows increasingly complex instructions. Adult was giving
> children instructions before planting.

DR1-13 represents the skill of following increasingly complex instructions, and the

picture served as evidence that the children were meeting this developmental milestone.

Also included on the documentation board were children's drawings of the garden

accompanied by dictation of what the child said about her/his picture. One of the pictures

showed all of the children sitting in front of the garden with their journals and markers.

The DRDP-R assessment measure cited was emerging writing, and the notation was

"Children were making a drawing of the garden". Carla's ability and effort to tie

children's work and experiences to the developmental assessment tool reflects her

understanding of the assessment process as being an integral part of planning and

implementing the curriculum. When asked about the book about the garden project and

how it related to the DRDP, Carla answered:

> CARLA: Ah well, all the things we do here relate to the DRDP
>
> INTERVIEWER: (whispering) good answer
>
> CARLA: Everything - I mean one little thing can relate to five, you know,
> a DRDP, I don't have… have enough room to write for everything, you
> know, but I think I select the one that relates to the best DRDP so
> whenever whatever activity I am doing I can sit down and write and write
> and write DRDPs with one activity

Carla was the only teacher to articulate the process between assessment, instruction, and curriculum planning, and the work she selected to display in the big room reflected this level of understanding. Another aspect of the room that reflected Carla's goals and values for children was the way in which she thoughtfully displayed her children's work. Her children's art work was carefully mounted on construction paper and was displayed in accordance to guidelines from the Creative Curriculum, which encourages teachers to "treat it as if it were on display in a museum" (p. 333). When the children in her class participated in an art show sponsored by the agency, Carla covered long tables with white table cloths and used book holders of various heights to display her children's art work. Because the picture the children selected to represent was of a little boy, many of the children included their names in their artwork and were able to use various mediums to write their names, such as oil paint, thick markers, and watercolors. Claudia's classroom also participated in the art show, but she did not display the children's work.

Along the far back wall of the big room, in the area where the children ate, some of the children's work related to the celebration of Dr. Seuss week (in honor of his birthday) was displayed. There was a big Dr Seuss character that had been drawn by one of the teachers and a speech bubble that said "I do not like green eggs and ham". This was surrounded by a cut and paste activity in which the children cut and pasted eggs and ham from green construction paper onto a paper plate. Celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday was a tradition started by Margaret and this week was also celebrated by the local elementary school. Because of the requirements of state and federal funders and licensing agencies, there was a great deal of environmental print aimed at adults in the Big Room. Parent bulletin boards and announcements were on various walls and gave the

children the opportunity to see print in their environment. This print was primarily in English, and data supporting this will be presented in the section on quantitative data.

The library area in the large classroom had one computer that was located next to a book shelf, which had 23 books of varying levels and genres. Only one of the books in the self was in Spanish. There were two child-sized sofas for the children to sit at when looking at books, and I observed children do this on several occasions. On one wall near the entrance to the big classroom there was a documentation board highlighting male involvement, one of the focuses of Head Start. Baskets of books were available throughout the classroom, and children were frequently observed taking books from the baskets to review them. There was a big white board with markers in the room that the children could draw and write on, as well as a big flip chart with Nursery Rhymes. In the cooking interest area, there was a basket of books related to cooking: there was one book about chiles and several cookbooks. In addition, there were two Spanish magazines, Ventana Latina, and Comida, Salud, y Familia. Another literacy artifact that was present in the center were the children's journals. All of the children had spiral bound notebooks with their names on the top. The children used these journals for writing, drawing, and other activities.

Although the big room met a wide variety of purposes, Carla's comments about the difficulties she experienced capture many of the environmental constraints observed during data collection:

> CARLA: It affects me. I feel, you know, this is my worst year in all the
> years that I have been teaching. Yeah! Because I don't have a space and I
> like to have the alphabet in my room and the kids love it, to go and you
> know, keep working on it and writing. I like to have a little space for them
> to go and write whenever they feel like it. Here, you know, this is for

everybody. Everybody uses that. So, if I put my markers and my paper there it will be gone in one day, so you can't. And when you have your own class you can have a stapler, tape, everything for them to go write when they feel like it. And you have print everywhere, so they can....so it has been kind of hard.

INTERVIEWER: So you think it impacts not only the materials [OV] but also....

CARLA: It impacts the children too! Oh yes it does! Because the kids are not free to go and use the table whenever they want. You know you have children who all they want to do is go write and, you know, that is their passion, and you need to give them freedom to do that if they want to. And here it is like, "Well, this side of the classroom is closed right now" or "it's just for this class." So for me that's not the right way. So we are doing this year like that because they told us it was going to be three weeks, two months, and then it is going to be all year. So, you know, sometimes you can only do so much. But it's not like my dream. So...

These quotes reflect the specific impact that the environment had on the early literacy practices as well as the impact these practices had on the children.

Pamela's Classroom

Pamela was the only teacher at Montgomery Head Start that had a classroom that was not shared with the other teachers, enabling her to determine the classroom layout, and the materials displayed on the walls and in the interest areas. Because her room was so small, however, Pamela did not have space for all of the interest areas required by the curriculum, and her children had to eat in the large room. In addition, they were split into two groups during small group and nap time to accommodate licensing regulations. In the case of small group activities, I found this to be an advantage, because the smaller group size allowed Pamela to give the children more individual attention. For example, during two cycles of the CLASS observation, Pamela was alone in her classroom with only 9 children, an environmental factor which could have played a role in her higher scores on the CLASS. My own experience as a preschool teacher and my years

administering Head Start validate this as there is a big difference between 10 and 20 children, even with the additional adult present with 20 students.

Pamela's classroom reflected the work of her children, which was displayed on walls and bulletin boards. Pamela displayed the children's work around the classroom, including their letter like scribbles. On the back of one of her bulleting boards was a display that read "Thing's that grow in the soil" (the word thing's was grammatically incorrect). This display had a variety of children's work, including collages of foods that grow in the soil and what appeared to be a homework assignment in which the children were asked to cut and paste anything that grows in the soil. There were also pictures similar to those in Carla's room of the children engaged in various gardening activities and the corresponding DRDP-R measures. There was also a pictograph of how seeds go from being put in the ground to flowers, which was a useful strategy for teaching dual language learners, although based on my data analysis, I doubt that this was an intentional strategy.

In the middle of the room there was a bookshelf labeled library/biblioteca and had baskets filled with books. The alphabet was displayed behind a display board, and this is the only classroom in which I saw the alphabet displayed. By the computer there was a list of children's names labeled take turns that the teachers used to determine whose turn it was to be on the one computer that was in the room. During an observation I witnessed an Associate Teacher using this chart to solve a conflict over whose turn it was to use the computer, sending the children an important message about how print can be used in an authentic way. One another bulletin board Pamela had the children's work, which included letter like scribbles and activities related to letter and word learning. Again

reflecting the garden study, Pamela had a growth chart on the wall that was a sunflower. Next to the sunflower she had the question: How are we growing? and the date of 2-16-10. Pamela had measured each of the children and placed their first and last name on the wall next to how tall they were, which is an authentic and engaging use of print and reflects a strategy promoted by the Creative Curriculum.

Claudia and Elizabeth's Classroom

Claudia and Elizabeth shared room 3, as is typical with AM/PM classrooms. Similar to Pamela's classroom, the children gathered in room three for circle time, split up for small group, with one group staying in room 3 while the other group went to room 4 for small group. Both classrooms ate in the large classroom. As mentioned earlier, room 3 posed particular difficulties because this is where the adult and child bathrooms were located. Circle time and small group activities were often interrupted, or the children and teacher lost focus momentarily, when an adult of a group of children and their teacher came into the room to use the bathroom. In an ideal classroom, bathrooms are located in the classroom and are partially open to allow for privacy and adult supervision.

Evidence of Claudia's bug study was apparent in room three. Claudia had made poster boards entitled bugs and insects. On this poster board she had pictures of various bugs with their names underneath. Pictures of bugs were also on the wall and were labeled in English and Spanish. Also posted on the wall as a craft-like art project in which the children made ladybugs and the teacher wrote Ll is for ladybug across the top of the paper. Other than that, there was no evidence of the children's work, the alphabet

or any other type of environmental print. There was a caddy available for writing materials, but it was unorganized and not visually appealing.

Room four was shared by all teachers and was primarily used for small group time. There were two tables used for group work and a small area used for dramatic play. A library area was comprised of a book shelf, with one book in Spanish, and two small couches for the children to sit on and look at books. Because room one was used by all of the classrooms for a variety of things and because the other rooms were so small, the center environment did not reflect many of the goals of the program curriculum, which is centered on the use of 10 interest areas.

Book baskets were located throughout the center and were taken outside along with other literacy materials, such as ABC puzzles and a fishing game that encouraged children to match a letter with its sound. During one observation, there were two book baskets outside, which had thirteen books in Spanish, along with 12 English titles and another basket with 12 books, 3 of which were in Spanish. The books varied in complexity, from board books to higher level preschool books and the genres included both fiction and non fiction. In the office there were two large book shelves filled with books, and although teachers and the director discussed the practice of teachers accessing these books, I never observed this occur or never saw the books organized or rotated to reflect the children's interests or the project being studied. On top of the bookshelf was a character from Dr. Seuss, reflecting Margaret's love of the author, and a portion of the book shelf was dedicated to his books. All of the Dr. Seuss books were his lower level ones that, despite their fun word play and opportunities for children to be exposed to phonological awareness, lacked a strong plot or character development. Given that Dr.

Seuss wrote so many books, such as the Lorax, Horton Hatches and Egg, Daisy Head

Maizy, ect. I found it interesting that none of these books were in their collection..

However, the lower level books are accessible and engaging for the dual language

learners and I observed the teachers reading them to the children during the Dr. Seuss

week.

Program Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, fourth edition (Dodge, Colker, &

Heroman, 2004) is one of the most widely used curricula in early childhood programs

and divides child development into four overlapping areas: social/emotional, physical,

cognitive, and language development. While originally focused primarily on the key role

of the environment in early childhood programs, the new edition "defines more clearly

the vital role of the teacher in connecting content, teaching, and learning for preschool

children (p. xiii). This shift and the addition of research based strategies shown to lead to

positive school readiness outcomes reflects the policy mandates post NCLB that have

affected early childhood education and highlight the role of macro level variables on

teacher practices and children's experiences.

The Creative Curriculum emphasizes child initiated learning in environments that

are developmentally appropriate and carefully planned by the teacher to meet each child's

individual needs. The learning environment is the starting point for curriculum

implementation and the foundation of the curriculum is 10 interest areas: blocks,

dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and

movement, cooking and computers. The curriculum states that the materials and

experiences made available in interest areas should be thoughtfully planned by the teacher to meet children's interests and skill level. Learning is supported by positive teacher child relationships and intentional instructional strategies that guide children's thinking to the next level of development. The teacher is viewed as a skilled facilitator who is able to integrate content learning into all aspects of the curriculum and daily routine and an entire chapter of the curriculum is devoted to describing the role of the teacher. Building a classroom community in which children feel safe and their ideas are valued is another key tenet of the Creative Curriculum.

With regards to language and literacy, The Creative Curriculum supports the notion that literacy and language learning should be integrated into the classroom via daily routines, interest areas, group instruction times, and in-depth studies of topics that are of interest to the children (Cite). Every interaction should be viewed as an opportunity for teaching, and language and literacy should be naturally embedded into all parts of the day. The Curriculum identifies seven research based components of language and literacy, which have been drawn from the work of Snow, Burns, Griffin (1998) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000): vocabulary and oral language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, comprehension, and understanding of books and other texts literacy as a source of enjoyment. The Creative Curriculum also provides guidance on best practices related to several of the key early literacy activities generally associated with preschool, including teaching children how to write their names and the letters of the alphabet. This guidance will be juxtaposed with espoused and enacted practices throughout my discussion of the relationship between teacher practices and those called for by the curriculum.

A signature feature of the Creative Curriculum is the use of studies, which are in-depth investigations of topics that are of interest to the children. Studies are presented as a meaningful way to teach content by building on children's knowledge and interests and the "strongest feature of a study is its ability to support children's inborn dispositions to be curious, to explore the world, and to make sense of their experiences in a meaningful context" (p. 190). Studies are very different than the thematic approaches to content typically used in preschool classrooms, as they are based on the children's ideas and evolve over time depending on the interests of the children.

Curricular guidance related to specific activities and settings (book reading, large group/circle time, meal time, and small group) will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter as they have been used to frame the analysis of my qualitative data. It is important to note that the Creative Curriculum was introduced as the program curriculum three years ago as the result of the leadership changed. Until this curriculum was adopted, the program used several different curricula, including the Creative Curriculum and High Scope, depending on the curriculum used by the local school district. The first year of curricular implementation was focused primarily on setting up the environment to reflect the goals of the Creative Curriculum. The focus during the year which data was collected had shifted to promoting the study approach to teaching integrated content, and this was something that the teachers were just becoming familiar with. This is an important contextual factor to keep in mind when exploring the relationship between enacted practices and those called for by the curriculum. At a program level, targeted professional development on the program curriculum had only been in place for two years.

Readiness Curriculum

Another variable affecting early literacy practices at Montgomery Head Start was

the use of a readiness curriculum developed by a local university. This curriculum was

being used in select centers and was designed to help teachers provide literacy and math

activities for the children. The readiness curriculum was highly prescriptive and

primarily teacher directed, making it philosophically and conceptually very different

from the Creative Curriculum. The readiness curriculum used a letter of the week format

and provided activities designed to last 26 weeks. The increased reliance on this type of

curriculum post NCLB was discussed in my review of the literature and the differences

between the Creative Curriculum and the Readiness Curriculum highlight the debate in

the field concerning the efficacy of different approaches to literacy learning. Elizabeth

described the conflict between these two curricula and their competing goals:

> ELIZABETH: um..we do it like ah just one day that one day because I
> have to do the RC from Monday through Thursday and on Friday its ah its
> ah a day that we do ah you know, according to the children's interest so
> that is the day that I can plan you know art or whatever the children you
> know would like to do.

Agency guidance with regards to this curriculum was that it was to be used as a

supplement to the Creative Curriculum and that the Creative Curriculum was the primary

curriculum used by the agency. Elizabeth's comment, as well as the conflicting curricula

used at Montgomery Head Start, typified the conflict that is occurring in the field of early

childhood education, as researchers, program administrators, and teachers struggle to

reconcile the notion of developmentally appropriate practice and research indicating the

importance of early language and literacy skills to increase school readiness.

Summary

A socio cultural framework calls for a description of historical and cultural forces that affect every day processes and reflects the contextual paradigm that requires the examination of the various contexts in which humans develop. The goal of this section was to explain the context of the research study in order to situate my data within a specific ecological milieu. In keeping with my theoretical framework, the children and teachers that spent their days at Montgomery Head Start cannot be understood without first grounding my data within the cultural and environmental contexts in which teaching and learning take place. The community of Lincoln Heights, with its rich history, high level of poverty, and population characterized by recent immigrants whose first language is not English, represent important contextual variables that are essential if I am to situate my findings within to my theoretical framework.

During data analysis, the constraints of the physical environment consistently emerged as a factor impacting teachers' early literacy practices, and additional evidence of this will be provided in the following chapters. The Creative Curriculum, with its research based focus on an integrated and authentic approach to early literacy provides a backdrop for my analysis of how espoused and enacted practices are related to the curriculum called for by the program, including recommended practices for dual language learners. In addition, evidence of the Readiness Curriculum is described in my data on espoused and enacted practices and, together with the Creative Curriculum, reflect macro level variables that affect teacher practices.

Quantitative Results

This section will describe the quantitative data, including results from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (La Paro, K. M., Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. (2004), the Emerging Academics Snapshot (Ritchie S*.,* Howes C.H*.,* Kraft-Sayre*, &* Weiser B., 2001) and the Treatment of Native Languages (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). Because of my interest in the relationship between espoused and enacted early literacy practices, qualitative results will also be included in this section to highlight emerging themes and illustrate the relationship between espoused and enacted practices in response to my second research question. The mean CLASS scores are found in Table 3:

Table 3: Mean CLASS Scores

Domain and Indicator	Score
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	4.9
Positive Climate	4.8
Negative Climate	7*
Teacher Sensitivity	4.2
Regard for Student Perspectives	3.6
CLASSROOOM ORGANIZATION	4.5
Behavior Management	4.1
Productivity	3.4
Instructional Learning Format	3
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	2.3
Concept Development	2.5
Quality of Feedback	2.1
Language Modeling	2.3

Scoring Rubric: 1,2 = low 3,4,5 = mid, 6,7=high   (*reverse coded)

The mean scores in the emotional support and classroom organization domains of the

CLASS were in the mid range of quality, which is defined by the CLASS manual as a

score of a 3, 4, or 5. The average class scores are consistent with trend data provided

through extensive research conducted by Hamre and Pianta (2007), indicating that

children tend to experience moderate to high levels of effective interactions for emotional

support and classroom organization, while most children attend pre-k-3rd classrooms

characterized by low levels of instructional support. The low levels of instructional

support reported at Montgomery Head Start are consistent with this data as well as with

that presenting in my review of literature that points to the low quality provided in many publicly funded preschool programs serving children at risk.

Analysis of CLASS scores at the individual classroom level reveal differences in teaching practices and in the quality of experience provided to the children. Individual CLASS scores are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Individual CLASS Scores

Domain/Indicator	Carla	Elizabeth	Pamela	Claudia
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	5.57	3.375	6.375	4.35
Positive Climate	6.25	2.25	6.5	4.25
Negative Climate	7	7	7	7
Teacher Sensitivity	4.5	2.75	6	3.67
Regard for Student Perspectives	4.5	1.5	6	2.5
CLASSROOOM ORGANIZATION	3.92	3	4.34	2.92
Behavior Management	4.5	3.25	5.25	3.75
Productivity	3.75	3.25	4.5	2.25
Instructional Learning Format	3.5	2.5	3.25	2.75
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	3.08	1.07	4.08	1.17
Concept Development	2.75	1.25	5	1.25
Quality of Feedback	2.5	1	4	1.25
Language Modeling	4	1	3.25	1

Scoring Rubric: 1,2 = low 3,4,5 = mid, 6,7=high

When the CLASS scores are disaggregated to the individual teacher and classroom level, a more discrete picture of classroom processes and interaction emerges. Both Carla and Pamela scored in the high range in the emotional support domain, while Elizabeth and Claudia scored in the mid range of this domain. The emotional support domain of the CLASS includes four dimensions: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives. Positive climate measures the emotional connection between the teacher and children as evidenced by the warmth, respect, and enjoyment that is communicated both verbally and non-verbally. Carla frequently hugged the children, smiled at them and spoke to them with endearments such as "mi Corazon" and "you are beautiful." Pamela's enjoyment of the children was evident in her smiles and laughter and interest in their activities as they told her about how their grandma's car had broken down or when she reminded a child who forgot to bring something to share on sharing day that he did have something to share because he was going to be a big brother. Pamela's espoused beliefs regarding the social emotional aspect of the classroom were evident in the following quote:

> PAMELA: I think um the best thing is to I think to listen to them you know, be patient with them um to kind of understand where they are coming from too, you know, if you don't understand where they are coming from it is hard to and some of them may come in the morning and…..as adults we need some time wake up on the wrong side of the bed, being there for them and to make it to be your passion if you are not in it, it is harder for everybody.

The theme of building relationships with children was also evident in Carla's espoused practices:

> CARLA: Um, I think I always want to make a difference in the children that have a hard time. That's always my goal. Like inspire them. Especially I wanted to work with children in Head Start. Most of these

kids here are from where I am from. And the same culture and stuff like that. And I know that sometimes at home they have a hard time. So I remember my first grade teacher, she's, you know she was so good. And I still remember her. And I know you can make a difference in the children. You know if they don't have the stability at home, if they don't have the love, if they...I know you can give them, at least not all day but part of the day you an give them that. And I wanted to do that.

INTERVIEWER: And so, do you feel like you have been able to achieve that goal?

CARLA: Oh yes! I think so. I feel like I can do it and I do it! I know I do it! Because children, I had children five years ago but they still come and look for me, and the mom says "oh she wants to see you!" and they invite me to their communions, and you know, so they still remember me. So that is exciting!

Examples of Carla's enacted practices that support her statements will be found throughout this chapter as evidence that her enacted practices regarding emotional support match her espoused practices.

Both Claudia and Elizabeth were more reserved in their approach to the children, and while Claudia did show instances of warmth towards the children, it was not of sufficient frequency or duration to warrant a high score in this indicator. Claudia did, however, discuss the importance of building relationships with the children, as evidenced by the following quote:

CLAUDIA: My main goals is to teach them to make them, you know, to know themselves, to learn things, to make them feel happy, to bring their self esteem up. If they have self esteem, low self esteem I just want to make them feel comfortable coming to a school setting and they know that we are here for them if they need anything, to have friends to feel that they have a friend.

Elizabeth, with a low score of 2.25, at times seemed detached from the children and as if she was going through the motions of teaching without making a connection with the children. Elizabeth spoke about the difficulty of being a preschool teacher:

> ELIZABETH: I think being a preschool teacher is not I think is it not easy it is not an easy job. I think you have to have patience mostly and you have to be able to understand children and you need to be wiling to be working with children and if you don't have, if you don't have those then I don't think this job is for you.

Elizabeth did not discuss the importance of building relationship with the children in her classroom, nor did her espoused or enacted practices reflect real enjoyment of the children. At one point during the data collection period, I asked Elizabeth if she liked being in a part day classroom because I knew that she had always been a full day teacher. Elizabeth responded that she was getting used to it, but at the end of her class session when the children were going home, she told me "well, the best part of being in the AM class is that the children go home early." While I am sure that she was not entirely serious when she made this statement, it reflects the overall level of emotional support provided in her classroom.

The teacher sensitivity dimension of the emotional support domain reflects the teacher's awareness of children's emotional and academic needs and his/her responsiveness to them. This dimension is closely related to the regard for student perspectives dimension, which reflects the teacher's ability to follow the children's lead and provide experiences that allow for autonomy and leadership. Pamela was the only teacher to score in the high range on both dimensions. An example of an enacted practice that supports this philosophy took place when a child brought a CD to share with the group. Pamela observed that the children were using blocks as microphones and told the children that there were some microphones in another room. She took several of the children with her to get the microphones and told the children that they could also take the CD and the microphones outside with them so that they could continue their activity.

Carla scored in the mid range on both the teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives dimensions. Although observation of Carla's enacted practices, coupled with her teaching philosophy shared during interviews, indicated the she frequently followed the lead of the children and valued child directed learning, on the day of the CLASS observation she engaged in a very long, teacher directed circle time which involved a planned sequence of school readiness activities. Carla moved the children through these activities, not reading their cues that circle was too long and the children were becoming disengaged. Because this circle time encompassed half of the four 20 minute observation cycles called for by the CLASS, Carla's score in these dimensions may not be an entirely accurate depiction of her teaching style. When compared to observation and emerging academics snapshot data, a more complete picture of Carla's teaching practices emerged, highlighting the value of the multiple methods used in a mixed methods design.

Claudia scored in the mid range of teacher sensitivity and on the low range of regard for student perspectives. Claudia had a set routine for her classroom, and the children knew what to expect at all times. Despite her stated belief that children learn through play, Claudia often controlled the type of play that children engaged in, such as letter bingo or games designed to teach phonological awareness. In addition, her use of flashcards and close ended art projects based on a model made by the teacher, further support these scores. Elizabeth scored on the low range of teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives. As will be shown throughout this chapter, Elizabeth used very didactic teaching methods and moved through her lessons with little regard for children's

interests or experiences. She frequently ignored the children's requests for her attention, and evidence of her teacher directed style will be highlighted throughout this chapter.

The classroom organization domain of the CLASS looks at three dimensions: behavior management, productivity, and instructional learning formats. All teachers scored in the mid range of behavior management, which is consistent with the results of Hamre and Pianta's (2007) study. Productivity is defined by the CLASS as how well the teacher uses instructional time and routines so that children are given opportunities to be involved in learning, while the instructional learning formats dimension captures the ways teachers maximize children's interest, engagement and ability to learn from activities and lessons. Teacher's scores on the productivity dimension were in the lower end of the mid range, with the exception of Elizabeth, who scored in the low range. When considering the physical environment at Montgomery Head Start and the fact that the teachers and children had to transition to different rooms one could hypothesize that these low scores could be a function of the environmental constraints.

Scores were similarly low on the instructional learning format dimension, reflecting teacher's lack of knowledge about and infrequent use of research based instructional strategies. The instructional learning formats dimension considers the degree to which teachers are effectively facilitating learning by the use of effective questioning, expanding children's involvement, providing a variety of modalities and materials and using strategies to ensure active participation by the children. Although promising practices were observed, they were not consistent enough to warrant higher scores in this indicator.

The final domain of the CLASS, instructional support, is most closely aligned with my interest in teacher language and literacy practices, and results on this dimension are consistent with data provided by Hamre and Pianta (2007), which indicated that teachers typically score on the low end of this dimension. The concept development dimension of the CLASS is designed to capture the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote children's higher order thinking skills and cognition. In order to score in the high range of quality on this dimension, teachers need to focus on increasing children's understanding rather than on rote instruction. In addition, an important behavioral indicator of the concept development dimension of the CLASS, and a critical component of the Creative Curriculum, is the extent to which teachers tie learning to children's lives and make experiences and activities relevant and meaningful. Given my focus on the socio-cultural nature of early learning, this lack of attention to connecting learning to children's experiences is important given the findings of the ethnographic researchers such as Moll, Velez-Ibanez, & Greenberg's (1990) and Heath (1983) described in Chapter 2. Pamela scored in the mid range of this dimension and observations done during the CLASS cycles indicted that she encouraged children's thinking and made connections to past events. During the interaction described below, Pamela connected a child's comments about a basket to a gardening study that they had just completed:

PAMELA: What can you do with a basket?

CHILDREN: Put fruit

PAMELA: What else can you pick? Something………remember we talked about the garden. What can you put?

CHILDREN: Blueberries, strawberries, I want to put that in my basket

Although Pamela did not extend the children's thinking to levels described as high quality by the CLASS and sometimes gave the answers to the children too soon, her attempts to encourage thinking resulted in a mid range score on this dimension.

The quality of feedback dimension of the CLASS measures the extent to which the teacher provides feedback and expands learning and understanding by encouraging participation in extended conversations and discovery. Indicators in this domain include promoting analysis and reasoning, brainstorming, integrating concepts with prior knowledge, and connections to the real world. My discussion of enacted practices collected during naturalistic observations will provide evidence in support of individual CLASS scores on this dimension. The final dimension of the CLASS, language modeling, captures the quality and amount of teacher's use of language facilitation and stimulation techniques, including the use of open ended questions, self and parallel talk, and the use of advanced language. All of these indicators are consistent with strategies recommended by the Creative Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of talking with children about their work, asking children questions, and introducing new vocabulary. Both Elizabeth and Claudia scored a 1 on the language modeling dimension, indicating low levels of quality, while both Pamela and Carla scored in the mid range of quality on this dimension. It is important to note that data from all sources pointed to low levels of instructional support in all classrooms, and although there were examples of exemplary teaching during the data collection period, they were not of sufficient frequency to result in high quality scores on the instructional support domain of the CLASS.

Emerging Academics Snapshot

The Emerging Academics Snapshot (Ritchie*,* Howes*,* Kraft-Sayre*,* & Weiser*,* 2001*)* provided data on how the 16 target children spent their time, including what activity setting they were involved in, the content being presented, and the type of teacher-child interaction. Observations took place over a three hour period during the busiest part of the day (the morning for the full day classrooms and the entire class session for the PM classroom).

Activity setting. The activity setting was coded to capture the activity in which the child was engaged in at the time of observation and included routines, meals/snacks, large group/circle time, free choice/center time, outside time and small group time. Table 5 describes the percent of time spent in each activity setting by classroom.

Table 5: Activity Setting

Activity Setting	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
Routine	17%	12%	10%	20%
Meal	0	2%	5%	8%
Large group/circle	21%	23%	21%	35%
Free Choice	47%	21%	52%**	6%
Outside	8%	23%	0%	22%
Small Group	8%	18%	12%	9%

*** Because Elizabeth's class did not go outdoors on the day of the snapshot observation due to wet equipment, the percentage of time spent in free choice was inflated. This was taken into consideration during analysis*

On average, the target children spent approximately a quarter to a third of their time in large group/circle. This finding was also supported by the CLASS observations, which

indicated that all teachers spent approximately 40 minutes in circle time/large group activities. While the activity setting that received the highest percentage in Pamela's classroom was free choice, her children spent 21% of their time in circle, which was very close to the amount of time Claudia's children (23%) and Elizabeth's children (21%) spent in circle time. Carla's children spent the most time in circle, at 35%. The finding that the children spend a considerable amount of time in circle, coupled with the teacher directed nature of circle time are consistent with the low scores on the Instructional Support Domain of the CLASS and represent an instance when enacted practices are not consistent with those called for by the program curriculum. Carla was the only teacher to discuss the length of circle time during her interview, and she indicated that:

> CARLA: Well, circle time is only for a short time in the morning. You know maybe for a half an hour during the day. So they have more time to do free choice or whatever.

In this case, Carla's espoused and enacted practices are contradictory, and based on my experience working with preschool teachers I would hypothesize that the other three teachers would be surprised to learn how long their large/group circle times last. The length of time spent in large group/circle time conflict with guidance provided by the Creative Curriculum, which recommends that large group time last between 5 and 20 minutes and are incongruent with the espoused practices articulated by all four teachers, in which they stated that children learn through play.

Another interesting finding from the data analysis was that the third most frequent activity setting in three of the classrooms was routine. This was particularly salient in Pamela and Carla's classroom. The children in Pamela's classroom spent 17% of their time in routines as opposed to 8% outside and 8% in small group. Carla's children spent

20% of their time in routines and 9% of their time in small group. Highlighting the role of context, this finding is no doubt a reflection of the physical set up of the center and the continual moving from room to room that took place to accommodate the needs of each classroom.

At the individual classroom level, the academic snapshot data provided insight into the similarities and differences in activities and experiences. The target children in Pamela's classroom spent 47% of their time in free choice, reflecting her child centered style of teaching. However, it is important to note that there is a difference between simple allowing children to learn through play and intentional teaching in which learning is embedded in interest centers and facilitated by effective teacher child interactions, and CLASS scores in Pamela's classroom suggest that that was not done at a level to ensure high quality. In addition, target children in Pamela's classroom spent very little time outdoors, almost a third of the time that Carla and Claudia's children spent, and this is notable given the fact that hers was a full day classroom. Claudia's children spent as much time in small group as they did outdoors. The Creative Curriculum recommends that children spend 45-60 minutes outdoors. Carla's target children spend 55% of the observation period engaged in large group/circle and routines, over half of the observation period. Her children spent only 6% of their time in free play, which is most likely a reflection of the physical environment of the center and the fact that the snapshot was done in the morning; I frequently observed Carla's children engaged in free play during my afternoon visits, when there were fewer children in attendance and things weren't as hectic. The Creative Curriculums recommends that children spent at least an hour in free choice activities.

Data from the Emerging Academics Snapshot indicated that target children spent an average of 15% of their time participating in routines. While transitions and routines can and should provide important learning opportunities, the teachers at Montgomery Head Start did not utilize them this way and as a result, scores in the productivity dimension of the CLASS were in the mid to low range of quality. Overall, there was both consistency and variability in the activity settings in which children spent their time. Other researchers have looked at the amount of time children spend in activity settings. Layzer, Goodson, and Moss (1993), for example, found that children spent approximately 29% of their day in large group settings and 20% in free play. Pianta et al. (2005), in their large scale study of structural and process variables related to classroom quality, used the snapshot tool and found that classrooms located in a school building offered less time in free choice–center settings and more time in whole group settings. Although not located in a school building, Montgomery Head Start was located in a building designed with older children in mind, and the results from my study are similar to those reported by Pianta et al. In addition, Pianta and colleagues reported that in classrooms where at least 60% of the children came from families below the poverty line spent less time in free choice activities and that in classrooms rated high on global measures of quality, including the CLASS, children spent more time in free choice and less time in routines. Early et al. (2010) also used the snapshot procedure to examine how preschoolers spent their time. Similar to the results of my study, the researchers reported that target child spent a great deal of time (37%) in a teacher assigned activity, coded as an activity selected for the child by the teacher, including large group/circle.

Child engagement in pre-academic and academic activities. This section of the Emerging Academics Snapshot captures children's engagement in pre-academic and academic activities. Table 6 describes the percent of time target children spent engaged in each type of activity.

Table 6: Child Engagement in Academic and Pre-Academic Activities

Academic Area	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
Pre reading	14%	8%	11%	8%
Letter sound	22%	12%	13%	0%
Oral Language	5%	35%	6%	37%
Prewriting	22%	0%	12%	1%
Math	20%	6%	4%	17%
Science	2%	17%	1%	10%
Aesthetics	0%	16%	51%	27%
Computer	15%	6%	3%	0%

While no clear patterns emerge from the data on child engagement, what is apparent is the variability of experiences provided to the target children depending on which classroom they were in. For example, the target children in Claudia's classroom were exposed to oral language activities, 35% of the time, while children in Elizabeth's classroom received oral language support 6% of the time. These enacted practices are consistent with practices observed during the data collection period and are also congruent with espoused practices. Claudia spoke frequently about her use of songs to teach concepts to the children, and I frequently observed her singing with the children:

CLAUDIA: Literacy, singing, yes, I see what kind of songs the children love and they like to participate. You would be surprised. They like to participate, especially I see the kind of song that they want me to play so I play it for them and they even take the song or they do whatever they have to do to follow the song.

Naturalistic observations of Elizabeth's practices described throughout this chapter and the next will provide further examples of the limited language environment in her classroom, as does the score of a one on the language modeling dimension of the CLASS. Carla's target children also received a high amount of oral language exposure, 37%. Carla's CLASS score on the language modeling dimension of the CLASS fell in the mid range, which is higher than those reported by Hamre and Pianta (2004). Carla's frequent use of activities to promote oral language development is consistent with enacted practices that will be described in greater detail during the presentation of naturalistic observations. In addition, the high level of oral language reported by the snapshot are consistent with Carla's espoused practices on the role of language:

CARLA: We do like open-ended questions, right. And since some of the kids are like 3 years old some are 5. So, the five year olds we give them an opportunity to all the kids to speak and do (sic)therapy and stuff like that. So the younger ones are absorbing you know, all this information. And we ask open-ended questions during circle time and let them talk about the current topics. I also you, if I notice the child is telling me something, "Oh, at the zoo I saw this..." or whatever, then I try to increase their vocabulary by saying "Oh, ok you saw this at the zoo! Was it large? Was it this way?" or whatever. So to enrich it.

INTERVIEWER: So then you talked about introducing new vocabulary and introducing new letters, but then also [OV] support their...

CARLA: Yeah, you let them say something, to speak, and then you just make it more rich, you help them to. I mean you never tell a child "It's not that way," just enrich.

Interestingly, target children in Pamela's classroom, who received the highest score on the language modeling dimension of the CLASS, were exposed to oral language activities

only 5% of the time, and inconsistencies across data highlight the variability of educational settings, not only in practices used across classrooms but practices within classrooms.

   Adult-child interaction. This section of the snapshot measures the complexity of the adult's interaction with the target child, both individually or during whole group activities. This section is coded when the teacher and child are within approximately 3 feet of each other or if either the teacher or child attempts interaction. Table 7 details the number of times that each interaction was coded.

Table 7: Adult-child Interaction

Interaction	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
Monitor	22	3	18	6
Teacher Routine	7	2	7	0
Minimal	3	2	1	0%
Simple	6	2	7	1
Elaborate	3	2	4	5
Elaborated group	12	35	12	18
Intense	0	0	4	6

Both Pamela and Elizabeth spent the majority of their time monitoring the children (22 and 18 instances respectively). While this data is consistent with the CLASS scores in Elizabeth's classroom, it is inconsistent with the scores in Pamela's classroom that were in the high range on emotional support and mid range on instructional support. Adult interaction is coded as monitoring if the teacher is unaware of the child, ignores child, or

does not notice or attempt to engage a child who's clearly not paying attention during whole group activities. These behaviors are clearly not consistent with those described as high quality on the CLASS.

Claudia's interaction with target children was coded as elaborate group 35 times, which is defined as the teacher's attempt to engage the children in a learning activity in a group setting. The high amount of time spent in elaborated group is consistent with the snapshot category of activity setting in which Claudia's target children spent 23% of the observation period in large group/circle. This was also confirmed by the CLASS observation in which Claudia had the longest circle time (50 minutes) of all teachers. The target children in both Pamela and Elizabeth's classroom were also coded as being in an elaborate group 12 times, while there were 18 instances of elaborate group coded for Carla's target children, again reflecting the large amount of time children spent in circle. Only Elizabeth and Carla had intense interactions with target children, which are defined by the tool taking place when as teacher hugs or holds the target child, restates the child's statement, acknowledges them, answers or helps the child figure out their own answers, engages in conversation, plays interactively with the child, or works 1:1 to develop pre-academic skills. While this finding is consistent with other data sources on Carla's classroom, it is inconsistent with findings from data on Elizabeth's classroom. It is important to note, however, that the percentage of time spent by both Carla and Elizabeth in an intense interaction is relatively small, especially when compared to other types of interaction. The finding regarding the low levels of intense interaction between the children and teachers highlighted inconsistencies between observed practices and those

called for by the Creative Curriculum, which proposes that all learning takes place in the context of relationships.

Adult child engagement. This category complements the Adult Interaction coding by providing additional detail about the specific ways in which the teacher interacts with the target child individually. Results for the Adult Child Engagement Section of the snapshot are provided in Table 8 and represent the frequency of the coded behavior:

Table 8: Adult-child Engagement

Engagement	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
Organization	11	4	10	16
Encourages	3	34	12	28
Scaffolds	0	0	1	17
Reads	9	2	9	2
Instructs	23	15	16	2

Pamela and Elizabeth engaged in instruction the majority of the time, defined as didactic, teacher led instruction in which there is one right answer. In Pamela's case, the target children received very little active engagement from the teacher, because the second highest activity coded was organization, defined as time that the teacher uses to get the class settled, taking attendance or engaged in another organizational task, or transitioning between activities. Again, in Pamela's case the snapshot data is inconsistent with that of the CLASS. A possible explanation for the inconsistencies between CLASS and snapshot data could be Pamela's relationship with me and my position as an Area Director and the Director of Educational Services. Because I frequently do professional

development for teachers, Pamela knows my expectations for teacher child interactions and could have been "putting on a show" for me while I was in her classroom doing the CLASS observation. This is frequently the case when I visit classrooms and reflects a danger to the validity of my data that results from my insider status in the Head Start program under investigation. Because Dr. Wishard completed the snapshot observation, it is possible that Pamela reverted to her typical teaching style on this day.

There were 34 instances when Claudia was coded as encouraging target children, which includes encouraging children to read books, practice writing, engage in play with literacy themes. This category is also coded if the teacher displays and praises children's work, provides opportunities for children to participate in activities designed to develop pre-academic skills provides motivating materials and encourages children to talk with one another about what they are doing or thinking.   Claudia's espoused practices were consistent with this finding:

> CLAUDIA: Singing, talking to them, listening to them, talking back to them, if they say something you just not correct them but talk back to them in the appropriate way so they can repeat it you know just be there for them in many ways I can think of to help them.

Claudia scored in the mid range of quality on the teacher sensitivity dimension of the CLASS, and her use of encouragement as a teaching practice support this score.

An interesting finding from this section of the snapshot is the lack of scaffolding as a means to engage children in learning. While Elizabeth engaged in scaffolding once, no scaffolding was observed in Pamela and Claudia's classroom. Carla, on the other hand, scaffolded the children's learning 17 times. Scaffolding was coded if the teacher used the curiosity of the children and responding to add to their learning, used visuals and

concrete objects to help children learn new vocabulary, and new concepts, uses gestures

and body language to convey ideas, speaks slowly and carefully, repeats, supplies words

to describe actions, elicits responses, refers to children's experiences, narrates what

children are doing, asks questions, helps children expand on their answers and thoughts

works to link classroom activities to children's lives and experiences. Although she did

not explicitly state that scaffolding was an intentional strategy used to support children's

learning, the snapshot data is consistent with Carla's espoused practices:

> CARLA: Sometimes we do it at small groups and we put things out and
> we let the kids...or you know we give them different things and we say,
> "oh let's see, which one doesn't start with the letter H?" And they have to
> figure it out.
>
> CARLA: Um, I like I said, I give them the tools, the tools, but mainly let
> them be kids and choose what they want and teach them to be
> independent. Try to figure out each child, you know, individualize to the
> child, and give them materials that are according to their age and their
> level. So, I think that is important. Because if you give a child something
> very hard sometimes they loose interest. Or if it is too easy it is not
> challenging enough. So you need to find the right thing for everybody.

While Carla's CLASS scores did not indicate a high level of these behaviors, the

snapshot data is consistent with practices observed during naturalistic observations.

Examples of Carla's use of scaffolding will be described in greater detail during the

discussion of the video taped literacy lesson and her practices used in various activity

settings. Carla's espoused and enacted practices regarding the use of scaffolding were

consistent with those promoted by the Creative Curriculum, which presents scaffolding as

an effective strategy to encourage children's development.

Other researchers using the snapshot procedure on similar populations reported

that teachers used didactic teaching interact methods three times more frequently than

they used scaffolding and suggest that this may be because it is easier for teachers to implement this teaching style in large groups (Early et al, 2010).

Summary

Data from both the CLASS and the Emergent Academic Snapshot indicate that the teachers at Montgomery Head Start failed to consistently implement research based practices into their teaching. While there were instances of high quality teaching and the use of evidence based practices, including Pamela and Carla's high CLASS score on the emotional support domain of the CLASS, Claudia's use of encouragement and oral language as instructional strategies, and Carla's use of scaffolding and support of the children's home language, the frequency and intensity of these practices were not sufficient to result in high ratings of overall program quality. Additional support for this conclusion is found in the analysis of the language portions of the Emerging Academics Snapshot, which will be discussed in the following section. Because of the role language plays in the cultural communities framework as a tool to transmit the values, goals and practices of cultural communities, and the role of language as the foundation for literacy development in preschool (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001), observations of language use from the snapshot procedure and Treatment of Native Languages will be described in detail in the following section.

Language Use

In order to describe the language environment at Montgomery Head Start, interview data on espoused practices related to language use will be triangulated with quantitative data from the Emerging Academics Snapshot procedure and Treatment of Native Languages. This description and comparison of espoused and enacted practices is

in response to my first two research questions, and will be used to answer my third research question related to the relationship between espoused and enacted practices and those called for by the Creative Curriculum. In addition, because of my focus on dual language learners and the language and literacy practices related to them, this data is critical to the examination of my sub-question on differences in espoused and enacted practices for English only and dual language learners.

Emergent Academics Snapshot peer and teacher language. Because the target children were selected for observation because they were dual language learners, it is not surprising that when speaking together the children spoke in Spanish. The percentage of time children spent speaking English and Spanish can be found in Table 9, along with instances in which they used both languages simultaneously.

Table 9: Emerging Academics Snapshot Peer Language

Peer Language	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
English	37%	22%	31%	29%
Spanish	61%	75%	62%	66%%
Bilingual	2%	3%	7%	4%

Teacher language use reflects the language the teacher spoke while engaged with the target child. Table 10 describes the language used when the teacher was speaking with the target child.

Table 10: Emerging Academics Snapshot Teacher Language

Teacher Language	Pamela	Claudia	Elizabeth	Carla
English	33	21	48	20
Spanish	0	3	0	7
Bilingual	1		0	13

Because they did not speak Spanish, it is not surprising that both Elizabeth and Pamela spoke English when interacting with the target children. Claudia spoke in English 78% of the time, and Carla spoke English 50% of the time and she spoke in Spanish or bilingually 50% of the time. Findings on language use for Carla and Claudia are consistent with their espoused beliefs on how to best meet the needs of dual language learners:

> CLAUDIA: With the dual language learners, we speak mostly English and uh the reason, believe it or not, they pick it up quickly.

> CARLA: So for me, it is important to do it in both. And the children that Speak English as a first language, they start learning Spanish too. So that's good! And so I try to teach both languages. And when we sing songs, sometimes we sing in English and then in Spanish. Yeah, it is very important for me to consider both languages. I believe in keeping, you know, if your child's first language is Spanish don't make that child lose their language.

Snapshot data was also reviewed for language use of the Associate Teacher, because in Pamela and Elizabeth's classroom both Associate teachers speak Spanish. The Head Start performance standards require that when classrooms have a majority of children who speak the same language, at least one classroom staff member interacting regularly with

the children must speak their language (DHHS, 1996). Both Pamela and Elizabeth

indicated that their associate teacher spoke to the children in Spanish:

> INTERVIEWER: Does Ms. Cortez speak to them in Spanish?
>
> ELIZABETH: Um..
>
> INTERVIEWER: Or how do you guys do that?
>
> ELIZABETH: When I do circle time um she doesn't sit there and speak
> Spanish to them but when we do small group and she will come and you
> know speak English to them and if they don't understand, she will speak
> to them in Spanish

Snapshot data on the language spoken to the target children by the associate teacher in

Elizabeth's classroom indicated that of the 36 instances coded for language between one

of the target children and the associate teacher, two of the exchanges were done

bilingually, 28 were in English and 6 were in Spanish, indicating that the dual language

learners in Elizabeth's classroom were exposed to English by both the teacher and the

associate teacher the vast majority of the time and Elizabeth's articulated practices were

not congruent with observed practices. When asked whether her associate teacher ever

read to the children in Spanish, Elizabeth replied:

> ELIZABETH: As far as reading books in Spanish, no, but in English she
> does though
>
> INTERVIEWER: And you have books in Spanish?
>
> ELIZABETH: Yeah, we do, we have a lot of books in Spanish she, she
> doesn't read um in Spanish
>
> INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that is?
>
> ELIZABETH: Well most of the time I do circle time so you know maybe
> in small group you know because when we do large group we do it in
> there and then after that you know and when somebody does not use this
> room she will come over here and she will do small group she might read,
> I don't know because I am with my group and she is with her group.

The fact that Elizabeth's espoused and enacted practices about children's exposure to their home language do not match, coupled with her lack of knowledge about how her associate teacher conducts small group activities when she is not present, points to a conspicuous lack of attention to the needs of the dual language learners in her classroom.

When asked about assistant teachers' language use in her classroom, Pamela replied:

> INTERVIEWER: There are so many other assistant teachers that speak Spanish
>
> PAMELA: Yeah yeah, so for mine she is bilingual but she speaks a lot of English but there are some that speak Spanish.

Pamela's assertion that her associate teacher spoke primarily in English was supported by the snapshot data which indicated that of the 23 instances of conversation between target children and Pamela's associate teacher, 3 were bilingual, 14 were in English, and 6 were in Spanish. In the case of Pamela's classroom, espoused and enacted practices regarding dual language learners' exposure to their home language were consistent. While the snapshot data was analyzed only at the teacher and associate teacher level, it is important to note that in addition to the teacher and associate teacher in each classroom, there were assistant teachers who also contributed to the language environment at the center. An examination of the Treatment of Native Languages data gives additional insight into the language children were exposed to at Montgomery Head Start.

Treatment of Native Languages. While the snapshot looked only at the experiences of the 16 target children, the Treatment of Native Languages (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007) tool captured the experiences of all children in the classroom. This global observational instrument was used to assess the overall use

and treatment of Spanish. Items included the overall frequency of home language use in the classroom as well as the specific contexts in which the home language was used. Table 11 describes the number of children in each classroom by first language.

Table 11: Children's First Language by Classroom

Number of Children by Language	Carla	Claudia	Pamela	Elizabeth
English as first language	3	2	8	3
Spanish as first language	17	18	12	17

Analysis of the data from this tool indicated that the children in Carla, Claudia, and Elizabeth's classroom received conversation and instruction in Spanish. Children in Pamela's classroom were exposed to Spanish occasionally (<10%), which was consistent with Pamela's statement that her associate teacher speaks mostly in English. The proportion of language use observed at Montgomery Head Start is described in Table 12.

Table 12: Proportion of Native Language Use

Proportion of Native Language Use	Carla	Claudia	Pamela	Elizabeth
90% English, 10% native language			X	
70% English, 30% native language		X		X
50% - 50%	X			
30% English, 70% native language				
10% English, 90% native language				

This data was consistent with snapshot data for Carla's classroom, which indicated that she spoke equally in Spanish and English. It was also consistent with her espoused beliefs on the importance of using both languages with the children.

The Treatment of Native Languages tool also assessed the extent to which the children's native language was used for managing the children's behavior versus for encouraging thinking. Results are found in Table 13:

Table 13: Purpose for Native Language Use

Purpose of Behavior	Carla	Claudia	Pamela	Elizabeth
Managing behavior	50%	70%	90%	80%
Encouraging thinking	50%	30%	10%	20%

With the exception of Carla's classroom, a clear pattern emerged from this data in which Spanish was used for managing children's behavior and giving directives, while English was used for instruction and to encourage children's thinking. This data will be discussed in greater detail in response to my fourth research question, as it helps describe the cultural community of the center and how this community impacts the experiences children. Table 14 provides additional information on the language environment of each classroom.

Table 14: Native Language Environment

Observation	Carla	Claudia	Pamela	Elizabeth
The teacher speaks to children in their native language.	X	X		
An aide speaks to children in their native language.	X	X	X	X
A parent or other volunteer speaks to children in their native language.			X	
Children are actively discouraged from speaking in their native language				
Native English-speaking children are encouraged to speak native language of LEP or NEP students	X			
Classroom has books in children's native language				
Classroom has signs or labels in children's native language.				
Teacher uses simultaneous translation.	X			
An aide uses simultaneous translation.	X		X	

A review of the data on language use indicates that children had very different experiences with language depending on the classroom that they were in, with the children in Carla's classroom experiencing a very different environment than the children in the other three classrooms. Teacher practices related to language use and language of instruction were closely tied to their beliefs about the nature of language learning and their goals for children, and these beliefs will be discussed in the following section, as I

describe the results of the quantitative data on language use with the teacher's espoused

practices on language development.

Teacher Beliefs about Language Development

Enacted practices about language use in their classrooms were consistent with

articulated practices captured by interview data. While Carla and Claudia were both

native Spanish speakers, they had very different views about how to best meet the needs

of dual language learners. Carla felt very strongly that children need to receive

instruction in both languages and the language environment in her classroom reflected

these beliefs:

> CARLA: Oh, well in my class I try to do it in English and Spanish. So I don't know if you notice but when we are reading a book I just slowly and read the book in English but then I am gonna give them hints in Spanish just so that way if they don't understand they don't feel lost. Because that way, you know sometimes if you don't do that the kids are going to loose interest and forget it. So for me it is important to do it in both. And the children that speak English as a first language, they start learning Spanish too. So that's good! And so I try to teach both languages. And when we sing songs, sometimes we sing in English and then in Spanish. Yeah, it is very important for me to consider both languages. I believe in keeping, you know, if your child's first language is Spanish don't make that child loose their language. [UI] But at the meantime, teach them English. Your language is important but we need to learn something else too.

Carla's strong beliefs about maintaining the home language while learning a new one

were reinforced by her own experiences with her sons.

> CARLA: Yeah, and I believe that children can do it. I have two sons and they are totally bilingual. I started teaching them since they were babies in both languages.

When asked if she thought that children need to be fluent in English before going to

kindergarten, Carla stated:

CARLA: I don't think the NEED to be fluent in English. Some children don't even come to preschool and they just go to kindergarten and I mean, they learn so quick! I mean, I know friends that have their kids going to kindergarten and they didn't speak any English and then 6 months later the kids are speaking. I mean, kids absorb so much! If they are fluent in one language, if the children know their native language, they speak well and they don't have any problems. I think they can pick it up, they can pick up another language. The children that have problems and they don't understand their own language, they have problems with anything! So...

The quote above illustrates Carla's clear understanding of dual language development, and she clarified her beliefs when asked by the interviewer if her goal was to support language in general rather than supporting one language over another:

CARLA: Yes, exactly! Language in general! I don't care in which language we communicate, but for me it is important for them to be able to do it. Because once they get one language well, they can learn another language.

As the data from the snapshot and treatment of native languages illustrate, Carla's enacted practices reflected these beliefs. In addition, Carla's comments about the nature of language learning and the need to support the home language while introducing a new one reflect research based practices and are one of the few instances in which teachers at Montgomery Head Start were able to articulate the relationship between the two.

Claudia's enacted practices with dual language learners were also consistent with her beliefs. Claudia believed that the best way for the children to learn English was through immersion:

CLAUDIA: With the dual language learners, we speak mostly English and uh the reason believe it or not they pick it up quickly.

Claudia spoke about using Spanish to make the children feel comfortable and to give instructions, which is consistent with data from the Treatment of Native Languages which indicated that she uses English primarily for teaching and learning and Spanish for

managing behavior. A description of Claudia's enacted practices related to this will be

presented in the discussion of meal times in her classroom, in which she spoke to the

children in Spanish when giving instructions on tasks related to the meal time routine.

When asked to describe how she adjusted her practices to meet the needs of the dual

language learners in her classroom, Claudia replied:

> CLAUDIA: I speak English at the beginning of the year- English and
> Spanish mostly most of it English then Spanish cause we don't want to
> make them feel like they are out of the group so we try to make them feel
> comfortable by speaking Spanish and English at the beginning. But once
> they get that confidence that we can see that they understand, especially
> when you give them instructions that, you know, you can see by the way
> that you talk to them the kinds of instructions that you give them what
> they have to do. So depending on how you feel in the interaction that is
> when you start speaking English most of the time so they can pick it up.

Pamela, who had the highest number of English speaking children in her classroom,

struggled with how to best meet the needs of her dual language learners and cited this as

one of the challenges that she faced working at Montgomery Head Start:

> INTERVIEWER: Is there anything particularly challenging about working
> in this community? Or working in this center or things you really love?
>
> PAMELA: The language gets challenging the language barrier of course
> that gets challenging, but for the most part I really haven't had any really
> big, big problems working at the center. The parents are really respectful
> and things like that um the kids are you know OK, so I really haven't had
> any problems throughout my five years here I really haven't had a hard,
> hard time you would think with me being African American basically the
> only African American teacher it would be hard but I haven't had too
> much of an issue. I think in the beginning there were a couple of parents
> they thought the language barrier was hard.

Pamela believed that children need to hear both languages, but also felt that because the

children are exposed to Spanish at home, they should learn English at school:

> PAMELA: As far as English learners, um, I definitely think they need to
> hear, you know, both languages and speak both languages. I definitely try
> to encourage this. I feel like they get it at home and we should definitely

be speaking English here if they are getting it at home so that way they
will understand it when they get really to go to kindergarten.

When asked what she does to help children develop their English skills, Pamela replied:

PAMELA: Um we do music and movement um we are displaying books
and reading books to them uh just overall communicating you know.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean by that?

PAMELA: Just when you are talking, taking in English and then whatever
the home language is you would talk to them in both languages, explain to
them in both languages actually yeah we have books in English and
Spanish and there are songs that they sing in English and Spanish.

The Emerging Academics Snapshot and Treatment of Native Languages indicated that

Pamela's enacted practices are inconsistent with her espoused practices. Data from

naturalistic observations indicated that simultaneous translation did not take place in

Pamela's classroom, and this is supported by the Treatment of Native Languages data

which also indicates that this strategy was not utilized. Rather, Spanish was used when it

became clear that children did not understand what was going on or Pamela needed to

understand what they were saying to her. Pamela's stated that when communicating with

the Spanish speaking children, she relied on her Associate Teacher or the other children

to translate for her:

PAMELA: Well, for most of mine…..most of them pretty much speak it
but there are a few that just say random words, little bits and pieces. I can
kind a make out a couple of words and I can go from there or I will have
Miss Susana just kind of say....or I will ask another child "what did he
say?" you know the ones that speak really good English and they will tell
me.

I did see evidence of Pamela using Spanish words to communicate with the children:

PAMELA: You're saying pluma, Pen, what can you do with a pen?

CHILDREN: Write!

This was the only instance in which I observed this, but it is interesting to note that

Pamela's use of Spanish was used within the context of teaching and learning rather than

behavior management.

Elizabeth's goal for her dual language learners was for them to learn some of the

basic skills in English:

> ELIZABETH: English language learner? I um, I think right now I am
> trying to you know teach them the basic learning, I am trying to teach how
> to speak like simple English, um and trying to teach the numbers, letters
> and shapes in English.

When asked if she thought that it was important for children to maintain their home

language, Elizabeth responded:

> ELIZABETH: I think so, uh, I think that you know for a child to speak
> both language um when they grow up they will, you know, have more
> opportunity to look for jobs because right now they are looking for
> bilinguals and I think it is very important that, you know, I encourage
> them how to speak in their language.

Unlike Carla's response about the benefit of maintaining children's first language as a

means to develop their second language, Elizabeth's comments were related to their

future job prospects if they could speak Spanish and reflected a limited view of the nature

of dual language development. When asked if her assistant teacher spoke to the children

in Spanish, Elizabeth paused and then replied:

> ELIZABETH: When I do circle time um she doesn't sit there and speak
> Spanish to them but when we do small group and she will come and you
> know speak English to them and if they don't understand, she will speak
> to them in Spanish
>
> INTERVIEWER: Do you guys talk about it or it it just something that
> kind of happens
>
> ELIZABETH: It is just something that kind of happens, yeah

Elizabeth also shared her beliefs on constructs measured by the Treatment of Native

Languages:

> ELIZABETH: When they speak Spanish I don't go and say you need to speak English, I don't say that. I support their learning, I support, you know, their learning because we have like when we say support multi cultural so whatever they bringing in I will support it and if that child come in and say such and such to me and I don't understand I get my TA to translate for me. I don't tell them to stop speaking Spanish. I encourage them how to speak their own language.
>
> INTERVIEWER: And does your TA speak to your children in Spanish?
>
> ELIZABETH: Yes and in English, too
>
> INTERVIEWER: And is Spanish used both for helping them learn things and mostly for social interactions?
>
> ELIZABETH: Um for me when I do circle I speak in English and just you know just to make sure the kids all the kids uh understand the same language but when they play I don't care what kinds of language they speak I don't really care yeah.

Elizabeth's statements are consistent with the finding of the Treatment of Native

Languages measure which indicated that children are not discouraged from speaking their

native language while in her classroom. When asked how much English she thought the

children needed to have to do well in have for them kindergarten and what her goals for

the dual language learners are, Elizabeth replied:

> ELIZABETH: I don't have, I think for them to be able to speak English, like as daily English um like José. I have for example I have a child in my classroom he is from, he is from last year and he is able to speak English really good so maybe I think that they at home I think they are watching TV they are learning English there and when they come here they are learning English, too, but most of my parents they speak Spanish, too, so I don't know if they speak English to their kids.
>
> INTERVIEWER: So a child like Jose do you think he will be ready for kindergarten in terms of his English language?
>
> ELIZABETH: Oh yes, in the second year. They know how to speak English already.

Elizabeth's comments, which were similar to those made by all of the teachers, indicated

the belief that children pick up language very quickly.

I also observed Elizabeth using some Spanish to communicate with the children in

her classroom on two occasions. She told the children to "sientate bien" (sit down) when

they were not paying attention in large group/circle time, and when several boys were

making guns out of blocks during free choice she said "no pistolas" (no guns). The boys

continued to play guns, and Elizabeth told them:

> ELIZABETH: No pistolas, no guns at school, do we play guns at school?
> Take it apart.

In both instances that Elizabeth used Spanish, it was to give directions and address

misbehavior. There was no discussion about why guns should not be in school, which

would have been more inline with CLASS indicators and the curricular guidelines. In

addition, this supported data from the Treatment of Native Languages, which found that

Spanish was used primarily to give directions to children.

A significant finding from the interview data was the role that the parents played

in the language use at Montgomery Head Start. All teachers stated that parents of

children in their classroom wanted their child(ren) to learn English while at school.

Claudia stated that the parents of the children in her class wanted their children to learn

English while in preschool and felt that they would maintain their Spanish because it was

spoken at home:

> CLAUDIA: Oh parents are very happy for them to lean English they said
> that they themselves ......so they are happy that they are learning English,
> obviously most parents want them to learn English

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they ever worry that they will lose
> their Spanish?

CLAUDIA: No, because um at the conferences that I have with them they say it doesn't matter to them they are not going to lose their Spanish because at home they will speak Spanish to them and at school they can learn English and speak English to them so obviously they are happy with it.

The notion that Spanish is for home and English is for school was also evident in

Pamela's comments:

PAMELA: We should definitely be speaking English here if they are getting it at home so that way they will understand it when they get really to go to kindergarten.

PAMELA: Well, a lot of them have said that they want them to learn English. A lot of our parents especially my families they want them to learn English so I feel that since Spanish is their home language their first language so I try to make sure that they get the English because you know they get the Spanish at home.

Elizabeth also spoke about parental goals for language learning:

ELIZABETH: Yeah, because I don't know I have been working with Hispanic parents and sometimes they approach me and they say "I want my you know child to speak English only" and I don't want my child to speak Spanish and I say you know it is better if they speak two languages…….

Elizabeth related the children and parents experiences and beliefs to her own experiences

coming to the United States and not speaking the language:

ELIZABETH: Like the basic learning like numbers, colors, and shapes it is very important to them because I notice that a lot of my parents don't speak English and I have the same experience that those parents do. I think that when they came to this county if you don't know how to speak English it is very hard for you to find a good job. So that is how I think they feel, too. They feel the same way I feel. They want their child to speak English so that way when they get older they speak English fluently and can find a good job.

It is important to note that Elizabeth's statements about the importance of having two

languages is based on future job prospects rather than a research based understanding of

the nature of dual language learning and how the development of the first language will aid in the development of a second language.

Carla's beliefs on the importance of supporting both languages were evident in her statement about how she explains her philosophy to parents. When asked about how the parent in her classroom felt about the techniques she used, Carla responded:

> CARLA: I think the parents are very comfortable because they see and I explain to them why you do it and I already have my two sons that are a very good example you know so they are excited. See, I think it… it is the way you present to parents.

Similar to the response given by Elizabeth, Carla stated that when she talks to her parents about language she reminds them that when there children are ready to go to college they will need to speak another language and will have an advantage if they already speak two languages. Similar to Elizabeth's comments about job prospects for individuals that speak two languages, Carla's comments about the university are motivating to parents who want to see their children be successful.

When juxtaposed with suggested practices for dual language learners in relationship to those called for by the Creative Curriculum, teacher beliefs and practices, with the exception of Carla, are not consistent with curricular guidelines. The curriculum cites the recommendations made in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and states "If you have children whose primary language is not English, you should know that a strong base in the first language promotes school achievement in a second language (p. 141). The curriculum further states that the goal should be to have children understand, speak, read and write in both their primary language and English, and teachers should support children's first language while helping

them acquire oral proficiency in English.   The teacher's espoused and enacted practices, with the exception of Carla, did not support the curricular goal of actively supporting the children's first language in the school setting. The enacted and espoused practices described in this section reflect the lack of attention paid at both the center and program level to the type of instruction used with dual language learners. My insider status proves useful in interpreting this data, because I know that as a program, we have not paid a great deal of attention to how to meet the needs of this population. Espinoza (2010) cited the importance of developing explicit language goals for dual language learners and a "shared vision and program wide consensus" on desired outcomes for these children. As an agency, the Head Start program under investigation has not done this, as evidenced by the variation in practices found at Montgomery Head Start. Adopting a macrosytem view, the issue of how to best support dual language learners is just beginning to be addressed at the federal level of Head Start. A dual language institute was held in 2008 to address how best to support young dual language learners, and webinars, and other sources of information, including the recently revised guidebook entitled Multicultural Principals for Head Start Programs Serving Children Birth to Five: Addressing Culture and Home Language in Head Start (OHS, 2010) programs, are now available, however it appears as if federal guidelines and recommendations have not made it to the level of teacher practices. In addition, this issue has only recently been addressed by the state of California, and the needs of dual language learners were not addressed by the state's developmental assessment tool, the Desired Results Developmental Profile, until it's most recent revision in June 2010.

Conclusion

The presentation of my quantitative data addressed my first three research questions, which were to describe teacher early literacy practices and the relationship between espoused and enacted practices. CLASS scores provided information on the overall quality of teacher child interactions and the presence or absence of teacher practices that are evidenced based and have shown to lead to positive outcomes for children at risk (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004). CLASS data also pointed to variation in classroom practices across classrooms and highlighted gaps between teacher practices and those called for by the curriculum in response to my third research question. This variation across classrooms and the juxtaposition of espoused and enacted early literacy practices will be described in more detail in the following chapter as I describe and discuss findings from the qualitative data. The Emerging Academics Snapshot also provided information about enacted teacher practices from the child's point of view, and together with the CLASS, point to the low levels of evidence based practices being implemented at Montgomery Head Start. In addition, these findings point to inconsistencies between teacher practices and those called for by the Creative Curriculum, which calls for a child directed and integrated approach to teaching, including the teaching of language and literacy skills.

In response to my research question regarding differences between enacted early literacy practices for dual language learner and English only students, the data suggested that both dual language and English only students are exposed to similar practices. When triangulated with qualitative data on teacher's beliefs about dual language learning, it

appeared as if teacher practices for dual language learners were based on their beliefs about the nature of dual language learning, rather than on the research, or the guidelines provided by the Creative Curriculum. These findings have important instructional and policy implications as the field of early childhood struggles with how to best support dual language learners, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven. My research clearly points to the fact that, in the case of Pamela, Claudia, and Elizabeth, the teachers were not implementing research based strategies for dual language learners and were instead relying on an immersion approach to language instruction. Espinoza (2008b) noted that although there is a common belief in our society in the usefulness of this approach, the efficacy of total English immersion from prekindergarten through third grade is "a myth". Espinoza clarified this by stating that "intentional teaching for ELL children begins with explicit language and literacy goals that identify and build on home language strengths while systematically introducing the children to all aspects of the English language" (Espinoza, 2010, p.103). This approach to dual language learning is also supported by the Creative Curriculum, highlighting inconsistencies between enacted practice at Montgomery Head Start and research and guidelines provided by the program curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE

Qualitative Results

My research assumes children and teachers engage in culturally situated activities, behaviors, and processes that affect early literacy development. This chapter will present my qualitative results in response to my research questions:

1. What are the espoused and enacted early literacy practices of teachers in a Head Start classroom?

    a. Do the early literacy practices enacted differ for dual language learner and English only students? How?

2. What is the relationship between espoused and enacted practices?

3. How do teacher practices relate to program practices called for by the program's curriculum?

4. What is the relationship between teacher's experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom?

A critical component of analyzing the data and answering my research questions was attention to the processes involved in human activity in the Head Start classrooms under investigation. In order to further explore these processes, this chapter will continue to examine the relationship between espoused and enacted practices and how they interact to create a pedagogical culture and specific ecological niche for preschoolers in a Head Start center.

This chapter will first present the results from document analysis of the 16 target children's portfolios. Portfolios were coded for the presence or absence of observations related to the language and literacy measures of the DRDP-R. Additionally, I examined

children's work samples for evidence of the type of language and literacy activities being provided to the children as work samples reflect the experiences teachers have planned for the children.

Interview and naturalistic observations will be presented next. To provide a framework for analyzing qualitative data on teacher practices observed during naturalistic observations, I drew upon the work of Dickinson and Tabors (2001) and their seminal, longitudinal study of home-school literacy practices to frame my results and analysis. When analyzing language and literacy practices in preschool settings, Dickinson and Tabors examined the following activity settings for evidence of language and literacy practices: book reading, language opportunities during mealtimes, large group/circle and free play times. Similarly, I organized my data on teacher practices into the same categories, with the exception of free play. Although free play provides an excellent opportunity for language and literacy learning, and is the focus of Dr. Wishard Guerra's study, I found it to be beyond the scope of this dissertation and its focus on teacher practices. Rather, I added a focus on small group activities to the discussion of teacher practices, as small group times are designed to be more teacher directed and thus provided a setting in which to highlight teacher practices.

Target Children's Portfolios

Document analysis of the target children's portfolios was done in order to gain insight into teacher's beliefs about children's language and literacy learning. Although there were individual differences in the portfolios, four major patterns emerged across all classrooms, and these patterns, when triangulated with other data sources, increased my understanding of both espoused and enacted language and literacy practices.

Two primary sources of information are included in children's portfolios: anecdotal observations and work samples. The portfolios were organized into two sections, each representing a time period for data collection: period one was from September until November, and period two was from November to February. Each section had each developmental measure followed by a space for teachers to write anecdotal observations related to that measure. Following the section of observations, there was a section containing samples of children's work which was supposed to have been selected because it represented children's skill level on one or more of the DRDP-R measures. An example from one of Elizabeth's portfolios reflects this process:

> 12/3/09 Today, A tried to copy letter E. He was able to copy some E's but not accurate. Please see work sample.

The programmatic requirement for portfolios is that teachers indicate which measure is being reflected by the work samples selected for inclusion in the portfolio. In many cases, however, the teachers put work samples in the portfolio and did not link them to a measure.

The first pattern to emerge from the document analysis was that the teachers rarely met the program requirement of having 2-3 observations per measure per observation period completed. In some instances, there were measures with no observation for either period, and there were many instances when there was only one observation per measure per period and no corresponding work sample. My insider status proved very helpful in assisting me in understanding what I found in the portfolios. Portfolios were introduced three years prior to the school year in which my data was collected as a tool to gather data to quantify developmental assessments. This increased

the teacher's workload tremendously, and my experience has been that teachers are

resistant and a bit resentful about having to do the portfolios. Elizabeth's comment

reflected this when she was asked about her portfolios:

> INTERVIEWER: Tell me about your portfolios
>
> ELIZABETH: (heavy sigh) my portfolios… (laughs)
>
> INTERVIEWER: I know
>
> ELIZABETH: I am on my second period. I am almost done I think I have four more to go. Yeah, on my second period.
>
> INTERVIEWER: It is hard for you guys huh?
>
> ELIZABETH: Uh, yeah kinda because it is hard to find, to, you know find the time to sit down and do it. So, you know, when we have short of staff, um, I have to go in and fill in.
>
> INTERVIEWER: Right, cause you're the AM teacher.
>
> ELIZABETH: ...and sometimes you know we don't have time to do the portfolio.

Similarly, Claudia's comments when asked about the portfolio reflect the reasons why it

is difficult to get the portfolios completed:

> INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little bit about the DRDP-R and the portfolios and how they relate to what goes on in the classroom.
>
> CLAUDIA: Well, it is, whatever we do with them and um the photos or drawings or projects we file them into the portfolio. We try not to do as much because I know they want to take some home or sometimes we do twice the work for them so they can take it home because they ask for it later, you know- I want to take it home and sometimes it is hard for us to you know keep it with us because they want to take it home but um we try to get as much projects or work that they do so we can use in the portfolio and that way we can see the progress of each child.

While Claudia does mention that portfolios are used to "see the progress of each child" she did not relate the portfolios to what goes on in the classroom, which was what was asked for by the interview question.

Elizabeth's comments about the portfolios not only highlighted her frustration with them, but also reflected her misunderstanding of their purpose, something I have consistently seen with teachers I work with. According to the DRDP-R process, the assessment tool and portfolios are interdependent, and teachers cannot accurately rate children on a developmental measure without the data (which is found in the portfolio) to support each rating (emerging, developing, building and integrating). At the time when Elizabeth told me she had four more portfolios left to complete, I knew that the Head Start administrative office had already collected all of the DRDP-Rs from teachers, meaning that Elizabeth was completing observations in support of an assessment that had already been turned in for analysis. Elizabeth's comments reflect a common misunderstanding about portfolios and assessments: portfolios must be completed before assessments can be done rather than afterwards. This finding represented another example of the research to practice gap evident in other dat sources.

Interestingly, although the analysis of interview data indicated that Carla had the clearest understanding of how assessment is linked to planning and instruction, this understanding was not evident in her portfolios. A major goal of portfolio development is to obtain an individualized picture of children's developmental level, and Carla used generic observations for all of her children. For example, the same observation "child was able to look at a book properly, he asked questions about it and pretended to be reading" was used for all four target children. This observation was written to reflect the

children's understanding of concepts of print, yet her generic use of the same observation for four children told little about the children's mastery of this skill.

The review of the portfolios revealed that the teachers did not fully understand the critical role of portfolios in curriculum planning or assessment and that portfolios and the process that they represent were not understood or valued by teachers. This was also reconfirmed during the teacher interviews, as none of the teachers mentioned the use of the portfolios as a strategy used to assess children's school readiness or language and literacy skills. In my role as an administrator in the program, my focus continues to be increasing teacher's understanding of the critical role that portfolios play in the assessment of children's skills, the planning of the learning environment, and lesson plans. From a program perspective, it was clear that because of the absence of written observations, that the teachers were not being held accountable for their completion.

The second pattern to emerge from the portfolio review was the predominance of work samples related to the developmental measures on letter and word knowledge and emerging writing. All of the portfolios had teacher directed activities designed to help the children learn the letters of the alphabet that came from the readiness curriculum. Examples of these work samples related to letter and word knowledge included a block letter E predrawn by the teacher onto which the children had glued feathers, or a predrawn jelly jar that the children glued precut jelly beans onto. Another common practice that was highlighted by the portfolio review was the focus on teaching the children the letters of the alphabet and the letters in their names. All of the portfolios had work samples in which the teacher drew a letter, oftentimes capital and lower case, with

lines for the children to write their own letter. This was also done for the children's names and Figure 2 is an example of this type of activity:

J	_____	_____	_____	_____
o	_____	_____	_____	_____
s	_____	_____	_____	_____
e	_____	_____	_____	_____
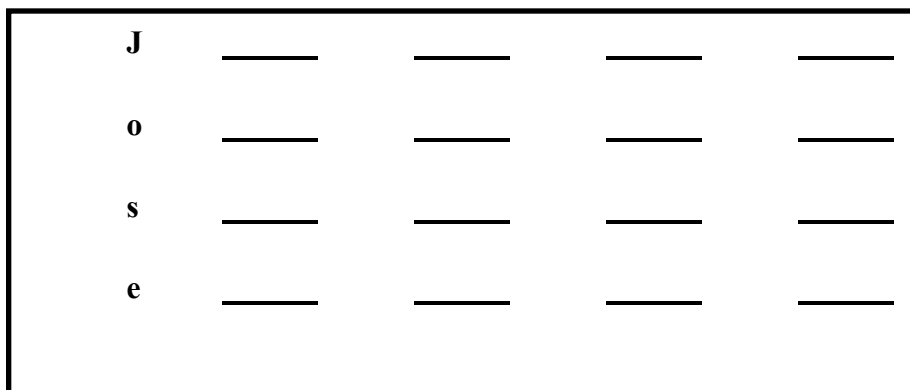
Figure 2: Sample Name Writing Activity

The teachers at Montgomery Head Start were clearly focused on teaching children the names of the letters and how to write their names, as evidenced by the predominance of this type of work sample in their portfolios. When triangulaged with other data sources, this finding not only helped me to describe teacher practices in response to my first research question, but was instrumental in increasing my understanding of the pedagogical culture at Montgomery Head Start. When asked about her favorite type of language activity to do with the children, Elizabeth responded by describing what she does to teach the children how to write their names:

> INTERVIEWER: And what about what is you're favorite type of language activity, language more generally
>
> ELIZABETH: For activities… I don't know if this is appropriate but we have the kids sit down and write their letters their alphabets, I did that with them and um drawing like um drawing pictures and then I dictate it.

Elizabeth's response to the interview question reflects her lack of understanding of the difference between language and literacy development and also reflects a very narrow focus on literacy being teaching the children to know the letters and write their names. The Creative Curriculum takes a much broader view of the complexity of language and literacy development and provides very clear guidelines related formal handwriting instruction. The curriculum does not recommend "structured drill and skill lessons on how to form letters" (p. 377). Instead, the curriculum advises teachers to demonstrate writing in an authentic way by using teachable moments and helping individual children as needed Teachers should model how writing can be used by writing thank you notes or lists, which help children learn not only how to form letters but the nature and purpose of writing. Curricular guidance suggests that authentic handwriting instruction should occur every day when teachers help children learn about the form of letters by providing alphabet materials including magnetic letters, alphabet puzzles, and books. In addition, teachers should talk about familiar letters in familiar words, such as their names, the names of their classmates, and other words of interest to the children. Work samples from portfolios indicated that teachers relied on teacher directed activities to teach children how to write and Elizabeth's comment that "I don't know if it is appropriate" reflects an ongoing conflict between teachers and program administrators who discourage this type of activity. Despite curricular guidelines that clearly prohibit activities such as tracing letters, teachers continue to do these activities and send them home with the children as homework. Pamela spoke about this when discussing homework.

> PAMELA: The sight words and what I have been doing is sending home
> little sheets like home every day not so much a packet but a sheet home so
> that the parent and child can be involved like you saw the one reading the

> books and then one day for the week the homework was to help them to tie their shoes so something as simple as that. And every day they are getting something. One day it may be just to write their names their first name so I just try to just get them ready in that aspect of sending something home with them so that way they will know because that way I know from my daughter's classroom.

Pamela's comments refer to sending formal handwriting activities home with the children, and she also discussed sending home sight words with the children, a strategy she learned from her daughter's kindergarten teacher. In an attempt to avoid teachers sending home worksheets to parents, which has been a common practice at the Head Start program under investigation, two years ago the program decided to implement the Creative Curriculum Learning Games (Sparling, 2007) as a way to send activities home with children that were in line with the program curriculum. Originally designed as part of the Abedecedarian Project (Ramey & Campell, 1984), the Learning Games are fun, developmentally appropriate activities that parents can do with their children to work on key school readiness skills. The Learning Games come with a checklist that program guidelines require to be placed at the beginning of the portfolio so teachers can check off when they have given the learning games to the parents. There is also a section on the lesson plan in which teachers are to document which learning game is being sent home that week. Based on my document review, it appeared as if none of the teachers were using these activities. Instead, they were continuing to rely on teacher directed activities, such as worksheets or letter tracing activities that followed more of an elementary school model. On some of the work samples found in the portfolios there was a due date written on the top of the page, or the word "tarea" (Spanish for homework), indicating that these activities had been sent home with the children. This supported the finding discussed

earlier regarding the teacher's primary focus on teaching children the letters and how to write their names.

The forth pattern to emerge from my review of the portfolios was the lack of attention paid by the teachers to the EL measures, with the exception of Elizabeth. In many cases, these measures had no observations written for them at all. Table 15 reports the number of observations completed by each teacher on the EL measures.

Table 15: Number of Observations Completed on EL Measures

Teacher	EL Measure	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4	
	Speaks English	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Pamela	Listens to and understands English	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Pamela	Speaks English	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	0
Elizabeth	Listens to and understands English	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
Elizabeth	Speaks English	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
Claudia	Listens to and understands English	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	0
Claudia	Speaks English	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Carla	Listens to and understands English	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Carla	Speaks English	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Interestingly, Carla, who held the strongest views about dual language learning, only completed two observations of the children's English language development. Because none of the teachers referred to portfolios in their discussion of how to meet the needs of dual language learners, data on espoused practices was not available to provide

insight into the teacher's beliefs about these measures. However, in a center that has 87% dual language learners, the lack of attention paid to these measures was striking.

Summary of Portfolio Review

The review of portfolios provided evidence of the narrow view of language and literacy held by the teachers, which was further supported by their difficulty in naming research based practices during interviews. Neuman (2006) pointed to the complexity of language and literacy development and stated that "comprehension of text, the purpose of reading, depends not on a small set of procedural skills but on a great infusion of knowledge— knowledge of words and their meanings, understanding of the concepts that connect them, and ability to think critically about what one reads. Serving as a foundation for literacy learning, such knowledge accelerates student achievement far more than recognizing the letter N does." (p. 29). While the Creative Curriculum supports this view, evidence from the children's portfolios indicate that the teachers in my study lacked the comprehensive view of literacy described by Neuman and instead focused narrowly on alphabet learning and teaching children to write their names as a measure of literacy development.

Video Elicited Interview

All four teachers selected book reading for the video taped lesson, supporting Dickinson's (2001) assertion that "when teachers explain how they foster early language and literature development, typically one of the first things they discuss is book reading" (p. 175). The following section will describe enacted and espoused early literacy practices that were captured during the video taped literacy lesson and interview. Information from the CCI will also be used to describe espoused practices. When

examining the video taped literacy lesson, I used the three categories of book reading

described by Dickinson to categorize the style used by each teacher. These book reading

styles are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16: Book Reading Styles

Co-Constructivist approach (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989, Dickinson and Smith, 1994)	Didactic Interactional (Dickinson and Smith, 1994)	Performance Oriented (Dickinson, 2001)
Book related to theme	Books used for direct instruction to teach specific information	Similar to co-constructivist because encourages reflection
Extended discussion before reading	Recall of specific facts encouraged	Story read in a dramatic manner, stopping occasionally for conversations
Frequent pauses to check understanding	No discussion of text in relation to children's lives	Pauses used to check understanding
Relation of text to children's experiences/emotions	Encourage responses that repeat literal information, not inferences	Questions require children to make connections between the book and their experiences, to reflect on specific aspects of the story, or to guide them through a reconstruction of the story or events.
Follows children's cues		
Development of topics leading to deeper understanding		
High cognitive demands	Low cognitive demands	

Pamela's Read Aloud

Pamela's employed the co-constructivist approach during her read a loud. She

selected a book related to her letter of the week and introduced the story to the children

and its connection to the O in Over. She also explained that a flannel board activity

would accompany her book reading:

> PAMELA: Now we are getting ready to start our reading. I have a story
> for you called Over in the Meadow why do you thing I chose this book?
> What letter do you see?
>
> CHILDREN: O
>
> PAMELA: O very good. That's one of the letters that we did we had the
> letter of the week, the letter O this week O (draws it out when she says it).
> With your finger make the letter O
>
> CHILDREN: It is so easy
>
> PAMELA: It is easy because it looks like what?
>
> CHILDREN: A circle
>
> PAMELA: A circle. Over in the Meadow it represents numbers, it has
> numbers so when I read the page, I am going to put on the board a little
> person and this is going to represent friends these are going to be friends
> today and I am going to put them on the board and then we are going to
> count them.

When asked why she selected this book during the video elicited interview, Pamela stated

that:

> PAMELA: Well, I tried to keep it in line with the lesson plan that I had for
> that week which was we were talking about from RC the letter O and we
> were talking about counting also with the number 9. And so I chose the
> book Over in the Meadow because I felt I could actually not only present
> that lesson but present it in a way that it would involve the flannel story,
> too, so they could count friends. They were doing the counting friends so
> they could kind of get the concept of socializing with their friends and
> counting and sharing and stuff like that so that is basically why I chose
> that particular lesson.

Pamela also discussed the use of flannel board stories as a language tool and her selection

of a flannel board story for the video taped lesson reflected consistency between her

espoused and enacted practices:

> INTERVIEWER: What about thinking more broadly about a language
> activity or communication activity something that you really love doing
> with the children that helps support their language?
>
> PAMELA: Um, I'll have maybe like if we are doing a flannel story they
> can actually get involved in it and get involved in it or talk about it or a
> finger play…that they can actually sing or participate in it we do that a lot.
> I don't have just one favorite but all of this I just enjoy you know in any
> type of activity like that it is OK.

Following the introduction of the book and flannel board story, Pamela began reading,

pausing on the title page to ask the children a question.

> PAMELA: Over in the meadow….. what color is this?
>
> CHILDREN: Green
>
> PAMELA: Why do you think they chose that color green for this
> particular page?
>
> CHILDREN: Says go for the car! Ms Pamela! Like on a tree
>
> PAMELA: Like a tree so that is maybe why they chose that color. Could
> it be that the grass in the meadow is green?
>
> CHILD: Yeah
>
> PAMELA: Yes, that is probably why they chose that.

This exchange reflected the co-constructivist style of joint reflection that pushes the

children towards a deeper understanding. Rather than simply asking the children to name

the color as a teacher utilizing the didactic interactional style would, Pamela encouraged

the children to make the connection between the color green and the green trees in the

meadow. In addition, she let the children come up with the answer "trees" and then

extended their thinking by making the connection to the green grass in the meadow. It is important to note that although this technique requires children to make a connection, the final answer was given by Pamela rather than children coming up with the connection to the grass on their own. This lack of attention to extending children's thinking provided additional evidence supporting Pamela's mid range score in the instructional support domain of the CLASS, which would require more turn taking and brainstorming to result in a high score. When asked during the video elicited interview if she knew in advance what questions she would ask, Pamela responded:

> PAMELA: (laughing) No, just whatever comes to mind
>
> INTERVIEWER: Just whatever?
>
> PAMELA: Whatever comes (laughing)
>
> INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but you have a goal, right, like you said, to teach the concepts?
>
> PAMELA: Right, right So I kinda know from the lesson, from the lesson plan, if I am going to talk about or if I am going to read a particular book that day and then I know what I am kind of going to talk about like Over in the Meadow it has the numbers and it talks about the animals and stuff like that, too, so I kind of know that that is what I am going to be talking about.

Pamela's response reflected the delicate balance between following a pre-planned lesson and the need to respond to children's cues in an authentic way and highlighted the concerns over the use of scripted curricula discussed in Chapter Two.

Pamela continued to read, and missed a very important opportunity to teach the children about the connection between the letter O and the sound that it makes when a child called out:

TONY: Oh Ms. Pamela! You can say O, when you say O, when you say O, teacher that means it is the letter O in it!

TONY: Very good, OK I am getting ready to read

Tony was a very bright and precocious child, who the teachers referred to as the "Big Word" boy because of his large and complex vocabulary. Pamela did not pick up on Tony's excitement or notice his very important discovery: that the sound the letter O makes is the same as its name. Pamela missed this opportunity to draw attention to the connection that he made and share it with the rest of the class. When reviewing this section of the tape during the video elicited interview, I asked Pamela:

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about that, what did you think about that, what Tony said?

PAMELA: What did he say again?

INTERVIEWER: He said you could day O like over

PAMELS: you could say O?

INTERVIEWER: Let's look at it again.

When I replayed the video of Tony's comment, Pamela did not notice the connection that Tony made, but instead continued to watch the video.

Pamela continued reading and when it was time to put the first flannel board friend on the board she paused and asked the children:

PAMELA: So we are going to put how many on here?

CHILDREN: One

PAMELA: What color is it?

CHILDREN: Orange

PAMELA: Do you think it is a boy or a girl…

At this point the children engaged in a conversation among themselves about whether or not the flannel board piece looked like a girl or a boy, reflecting the co-constructivist strategy of encouraging connections to the children's lives and experiences; to preschoolers, being a boy or a girl is a very important part of their developing self awareness and self identity. Pamela was able to reorient the children to the book following this discussion, which reflects her ability to manage classroom behavior, cited by Dickinson (2003) as a key feature of effective read alouds.

As she continued to read, Pamela continued to ask children questions related to the numbers, asking them to count and name the colors:

> PAMELA: I need you to have a seat, Tony, sit right here, crisscross on your bottom. Now we are going to count them we have one and one how many does that make?
>
> CHILDREN: Two
>
> PAMELA: Two, that's right. And what colors do you see on this page?
>
> CHILDREN: Green orange, blue (children shouting out)
>
> PAMELA: What about the water, what is that color?
>
> CHILDREN: Blue

This strategy of asking children to answer closed ended questions is more reflective of the didactic interactional style, again reflected in Pamela's mid range score on the instructional support domain of the CLASS. By February, the time that data collection took place, children, particularly the ones that are going to kindergarten, are ready for questions that require higher levels of cognition and require teaching strategies such as analysis, reasoning and brainstorming called for by the CLASS. Pamela continued to read, and paused when she got to a page about owls.

PAMELA: What are these?

CHILDREN: Owls

PAMELA: Owls, Where else have you heard that letter? Owl has a letter o………..

CHILDREN: Octopus

PAMELA: And octopus and……..

TONY: Ms. Pamela, you can see an owl in the night

PAMELA: Oh! Owls do come out at night and so now we have how many?

In this exchange, Pamela stayed with the topic for several turns to ensure that children make the connection between the letter O and their earlier discussion of the letter and words that start with O. The discussion about counting and colors continued, as Pamela continued with the flannel board portion of the story. Pamela asked the children again if they thought that the flannel board character was a boy or a girl, which led to a discussion of how many boys and girls were present in the classroom:

PAMELA: Girl, it could be a girl, there is girls in here how many girls are in here?

CHILD: 7

CHILD: no there is only 5

Several of the children discussed this question amongst themselves, and although they never arrived at a final answer about how many boys and girls were present, Pamela allowed the children to discuss this as a group and was able to redirect their attention back to the book, which reflected her high score on the regard for student perspective dimension of the CLASS.

As she continued to read, Pamela paused to discuss and explain a rare word to the children when it appeared in the text:

>PAMELA: How do you gnaw on something? (She made a gnawing motion with her mouth). Rats are gnawing, what are they gnawing on? What is this? (pointing to the corn)
>
>CHILDREN: Corn!
>
>PAMELA: If you gnaw on something what do you think they are doing?
>
>CHILDREN: Eating corn!
>
>PAMELA: They are eating
>
>CHILDREN: With their mouths
>
>PAMELA: Their mouths are eating and how many are these going to make four?

During the video elicited interview, I asked Pamela about this exchange:

>INTERVIEWER: I noticed that when you were reading the story there is a part where you stop and one of the words was gnaw.
>
>PAMELA: What? Gnaw?
>
>INTERVIEWER: So you stopped and talked about the word. Why do you think you did that?
>
>PAMELA: Anything that is big or different I try to explain to them what it means so that they have an awareness of what the word means so they have…..
>
>INTERVIEWER: Right, there was that word and there was another word and it was nice because you stopped and you really focused on the word. You were gnawing on the corn I think
>
>PAMELA: Oh gnawing on the corn …. just to have them know to gnaw on something. Tony has big words (laughing) you should hear his words. Some big words, his words are so big.

This was the first of several times that I saw a Pamela draw the children's attention to a

rare word and discuss the word with the children. In this instance, Pamela used effective

questioning to help the children come to their own discovery about what the word gnaw

meant and scaffolded the children's understanding when she used her mouth to replicate

the action of gnawing. Dickinson (2001) defined a rare word as a word that may be new

to preschoolers and stated that exposure to rare words help children develop vocabulary

knowledge, a key component of language and literacy development.

In keeping with the co-constructivist style, Pamela's reading was very animated

and at times dramatic, as illustrated by her making the sound of buzzing when she got to

a part of the book about bees. She also appealed to the children's emotions to keep them

interested, when she asked:

PAMELA: Are bees friendly or are they a little bit scary?

CHILDREN: Scary, they will sting you

PAMELA: They will sting

When she got to a page about crows that caw, Pamela emphasized the word caw with her

voice and the children begin to caw:

PAMELA: Caw, caw when you hear a crow cawing what do you think
they are saying?

CHILD: They are saying that someone is in trouble!

This is another instance of Pamela acknowledging a rare word and, although she draws

the children's attention to it and checks for understanding, this is a limited exchange and

the meaning of the word was most likely lost on the dual language learners.

When Pamela got to a page about frogs, she capitalized on the children's

excitement (they began making sounds like a frog) by leading them on an extended

discussion about frogs and where they live.

CHILDREN: Gribbit

PAMELA: What are these called?

CHILDREN: Frogs, they jump

PAMELA: What is a place that you would see frogs?

CHILD: At the river

PAMELA: Where else?

CHILD: The bottom of the ocean

CHILD: To the zoo

PAMELA: You may see frogs at the zoo

CHILD: In the water

PAMELA: You may see them in the water. OK Janine, Rebecca and
Kayla what number are we at? Number….what number are we at?

CHILDREN: 7!

At this point, Pamela addressed the girls in the group to refocus them on the story, as it

had mostly been the boys speaking during the discussion of where frogs live. It is

important to note that Pamela had several children, including Tony, who were very vocal

during the read aloud, and their contributions to the discussion kept conversations going

and took the collective thinking to a higher level. In keeping with the bi-directional and

process oriented nature of Brofenbrenner (1979) and Rogoff's (2003) models, it is

important to recognize the influence that the children have on teacher practices.

As Pamela continued to read, she came upon another word and asked the children:

PAMELA: How do you bask? Maybe like this (Pamela sticks out her
tongue and pretends to bask in the sun like a lizard).

While Pamela drew attention to the rare word, she failed to elaborate on it in sufficient

detail to ensure that the children, especially the dual language learners, understand the

meaning of the word. When Pamela turned to a page about ducks, she related the

mommy duck and her babies to the children's own experiences, another feature of the co-

constructivist approach:

> PAMELA: What did the duck say?
>
> CHILDREN: quack, quack, quack (the children all start quacking)
>
> PAMELA: This is who in the front? The mommy? So this means when you are with your mommy you need to be close by your mommy why do you think these ducks are close by their mommy? Because they don't want to lose their mom and the mommy doesn't want to lose her duck (answers for them)
>
> PAMELA: Where do you think the ducks are going?
>
> CHILD: Following their mom
>
> CHILD: Going home
>
> PAMELA: Are they following mommy? Because you have to stay close by mommy it is important that you stay close by mommy
>
> CHILD: My mom was walking fast, I couldn't catch up
>
> PAMELA: Your mommy was walking fast (Pamela laughs at the child's remark)

With this exchange, Pamela helped the children use their own experiences and emotional

reactions to understand the story. This technique highlighted Pamela's practice of talking

with children about their lives, which will be illustrated throughout the description of

each activity setting. This practice was discussed in the video elicited interview when

Pamela spoke about her conversations with the children:

> PAMELA: They all have so much that they want to share.
>
> INTERVIEWER: So when they want to share with you Pamela, tell me a little about that.
>
> PAMELA: When they want to share just anything I let them share I let them share, I listen, I let them share, and we talk about it and they do it a lot, they do it every day

INTERVIEWER: I went to Walmart......(laughing)

PAMELA: Everything from my mama said the car is broken you know anything, I listen but then if I want to like ask them questions about it to you know get them more involved with it........I'll do that also.

On several occasions, I observed Pamela talking with the children about what was going on in their lives, including a lengthy conversation with the group about a child whose grandmother's car was broken.

The next exchange is typified Pamela's child directed teaching style as she followed the children's lead when Tony remarked that the ducks on the page were similar to a familiar song:

TONY: Ms Pamela! "Like the song about the five little ducks!
Pamela began singing "five little ducks went out one day", and the children quickly joined in. The group sang several verses of the song, clearly enjoying the moment and the connection to a favorite song. This exchange also reflected the importance of spontaneity in early childhood education, as teachers can never predict what children will say or what opportunities for teaching and learning will be presented, which has been presented as a limitation of scripted curricula (Hasset, 2008).

When Pamela and the children were finished singing, Pamela continued reading and paused when she got to a picture of a beaver and his dam:

PAMELA: Does it look dark in there?

CHILDREN: Yeah

PAMELA: Where could this be like?

CHILD: Sticks

PAMELA: In a forest or where would this place be?

CHILD: The zoo

PAMELA: Where would you see a beaver?

CHILD: To the zoo

CHILDREN: I can't see, I can't see, too

At this point the children begin to lose attention and Pamela redirects their attention to the counting of the animals. Although the children never arrive at the correct answer about where you would see a beaver, Pamela read their cues and noticed that the children's attention to the story was waning. Pamela concluded the read aloud by counting the 10 beavers and the 10 children that have been placed on the flannel board. In this instance, Pamela effectively refocused the children to the theme of the flannel activity and book, which is counting, again highlighting the role of classroom management in the read aloud experience.

During the CCI and the video elicited interview, Pamela spoke about how she used books in the classroom and the value she places on them. She stated that she encouraged her children to bring books from home to share with the class and that she will read whatever book the children bring in. This espoused practice was evidenced by the fact that several of the children brought books to share on sharing day, which will be described later in this chapter. When asked what her favorite literacy activity is to do with the children, Pamela replied:

PAMELA: Oh, gosh, well I have quite a few of them I don't have one favorite in particular but a lot of them I enjoy, I like reading

INTERVIEWER: Pick one or two

PAMELA: Well, I like reading to them. I like having them to ask me to read a book. I used to sometimes I still do it I have the kids just bring a book in and I read it, bring your favorite book in and they were doing it all

the time and they would read the book it would be like story hour and whoever would bring their book we would read it. But I like reading to them, I like reading period, and I like to say you can read to me that would be like the activity that I like and I enjoy.

INTERVIEWER: So reading to them and having them read to you?

PAMELA: Having them read or look at the pictures or doing flannel stories as well doing flannel stories is another one that I enjoy.

Pamela also spoke about how she encouraged the parents of children in her classroom to read to the children, and this practice was consistent with her statements regarding her belief in the value of books and the role of parent involvement:

PAMELA: Um, the basic, I think the basic learning as far as like as English goes, reading and definitely getting into books and trying to promote reading to your kids just like a couple days ago we sent out the Dr Seuss hat that said on the hat read me three books and we try to get the parents into things or reading to their kids or to have the kids read to them or open a book and show them the pictures stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Are the parents receptive to that?

PAMELA: Yeah, yeah, the thing is we sent it home but not all the time we can't really do all but some bring it back we sent it home some bring it back some don't but they like the idea a lot of them explained to us that they did like the idea, reading, I try to encourage reading 20 minutes a day it doesn't mean you read just open the book and look at the pictures, magazines, let you child show you pictures.

Pamela's co-constuctivist style of reading was consistent with her CLASS scores and with her espoused beliefs about the importance of conversations in the classroom. When considering the dual language learners, however, although Pamela provided a rich language environment during this read aloud, the dual language learners were not able to fully participate in the higher level conversations.

Carla's Read Aloud

Carla's style of book reading also reflected the co-constructivist style. Carla also used some of the strategies of the performance oriented style in that she was very dramatic and used her voice and body to convey excitement. Carla discussed this technique, along with other intentional strategies for book reading in her video elicited interview:

> CARLA: Well, first thing, obviously at the beginning of the year you try to show the children the name of the book, how to handle books, how to take care of books, because this is very important you know, that books are precious...... so you need to teach them that it is something very, very important for them to take care of and also who the author is, how to flip the pages and then I go over with my fingers you know to like read the title and who the author is so that way they kind of start understanding what print means and all of that so um those are the basics and just make it very, very exciting when you read the book, making faces (laughter)
>
> INTERVIEWER: You are very good at that
>
> CARLA: Tone of voice and stuff like that so to draw their attention

Earlier in the data collection period, I had observed a group of boys in Carla's classroom reading the book David Gets in Trouble by David Shannon. My observation took place during a transition period, while the girls were being taken to the bathroom and the boys remained in the big classroom to wait their turn to use the rest room. Carla and an assistant teacher used this time as an opportunity to read to the children and have the children look at books on their own. Several of the boys looked at David Gets in Trouble and pretended to be the characters in the story. Following my observation of this activity, I shared with Carla how much I enjoyed observing her children read the book and what a wonderful and engaging language and literacy experience it was for the children. Based on my observation, it was evident that the boys, all of whom were dual language learners,

had a great deal of experience with, and love for, this book. Perhaps not surprisingly,

Carla chose to recreate this experience when I came to video tape her literacy lesson and

had selected a child in advance to take on the persona of David. I found out later that the

child that she selected did not want to participate on the day that I came, but Carla

selected another child so effortlessly that I was unaware that this was the case,

highlighting the importance of classroom management in the preschool classroom. When

asked why she selected this activity for me to videotape, Carla replied:

> CARLA: I selected that because that is one of the favorite books for my
> children, you know, ever since the year started and I started reading the
> book, you know they all want to be David and they take turns to be David,
> so I thought that was a very good example cause the kids chose it
> (laughing).

In keeping with her espoused views on dual language development and the data from the

Academic Snapshot and Treatment of Native Languages, Carla used both Spanish and

English during her read aloud and the children used a very fluid mix of Spanish and

English to answer Carla's questions and make comments about the book. Carla's style of

reading was very dramatic and engaging as she frequently changed the tone and pitch of

her voice and used hand and body movements to exaggerate and draw attention to her

words and the actions in the book.

> CARLA: All right, good morning, amigos, buenas dias, we are going to
> read the book David Gets in Trouble, by David Shannon. Okay, who
> wants to be David today? You raise your hand, how about Rosita can be
> David today? It is called David Gets in Trouble by David Shannon.

The children were very excited and were talking to each other and to Carla, telling her

that they wanted to be David, or another character in the book. Carla responded to their

comments and restated that Rosita would be David:

> CARLA: You can do it tomorrow; yes you can all be David. Oh you want to be the mean teacher, the maestra mal (bad teacher)? Ok so today instead of David it is going to be Rosita gets in Trouble, by David Shannon.

As she read the title and the author of the story, she ran her fingers under the words in the title and said "Rosita Gets in Trouble," which was consistent with one of the strategies she described above. This orientation to the concepts of print reflected an intentional practice I observed on several other occasions while in her classroom. Carla got a very worried look on her face as she read:

> CARLA: I didn't mean to do that, said Rosita.

Carla paused and asked Rosita:

> CARLA: What were you doing in there Rosita?

> CHILDREN: Skating!

> CARLA: Skating, you were skating where?

> CARLA: In the house!

Throughout the entire book reading, the children shouted out answers and ideas in both Spanish and English and were very active participants in the read a loud.

> CARLA: So we are supposed to ride the skateboard outside, not inside the house. And what is Rosita missing here?

> CHILDREN: Helmet!

> CARLA: A helmet. We are not supposed to ride a skateboard without a helmet!

> CHILD: Or a bike

> CARLA: Or a bike, that is right we are not supposed to ride a bike without a helmet

> CHILD: Or a scooter

> CARLA: Or a scooter

There is a great deal of peer talk here, and Carla noticed that a little girl is trying to get

her attention:

>   CARLA: Jessica what are you saying, mami?

>   JESSICA: Yo tengo una bicycleta aya (I have a bicycle over there)

>   CARLA: Oh, tu tienes una bicycleta? (Oh, you have a bicycle?) So you
>   need to wear a helmet with the bikes?

All of the children agreed, that yes, she needs to wear a helmet with her bike, which

prompted Juan to say:

>   JUAN: I have a bike and a skateboard and I don't wear a helmet

>   CARLA: No, you need a helmet, Even if you didn't fall….. yet you never
>   know

The children discussed this, primarily in Spanish, and Carla responded:

>   CARLA: Si, but if you fall and you have a helmet that's good and you fall
>   it protects your head (touches her head) it is good.

This is an example of an extended exchange involving many of the children in the group.

It lasted for 5 turns and reflects the co-constructivist approach of developing topics

leading to deeper understanding. The group talked a little more about helmets and then

Carla continued reading:

>   CARLA: It was an accident said Rosita. What did you do this time
>   Rosita? (Carla bent down to look at Rosita)

>   ROSITA: inaudibe

>   CARLA: You broke a window?

>   CHILD: And a plant

>   CARLA: (pointing to the plant) And what happened to the plant?

>   CHILD: She dropped it

CARLA: You dropped it! Do you think you mommy is going to be happy or sad?

CHILD: Mad

CARLA: How is your mommy going to be?

CHILD: Mad

CARLA: Mad? You think your mommy is going to be mad? Why is she going to be mad?

CHILD: She broke a window

CARLA: I am asking Rosita, why your mommy is going to be mad, Rosita?

ROSITA: because………..

CARLA: Because you broke a window? Oh wow

Carla turned the page and the picture was of David making a face because he does not want to eat eggs. Carla read:

CARLA: Do I have to eat that said Rosita?

The children begin talking in English and Spanish about the eggs and the picture and Carla asked:

CARLA: What happened, why do you have that face Rosita?

CHILD: She don't want to eat her eggs

CARLA: What happened, Rosita? Why you don't want to eat it? You don't like it?

CHILD: I like eggs

CARLA: You do like eggs

CHILD: Yo también (Me, too)

CARLA: You guys like eggs? Eggs are good for you.

This exchange, along with the discussion of helmets, reflects the co-constructivist strategy of relating the text to children's experiences and emotions. The children got very excited when Carla turned to the next page, which is of David running down the street with no clothes on. Carla put her hand to her head incredulously and asked:

> CARLA: What did you forget to bring to school Rosita?
>
> CHILDREN: Pants!
>
> CARLA: You forgot your pants? And who is bringing your pants? Who is running with your pants?
>
> CHILDREN: Mom!
>
> CARLA: Que le traje los pantalones? Who is bringing your pants?
>
> CARLA: Your mom is bringing the pants? And who are laughing?
>
> CHILD: El amigo y la amiga (the boy and the girl)
>
> CARLA: The boy and the girl, and why are they laughing?
>
> CHILD: No trajo pantalones (he didn't bring his pants)
>
> CARLA: Rosita forgot to wear pants to school so mommy is running and chasing her (Carla makes movements like she is running) so that she doesn't get to school without the pants.

Carla turned to the next page and read:

> CARLA: My dog ate my homework. That's what she said. Are we going to be doing that? Did you bring your homework Rosita? Where is your homework?
>
> CHILD: The dog ate it
>
> CARLA: The dog ate it? How do you know the dog ate it?
>
> CHILD: Look at the dog (the dog is in the picture looking in the window)
>
> CARLA: Oh, the dog came to school, he is showing half of the homework through the window?
>
> CHILD: Yeah

   CARLA: Wow

Carla's question of "how do you know?" extended the children's thinking and Carla

waited for the children to give her the answer, rather than answering it for them. Carla

turned the page and there was a picture of David (Rosita) getting a class picture taken.

One of the children commented that she now has her pants on, showing his understanding

of the story. Carla asked Rosita:

   CARLA: What are you doing?

   CHILD: Making silly faces

   CARLA: Making silly faces, you are making silly faces, mami, so the
   picture is not going to look good? She is messing it up!

   On the next page David is eating dog food:

   CARLA: Oh uh, what are you eating?

   CHILD: Dog food

   CARLA: Why are you eating dog food?

   CHILD: We like it

   CARLA: Oh, Jessica thinks she is eating the dog food because the dog ate
   her homework. The dog ate the homework, is that right, Jessica?

Jessica's comment shows her competency as she makes the connection between Rosita

eating the dog food and the dog retaliating by eating her homework. This highlights my

assertion that children are much more capable than the one word, close ended questions

about colors commonly used by teachers. Because Carla uses Spanish in her instruction,

she allowed the Spanish speaking children to participate in the conversations about the

book, an opportunity not available in the other classrooms. The children in Carla's

classroom engaged in code switching throughout the read aloud, allowing them to practice their language skills in a safe environment.

When Carla got to the page where David is pulling the cat's tail, the children called out, in keeping with Carla's strategy that the children are characters in the story, which the cat belongs to them. Carla responded to one of the children:

CARLA: That is your kitty? What is your kitty's name, Jasmine?

CHILD: y el perro es mió (and the dog is mine)

CARLA: The dog is yours?

CARLA: Rosita why are you pulling the cats tail? Why were you doing that?

All of the children begin answering her and discussing this, and are primarily speaking in Spanish. The fact that the children speak in Spanish when engaging in peer talk is supported by the data on Carla's academic snapshot, which indicated that when engaged in peer talk, the children spoke Spanish 66% percent of the time.

As Carla turned the page she put her hand to her head to exaggerate the meaning of the words when David drops the juice on the floor. All of the children are talking, making this section of the video hard to transcribe because there was so much language taking place, with Carla asking the children how the mommy will feel about the spilled juice (mad) and what they can do about it (clean it up). This conversation flowed fluidly between English and Spanish, and the book concluded when the mommy says "I love you Rosita". The children clapped and Carla promised that she would read the book again tomorrow and that somebody else could be David.

Although Carla did not speak specifically about read alouds during her interviews (other that the quote given above) she did talk about the importance of providing language opportunities to children, which the read aloud described above clearly did. When describing the importance of language, Carla stated:

> CARLA: Ok, their language, well when we read books we learn new vocabulary. You know, we let them ask questions.
>
> INTERVIEWER: What do you mean? Can you tell me more about that? About letting them ask questions?
>
> CARLA: We do like open-ended questions, right. And since some of the kids are like 3 years old some are 5. So, the five year olds we give them an opportunity to all the kids to speak and do (sic) therapy and stuff like that. So the younger ones are absorbing you know, all this information. And we ask open-ended questions during circle time and let them talk about the current topics. I also you, if I notice the child is telling me something, "Oh, at the zoo I saw this..." or whatever, then I try to increase their vocabulary by saying "Oh, ok you saw this at the zoo! Was it large? Was it this way?" or whatever. So to enrich it.

Carla's use of open ended questions was evident throughout her read aloud and she purposefully used questioning to expand children's thinking, as in the exchange in which Carla and the children discussed helmets. The video taped lesson also reflected Carla's beliefs about the importance of supporting children's home language in the classroom and was consistent with read aloud techniques described in the Creative Curriculum, which encourages teachers to create excitement about books and reading through interactive read alouds.

Elizabeth's Read Aloud

It was extremely windy on the day that I observed Elizabeth's literacy lesson. I was very happy to see that she had selected the book Gilberto and the Wind to read to the children, because it reflected something real that was going on that the children,

particularly the dual language learners, could relate to. Elizabeth had a small group of

children gather around her and she introduced the book to them by stating:

> ELIZABETH: Okay, I am going to show you guys a book. This is the
> book that I brought for you guys it is called <u>Gilberto and the Wind</u>, this is
> Gilberto (Elizabeth pointed to the child on the cover). This is Gilberto
> right here and you know the lady that wrote the book is called Marie Ets.

When asked why she selected this activity for the video taped literacy lesson, Elizabeth

replied:

> ELIZABETH: The <u>Gilberto and the Wind</u>? I think that um the reason that
> I picked that book is because um this month is a windy month so I want
> the kids, I want to introduce the kids to wind and I want them to know that
> wind do, does exist, does exist, but you can't really see the wind but you
> can feel the wind and the wind blows everything...demonstrate what the
> wind can blow.

Elizabeth's read aloud was an example of the didactic interactional style of reading.

Reflecting this style of reading, Elizabeth used the book as a form of direct instruction to

teach the children a specific concept: that the wind blew things. This goal was evident

throughout the lesson, as Elizabeth repeatedly asked the children to name what was

blowing the objects in the book:

> ELIZABETH: Who tried to take the umbrella away from Gilberto?
>
> CHILD: The wind
>
> ELIZABETH: Who broke it?
>
> CHILD: The wind

Elizabeth's questions required a one word answer, the wind, and she accepted this as the

only right answer. When a child responded that "the air" moved the object, Elizabeth

corrected the child and missed an important opportunity for the children to make the

connection that the wind is air:

ELIZABETH: You see the balloons? (Elizabeth points to the balloon)
What carries the balloons to the top?

CHILD: The air

ELIZABETH: The wind

In addition to only accepting one right answer, Elizabeth frequently answered the

questions for the children:

ELIZABETH: Who says yoo hoo?

ELIZABETH: The wind. See he is getting on where? He is getting on top
of the gate so the wind can move it.

Elizabeth's questions required little analytical thinking or reasoning, and the low level

cognitive demands made during her questioning are reflective of the didactic interactional

style of reading. The children were attentive throughout the book reading, and Elizabeth

frequently paused and pointed to something that she wanted to draw the children's

attention to:

ELIZABETH: What is his name, who remembers his name?

CHIL: Gilberto

ELIZABETH: You see this he is a big boy how many kites he has?

CHILD: Two

ELIZABETH: Two

Elizabeth's misuse of the verb tense in the word has reflects her own status as an English

in the review of her written work in the portfolios. Consistent with the didactic

interactional style, Elizabeth's questioning encouraged responses that repeat literal

information rather than inferences.

At one point in the story it referred to a pinwheel, and Elizabeth pulled a pinwheel

out of her bag, and told the children that they would be making pinwheels at the end of

the story:

> ELIZABETH: Let me show you something. I went and got this it is called
> pinwheel. I am going to have you guys come one at a time and blow it can
> you do it?
>
> CHILD: Yeah
>
> ELIZABETH: What moves the pinwheel?
>
> CHILD: The wind

Elizabeth had all of the children come up and blow the pinwheel, and expanded a bit on

her explanation of the wind when she said:

> ELIZABETH: What moves the pinwheel?
>
> CHILD: The wind
>
> ELIZABETH: The wind, the air from your mouth.

Interestingly, when a child gave the answer "air" in response to Elizabeth's earlier

question about what carried the balloons, Elizabeth corrected the child by stating that it

was the wind that blew the balloon. The introduction of the pinwheel provided concrete,

hands on activity for all children, particularly dual language learners, and was consistent

with Elizabeth's espoused belief in the importance of showing dual language learners

concrete objects to support their language development. However, Elizabeth failed to use

questioning to encourage higher order thinking, which was consistent with her low

CLASS scores in the instructional support domain. Elizabeth asked about the colors of

the pinwheel, and the children answered these questions with little effort. The pinwheel

could have encouraged a deeper understanding of the wind, yet Elizabeth relied on

questions about the color of the pinwheel that were not challenging to the children.

Elizabeth had other materials available, including balloons and bubbles and told the

children that they could blow bubbles when they went outside.

When she was done with the story, Elizabeth brought out some pictures cut from

a magazine and told the children that she was going to show them some pictures of what

the wind can blow:

ELIZABETH: I have some pictures I want to show you guys what can the
wind blow.

She showed the children a picture of a guitar and said:

ELIZABETH: A guitar, the wind can blow a guitar, the wind can blow it.

She then showed a picture of candles and asked the children what they were:

CHILD: Fire

ELIZABETH: Candles, the wind can blow candles.

Rather than recognizing that the dual language learners may not know what candles are in

English and substitute fire, she corrected the children and quickly moved on to the next

picture, missing another opportunity to expand children's vocabulary and make

connections with what they already know. Elizabeth continued to show pictures of water,

trees, a horse, and a football and asked the children if the wind could blow these objects.

When she got to the football, Elizabeth said:

ELIZABETH: The wind can blow the football, can you say football?

CHILDREN: Football

The pictures Elizabeth showed the children had no real connection to the wind, including

dishwashing soap and a couch. Elizabeth asked the children if the wind can blow each of

the items, with the assumption that the wind blows everything. When the children

protested that no, the wind can't blow one of the objects, like a bed, Elizabeth did not

acknowledge their comment, but kept going with her assertion that the wind blows

everything.

The children showed their competency when Elizabeth showed them a picture of

a mouth and the children respond with:

CHILDREN: Teeth! Lipstick! Lips!

ELIZABETH: It is a mouth.

While the answers that the children gave were correct and reflected their competence in

English, Elizabeth ignored this and instead gave them the answer that she was looking

for, which is typical of the didactic interactional style. This type of teaching involves

conversations with low cognitive demands, little reflective conversation about the story

and explicit instructional goals are dominant. In addition, Elizabeth's questions required

little analytical thinking or reasoning.

When she finished showing the children the pictures, Elizabeth directed the

children to the table, where they made pinwheels using precut patterns that the children

colored and Elizabeth then attached to a straw.

CHILD: Teacher, we are going to go outside?

ELIZABETH: Yes, we are going outside and the wind will blow it.

During her interview Elizabeth stated that the reason she selected this activity for me to

videotape was that:

ELIZABETH: The Gilberto and the Wind? I think that um the reason that
I picked that book is because um this month is a windy month so I want
the kids, I want to introduce the kids to wind and I want them to know that
wind do, does exist, does exist, but you can't really see the wind but you
can feel the wind and the wind blows everything...demonstrate what the
wind can blow.

Elizabeth's questions during her read aloud required one word answer: the wind, which

was consistent with her stated goal-for the children to know that wind exists. It was very

difficult for Elizabeth to reflect on her practices, and I was unable to elicit any more

feedback from her regarding her book reading strategies or her goals when selecting

Gilberto and the Wind and the accompanying activities. When asked what her favorite

literacy activity to do with the children was, Elizabeth replied:

> ELIZABETH: Favorite type of literacy? I think reading books to the kids,
> singing songs, um, singing songs, reading books, um I like the rhyming
> words, I like to do that, yeah numbers and letters.

When prompted by the interviewer to discuss her practices related to helping the children

learn to read and write, Elizabeth struggled to answer the question posed by the CCI:

> ELIZABETH: I don't know about writing, I don't know about reading, I
> don't know if they will be able to read I heard that some kids they were
> like 5, 5 or I think 4 or 5 they know how to read already but I think their
> parent spend a lot of time teaching them that but here that one on one is
> impossible here so they're not going to be able to read but you know like
> I was saying just kind of sit with them and point the words to them um the
> rhyme, rhyming words, I have been teaching them the rhyming words like
> what rhymes with cat They know how to spell cat c-a-t and I ask what
> rhymes with that word. They say bat, hat, rat. They know how to do those.

From her response it appears as if Elizabeth thinks that the interviewer is expecting that

preschool children will be able to read. Elizabeth had a similar answer during the video

elicited interview:

> INTERVIEWER: Right, um, what about reading books, tell me about
> reading books, do you read books to the kids a lot?
>
> ELIZABETH: I do, I do but you know as far as the child reading the book
> back to you he really doesn't know the words but sometimes I teach them
> about rhyming you know rhyming words, like cat and hat things that
> rhyme that um as far as point to the word and read it, they don't know how
> yet but if you read them a book like several times then they will be able to
> memorize it when they see the pictures they will be able to memorize it,
> the story better that, you know, not by reading it though, just be

memorizing it you know and recite what you said to them they just......they can just make it up and just pretend that they know how to read.

Rather than articulating the role of emergency literacy skills, Elizabeth talked about how teachers do not have time to work with the children one on one as parents might at home. The time constraints and paperwork involved in being Head Start teacher were a common theme in Elizabeth's interviews and are reflected again in this passage. Elizabeth did speak about rhyming words and their importance, yet she was not observed using this strategy during any observations.

Claudia's Read Aloud

Claudia's style of book reading was classified as performance oriented (Dickinson, 2001). Claudia read the story in a dramatic manner and stopped occasionally to discuss the book with the children. Similar to the co-constructivist approach employed by Pamela and Carla, Claudia's conversations encouraged reflection. According to Dickinson (2003) the goal of teachers using the performance oriented approach is "to allow the words and pictures to create a story world with pauses inserted only to ensure that the children fully understood the story" (194). Unlike the performance oriented described by Dickinson, in which the majority of the discussion takes place after the story ended, Claudia asked questions throughout her read aloud. Her questions required children to make connections between the book and their experiences, to reflect on specific aspects of the story, and/or to guide them through a reconstruction of the story or events, all common features of the performance oriented approach.

Claudia let the children select which books to read, and had several available, all of which reflected her bug study. The children selected a book about a sleepy ladybug

that flew to different animals in an attempt to find a place to sleep. Claudia made a

connection to their study of bugs and asked the children to tell her the color of the

ladybug:

> CLAUDIA: So we are learning about bugs, so let's go over the lady bug,
> what color is the lady bug?

> CHILDREN: Red, red and black

Claudia pointed out the front of the book, paused and turned the book over and asked the

children.

> CLAUDIA: And this is the front of the book and this is the………

> CHILDREN: Flowers

The children said flowers because there was a picture of flowers on the back of the book,

but Claudia corrected them and says that it is the back of the book. Claudia's read aloud

was characterized by frequent pauses to ask questions or discuss an aspect of the book, as

exemplified during the following exchange:

> CLAUDIA: So here is the tiger, he walked by.

Claudia pointed to the tiger and allowed the child closest to her to point to the tiger while

she described what happened in the story:

> CLAUDIA: Look the ladybug is on his back now. The tiger likes to roar
> he is making a lot of noise, the ladybug can't sleep here. It is too noisy.
> The tiger likes to roar he was making a lot of noise……

Claudia used this technique again when she explained to the children why the lady bug

could not sleep on a kangaroo:

> CLAUDIA: See what the ladybug is doing? Because Kangaroos like to
> jump, the ladybug can't sleep in here, it is far too bouncy.

This would have been a good opportunity for Claudia to draw attention to the word

bouncy, but she continued to read, missing the opportunity to introduce or discuss a new

word. Because of the small group size, the children were free to participate and comment

on the book and all of the children were very engaged during Claudia's read aloud. For

example, a child pointed to picture of the crocodile at the bottom of the page and said

crocodile, and Claudia paused and pointed to where the ladybug was on the crocodile's

back:

CLAUDIA: Onto his back, actually.

In keeping with the performance oriented style of reading, Claudia paused to ask the

children a question about what was taking place in the book:

CLAUDIA: She says he moved too much, so who passes by?

CHILDREN: The elephant

CLAUDIA: There is the elephant, and, do you see the ladybug here,
where is he?

CHILD: Right on his nose

CLAUDIA: Right on his trunk, see it? Claudia shows the book to all the
children

CLAUDIA: Guess what the elephant did…….he sneezes

CHILD: Achoo

CHILD: Teacher, where is the lady bug?

CLAUDIA: So what happened to the ladybug?

CHILD: He went somewhere

CLAUDIA: (laughing) He went somewhere

CLAUDIA: The elephant sneezes how do you sneeze?

CHILD: Ach-oo

> CLAUDIA: So there is a lot of air from his nose.

The children were intently looking at the book to see where the ladybug is and Claudia commented:

> CLAUDIA: I don't see it. I will pass the book around so my friend can see.

Claudia showed the page to each of the children and then asked:

> CLAUDIA: So what happened to the ladybug?
>
> CHILDREN: She went somewhere, she flew away
>
> CLAUDIA: Remember the elephant sneezes, she sneezed so hard that she is all the way back to where she started (Claudia pointed to the ladybug).

After reading the first book, Claudia let the children select another book and they chose one about a caterpillar, which was read in the same style as she did the first book. At one point, Claudia drew the children's attention to a new word, fluffy:

> CLAUDIA: Fluffy do you know what fluffy is? Fluffy means he has a lot of hair

While reading about the caterpillar, Claudia related the caterpillar in the book to the caterpillar that they found outside and to the book <u>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</u>.

> CLAUDIA: You know they are always eating like the very hungry caterpillar book.

At the end of the book, Claudia asked the children questions to make sure that they understood that caterpillars turn into butterflies. This is a common approach in the performance oriented style of reading, as a characteristic of this style is for the teachers to guide the children through a reconstruction of the story or events.

When asked why she selected this activity for the video taped literacy lesson, Claudia replied:

CLAUDIA: Um because we are doing bugs.

INTERVIEWER: OK

CLAUDIA: So I liked to talk to them about bugs and stories about bugs.

Claudia clearly enjoyed herself while reading to the children, and she spoke about her

beliefs regarding the value of reading to the children:

> CLAUDIA: Everyday, we read to them everyday....there is always a
> different book for them to read for us to read to them......and often the kids
> ask for the same book so you know its, its ah something that is normal for
> them to read and read the same book to them and we don't mind doing it if
> they ask for it

> INTERVIEWER: Right

> CLAUDIA: As long as they sit down and listen which they do and if they
> are interested in the book they gonna sit and they will listen…if you read
> them a book and there is a lot of letters, which I don't like it I just kind of
> make up a story about that book try to read… and make up what the story
> says.....so they can you know at least focus and understand the
> book........but yeah they love having read to them.

She also discussed books when asked what type of literacy activity she does to get

children ready for school:

> CLAUDIA: Um, learn to like, um, reading a book, looking at a book um
> that's well that is very important that they, they like to write. Reading,
> looking at books, learning, knowing that by looking at books you gonna
> learn things.

With regards to book reading, Claudia's enacted practices were consistent with her

espoused practices and also those promoted by the Creative Curriculum, which

encourages reading throughout the day to promote a love of reading.

Summary of Book Reading Practices

A review of the video taped literacy lesson indicated considerable variability in

teacher practices. Consistent with other data sources, there were differences in the

language of the read aloud, with Carla and her children speaking equally in Spanish and English, and Elizabeth, Claudia, and Pamela's children being read to in English. The children in Carla, Pamela, and Claudia's classroom were engaged in the reading process and all three teachers were warm and responsive to the children and encouraged their involvement in the story. This is consistent with data from other sources, including scores on the emotional support domain of the CLASS and data from naturalistic observations that indicated that the teachers, with the exception of Elizabeth, enjoyed warm and responsive relationships with the children. The read alouds were an example of literacy instruction that was embedded within the context of relationships.

Large Group/Circle

Large group time, commonly referred to as circle time, is a staple of the preschool day. Large group time typically occurs at various times throughout the day, with most programs having an opening group time towards the beginning of the day. This opening group time is the focus of this section as it provides an ideal setting in which to describe enacted and espoused early language and literacy practices and the relationship between them. Throughout this section, these practices will also be juxtaposed with practices called for by the Creative Curriculum in response to my third research question. According to the Creative Curriculum, large group time has a very specific function, and is viewed as an opportunity for children to practice their communication skills and express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings and share the work they have been doing with the rest of the group.

In the Home School study of Language and Literacy Development, Dickinson (2001) discussed the various approaches to large/group circle time used by profile

teachers. While one of the teachers in his study used a short large group (12 minutes) to bring the group together, talk about the day, and plan for activities that would be done in interest areas, another profile teacher had a 40 minute group time during which she reviewed academic material in a didactic fashion. Dickinson noted that for both of these teachers, their practices during large group were tied to their beliefs about the nature of early learning. An examination of large group times in the four classrooms at Montgomery Head Start indicated that large group times were both similar and different in terms of enacted practices, and that these practices were related to teacher beliefs about their role as a teacher and the function of large group time.

Pamela's Large Group/Circle

Pamela's circle time lasted for 40 minutes, beginning at 8:30 AM and ending at 9:10 AM. She began by telling the children that it was time to clean up and transition to circle time, and the children and teachers sang a song to assist with this transition. When the children were settled in the circle, Pamela announced that it was Friday and asked if everyone remembered to bring something to share because Friday was sharing day. A child showed her what he had brought to share and Pamela asked him to please put it in his cubby and let him know that she would let him know when it was time to share. Pamela then reviewed the days of the week by noting that yesterday was Thursday and so today is Friday. Pamela then led the children in a song about the days of the week and when she finished she told the children:

PAMELA: Today blankets go home, it's the last day of school.

The use of a calendar and direct instruction around the days of the week is a common feature of many preschool classrooms. Pamela did not discuss the use of the calendar in

her interviews, but the use of a calendar will be discussed in greater detail in my

discussion of the relationship between teacher practices and the Creative Curriculum at

the end of this section.

Pamela then facilitated an activity in which she took attendance by showing the

children an apple with their name and picture on it. As each apple was presented to the

group, the children said who the child was, and then sang:

> CHILDREN: Frida is here today, Frida is here today, we're so happy,
> Frida is here today.

This song was repeated for all children in the group, who took their apple and put it on a

tree to indicate they were present. This activity provided opportunities for the dual

language learners to be involved in the activity through the use of a familiar song and a

consistent routine that provided the opportunity for repetition and reinforcement. It also

exposed all children to the letters in their names and in their friends' names, and to learn

that words are made of letters and are units of print.

The social emotional climate during large group reflected Pamela's high score on

this domain of the CLASS. Children were gathered around Pamela, and both of the

associate teachers had children in their laps. One of the associate teachers consistently

provided support to a child who was having difficulty transitioning from his mother.

Pamela was observed encouraging the children to use language to solve problems when

she told a child who had been hit:

> PAMELA: Please let him know how it made you feel.

Further support of Pamela's score of a 6 on the regard for student perspectives domain of

the CLASS was found by Pamela's allowing a child with an IEP to sit at table and not

join the group, reflecting flexibility and support of children's autonomy which are indicators in the regard for student perspectives dimension of the CLASS.

The primary focus of Pamela's large group time was a read aloud of a book by Dr. Seuss. Under the direction of the site supervisor, the center celebrated the week of Dr, Seuss' birthday and all teachers were observed reading books by Dr. Seuss and doing art activities related to his books during the week. Pamela introduced the read aloud to the children by stating:

> PAMELA: This was a special week because what did we talk about?
> Whose birthday was it?
>
> CHILDREN: Dr Seuss
>
> PAMELA: We sang happy birthday song on Tuesday; do you want to sing
> it again?

The children and teachers sang "Happy Birthday" and when they finished Pamela began reading Dr. Seuss ABC. Pamela was very animated during the read aloud as she asked the children incredulously:

> PAMELA: Have you guys ever seen a duck dog?

Similar to the style of reading described in her video taped lesson, Pamela involved the children in the book reading and there were many back and forth exchanges between the teacher and the children. For example, Pamela asked the children to repeat the part in the book about "go go goggles" exposing them to the letter g and the use of alliteration. Pamela also used open ended questions that encouraged the children to think:

> PAMELA: What do you do when you are itchy?
>
> CHILD: You go to the doctor and get a shot
>
> CHILD: Man you scratch yourself, sometimes you can rub

Pamela and the children laughed and enjoyed the silliness of the book together, and she frequently paused to draw the children's attention to specific letters and ask whose name began with the letter on the page. The children responded by shouting out their name or the names of their friends. The book provided opportunities to talk about the letters and connect them to children's experiences, and Pamela capitalized on this, as illustrated by the following examples:

PAMELA: Ketchup who has this letter? Kayla, Kenneth

PAMLEA: M, whose letter is this?

CHILD: Manuel

PAMELA: I almost forgot, was that our letter of the week?

PAMELA: That's a quackeroo? Rebecca has this letter.

PAMELA: Does anything else have the letter S?

CHILD: My mom's name starts with the letter S

PAMLEA: Your mom starts with S? What's your mom's name?

CHILD: Stephanie

PAMELA: Stephanie. Sharing has the letter S and we are going to share
in a little bit!

Pamela's style of book reading observed during large group was consistent with that observed during the video taped lesson. Pamela involved the children in the read aloud and paused frequently to ask questions and check for understanding and connect the book to something meaningful in the children's lives. Pamela's strategy of relating her teaching to children's experiences was also evident in her use of the calendar at the beginning of her large group. The Creative Curriculum recommends that teacher use the calendar as a tool to show children how to keep track of important events, rather than

being used to drill children on the days of the week or months of the year, concepts too abstract for preschoolers. Pamela's use of the calendar was consistent with this recommended practice, as she related the fact that it was Friday to real events that were going on in the classroom: that Friday was sharing day and also the day the blankets go home to be washed. This practice was very different than that used by the other teachers, which will be described in the following sections.

The fact that Pamela read a book during the morning large group is consistent with her statement that she values books and that reading books to the children is one of her favorite literacy activities to do with them.

> INTERVIEWER: OK, um what is your favorite type of literacy activity to do with kids?
>
> PAMELA: Oh, gosh, well I have quite a few of them I don't have one favorite in particular but a lot of them I enjoy, I like reading
>
> INTERVIEWER: Pick one or two
>
> PAMELA: Well, I like reading to them. I like having them to ask me to read a book. I used to sometimes I still do it I have the kids just bring a book in and I read it, bring your favorite book in and they were doing it all the time and they would read the book it would be like story hour and whoever would bring their book we would read it. But I like reading to them, I like reading period, and I like to say you can read to me that would be like the activity that I like and I enjoy.

Pamela also cited reading books as an important activity for dual language learners:

> INTERVIEWER: So thinking specifically about their language and literacy what language and literacy skills do you think they need to have?
>
> PAMELA: Um, the basic, I think the basic learning as far as like as English goes, reading and definitely getting into books and trying to promote reading to your kids just like a couple days ago we sent out the Dr Seuss hat that said on the hat read me three books and we try to get the parents into things or reading to their kids or to have the kids read to them or open a book and show them the pictures stuff like that um…

The Creative Curriculum encourages teachers to read books to children throughout the day and states that reading to children is the best way to get them to love reading and develop language and literacy skills. Citing the research of Whitehurst (1992), the curriculum encourages teachers to promote language development during book reading by encouraging children to become involved in the story by asking open ended questions, add information, and encouraging them to make connections to their own experiences. Pamela's enacted practices during book reading in both the large group and video taped literacy lesson are consistent with strategies suggested by the Creative Curriculum. With regards to teaching children about the letters of the alphabet, the curriculum encourages children to talk about familiar letters in familiar words such as their names, the names of their classmates, and other words of interest to the children. The curriculum developers note that the alphabet needs to be explicitly taught to children but that it should be done in a way that is meaningful and relevant. Pamela's enacted practices during the large group time described above were consistent with these guidelines. However, the teachers at Montgomery Head Start also implemented a letter of the week approach to alphabet learning, which was part of the readiness curriculum described earlier. The letter of the week approach employed at Montgomery Head Start is not congruent with guidelines provided by the curriculum, nor with best practices in the field. Neuman (2006), for example, noted that children, particularly those from low SES families, need content rich instruction rather than skill and drill procedures designed to teacher a narrow set of skills.

Interestingly, the Emerging Academics Snapshot data on Pamela's target children indicated that they received instruction as the primary form of engagement (23%) with Pamela and that Pamela was the teacher that used this teaching style most

often. In this instance, snapshot data was not consistent with data collected during

naturalistic observations, in which Pamela employed a much more child initiated

approach.

Elizabeth's Large Group/Circle

Elizabeth's large group began at 8:30 AM and lasted for 40 minutes. Because of

the physical layout of the center, Elizabeth's classroom had breakfast in the large

classroom and then transitioned into classroom 3 for large and small group time. Once

the children got settled, Elizabeth led the children in a song about the day of the week.

When the song was finished, Elizabeth asked:

ELIZABETH: What day is it today, Angel?

Angel did not answer, but another child whispered "Wednesday" and Elizabeth

encouraged him to:

ELIZABETH: Say it loud so your friends can hear.

Elizabeth then went around the circle asking each of the children to say the word

Wednesday and one by one. Each of the children repeated the word Wednesday and then

Elizabeth then stated:

ELIZABETH: Today is Wednesday, February 17 and the year is 2010.
What day is it?

After a short pause in which none of the children respond to her question, Elizabeth

repeated that it was Wednesday and informed them that yesterday was Tuesday. Several

children began tapping their hands on the floor, and Elizabeth told them to "shh". This

use of the calendar was very different from how Pamela used it and is contrary to the

guidelines of the Creative Curriculum that cautions teachers against using the calendar for rote instruction.

Elizabeth then brought out a chart with the children's pictures and names below the pictures, and sang a song with the children as their picture was shown, similar to the method used in Pamela's classroom. The children participated in this activity and it was clear that this is a consistent routine for large group time. Following the song, Elizabeth suggested that the children count how many friends were present and began to count the children's pictures that were on the board. Elizabeth pointed out that three children were absent and placed their picture on the bottom of the board, stating:

ELIZABETH: Let's count how many girls- 1, 2, 3,4,5,6. How many?

CHILD: Four

ELIZABETH: No, not 4 it's 6

Elizabeth then held up six fingers and counted, pointing to her fingers as she said each number. In this instance, Elizabeth told the children the correct answer rather than helping them to come to the correct answer on their own, which is an indicator of high quality instructional support according to the CLASS. She then counted the number of boys and noted that there were six girls and eleven boys and asked the children if there were more boys than girls; the children answered that there are more boys. The children were getting restless at this point, and Elizabeth asked the children to please not touch each other and reminded then that she has stickers for good listeners. Stickers are often used in preschool classrooms as an extrinsic motivator to encourage good behavior. Although the Creative Curriculum does not explicitly discuss the use of stickers to reward good behavior, its approach to addressing behavior issues in the classroom is to

first understand the cause of the behavior and address it in a supportive way that provides

an opportunity for teaching and language development, a strategy not observed in this

instance.

Elizabeth then transitioned to a story about shapes that was provided by the

readiness curriculum. Elizabeth informed the children that they were going to learn about

shapes and for art they were going to fingerpaint shapes. She then read a book called the

Good Shape School, and before she began to read, she pointed to the front of the book,

the back of the book, and told the children that:

> ELIZABETH: The front has big letters and big words, look at the back do
> you see small words? We read top to bottom, left to right, beginning to
> end, how many pages do we turn at a time?

> CHILDREN: One

This intentional attention to the concepts of print was observed several times in both

Elizabeth and Carla's classrooms. Elizabeth began to read about Dorothy Diamond, and

had accompanying props that were the shapes discussed in the book. Elizabeth paused to

ask the children:

> ELIZABETH: What's her name?

> CHILDREN: Dorothy Diamond

> ELIZABETH: Likes to dance, how many corners does she have?

Elizabeth held up a diamond that she had as a prop, counted the number of corners and

stated:

> ELIZABETH: They are pointy, sharp, can they poke us?

Elizabeth didn't wait for the children to answer, but continued reading:

> ELIZABETH: He's the fourth friend, do they all look the same?

Elizabeth's style of book reading was consistent with that observed during the video lesson in that she relied on close ended questions. Her questioning did not encourage children to think and she did not use extended questioning to encourage children to explore what features of the shapes made them look the same or different. Elizabeth continued to read and several of the children began fidgeting. This was the instance discussed in Chapter Four, when Elizabeth addressed their behavior in Spanish by telling the children to **"**Sientate, sientate bien", reflecting the practice of using Spanish for direction and to address behavior rather than for instruction. When the story was over, Elizabeth continued to ask the children closed ended questions about the story, such as:

ELIZABETH: What is the teacher's name? What shape is this?

When discussing the shape of the star, a child stated:

CHILD: They don't have eyes

Elizabeth ignored this comment, which was actually a very astute observation that the props being used did not have eyes, while the shapes in the story did. Instead of using this observation to encourage higher level thinking skills, Elizabeth continued on with her direct instruction about shapes. During the large group activity, Elizabeth also ignored children who called out "teacher, teacher" to get her attention.

Elizabeth's enacted practices during large group were consistent with espoused practices shared during interviews. The focus on teaching the children the shapes reflected her concern with teaching the children "the basic learnings" so that they would be ready for kindergarten. Her group time also reflected her espoused thematic approach to working with children:

ELIZABETH: Every day I will do circle time with them and based on my the plannings that I plan for the kids I think I believe that they have to be related like if you teach them about a apple you have to have a song with it you have to read them a book you have to have them draw or making collage just have everything kind of related so that way the kids will be able to learn more that's how I teach in the classroom

INTERVIEWER: So when you introduce new things you present it in multiple ways

ELIZABETH: I introduce to them first and then that is how it goes you start and introduce to them and then go form there.

Elizabeth introduced the shapes through a story book, and as the presentation of her small group activity will illustrate, she followed up with activities designed to reinforce the shape theme with the children. Dickinson (2001) noted that critics of this thematic approach to learning trivializes and compartmentalizes learning by focusing on surface features and activities. This approach is also contrary to that called for by the curriculum, which proposes studies as a more integrated and meaningful approach to teaching content and reflects the dichotomy between the readiness curriculum and the Creative Curriculum. Elizabeth's low score of a 1.25 on the CLASS dimension of concept development reflects her use of didactic teaching methods that fail to stimulate higher order thinking, In addition, her group time methods reflect her low score in the CLASS dimension of regard for student perspective as her practices during large group indicated disregard for supporting the autonomy and leadership of children in group activities. When asked if she thought children learned best through teacher or child directed activities, Elizabeth responded:

ELIZABETH: I think for um adult activities it is like when you want the child to do exactly what you want that child to do. But for child direct activities I think that they can do whatever they want and you can just kind of go and observe them. I think they learn more by that, by learning and doing things by themselves. And, you kind of be in observance and just go

and observe them and if you really want to know something you can go and ask "oh, what did you guys do?" and write it down. But I think adult activity is very closed in or very limited or that you have to have the child sit there and just kind of, you know, do the activities, just one activity and just focus on that child.

Elizabeth's statement indicated that she believes that children learn more when engaged in child directed activities and that teacher directed activities are more appropriate during one on one interaction with children. In this case, Elizabeth's espoused practices do not match her enacted practices nor the practices promoted by the program curriculum. While Elizabeth stated that adult directed activities are very closed in and limited, observations conducted over time and in various settings indicated that her style of teaching did not promote creativity, higher order thinking or language development. The Creative Curriculum suggests that rather than being a time for direct instruction by the teacher (although this may occur at times), the goal of large group time is to provide children with the opportunity to talk and solve problems, and that teacher talk should not predominate. Data on enacted practices indicated that target children observed using the snapshot procedure received instruction from Elizabeth 16% of the time, and that this was the most frequent type of interaction they had with her.

Carla's Large Group/Circle

Carla's circle also lasted for 40 minutes, beginning at 8:30 AM and ending at 9:10 AM. Carla positioned herself in her seat and called the children to join her on the rug. Carla's style of teaching was very warm and engaging as evidenced by her smiling and telling a child "You look beautiful" as she joined the group. Similar to the other teachers, Carla sang a song to welcome the children to the group and sang a welcome song:

"Dylan is here today, Dylan is here today, we're so happy Dylan is here today"

The children were smiling, clapping, and singing and Carla was very animated as she and the children sang the song. Carla individualized the song for a child when she sang "the spiderman is here today" to a child who was wearing spiderman shorts. While Carla and the children sang the same song as Pamela's and Elizabeth's children, Carla had her children go to the center of the circle and jump when his/her name was called. Carla provided extra support and encouragement to children who were a little reticent to jump. In one instance she held out her hand to help a child join the activity and encouraged her by saying: "brinca mama" (jump mama). When another child was reluctant to participate, Carla asked her:

CARLA: Queires pasar mi amor? (Do you want to pass, my love? No, OK, vente me corazon, (come sweetheart), we'll sing for you.

The level of encouragement throughout the large group activity was consistent with data from the Emerging Academics Snapshot in which target children were encouraged during interactions with Carla 28% of the time. Following the song, Carla reached into her bag of materials and asked the children what they wanted to sing. Several children said the BINGO song, and Carla said "who will help me sing?" The children respond that they would and Carla asked the children how they spell bingo while holding up a book that retold the song. The children sang and clapped to the song while Carla turned the pages of the book. When the song was over, a child told her what the next song on the CD was and Carla thanked him for reminding her. They then sang the song "Do your ears hang low". The children were very familiar with the words and the movements, indicating they

had done this activity many times before.   At the end of the song, the children called out

what they would like to do next:

> CARLA: Duck, duck goose? We can play that outside, there's no space in
> here. You want the bean bag? We can play it in a little bit, who remembers
> los colores?

Although Carla frequently asked the children what song or activity they wanted to do

next, she rarely did what the children suggested, but continued on with her pre-planned

activities, which affected her CLASS scores on the emotional support domain.

When Carla had difficulty putting a new CD in the CD player she commented

"the CD is muy travesito" (very naughty) causing the children to laugh. Carla's use of

English and Spanish during large group time was consistent with data from all sources

and reflected her espoused practices on language use. Carla then led the children through

a song about the colors using large flashcards with each color and the word spelled

below. The accompanying song spelled out the word, for example, "R-E-D spells red,

and Carla pointed to the letters as she sang them, and pointed to things on the chart were

red as the song referred to them. When the song was over she asked the children who was

wearing red and the children responded. The song had many colors and Carla did the

same actions for all of them. The children began to fidget, however, and rather than

reading their cues, Carla continued with a song about numbers. As an observer, my

reflective field notes indicated that my impression of the large group activity was that

Carla had a set sequence of activities designed to teach certain skills that she needed to

pack into circle time.

The only time Carla mentioned large group/circle time was during the CCI

interview when she stated:

CARLA: Well, circle time is only for a short time in the morning. You know maybe for a half an hour during the day. So they have more time to do free choice or whatever.

Carla continued to describe all of the things that the children do for free choice and all of the materials that they have available for them. This was interesting given that according to the snapshot procedure, the target children in Carla's classroom only spent 6% of their time in free choice activity. This was most likely a function of the fact that her classroom was used by all of the teachers, however, her beliefs about time use in her classroom did not match enacted practices. While Carla stated that large group time should be short, the optimal time of 30 minutes was 10 minutes more that what was recommended by the curriculum and 10 minutes shorter than what she actually did. When asked how she thought children learned, Carla responded:

CARLA: Well, I believe that children learn through play. They learn through play. So you can do so much! But, having the tools for the kids there and guiding them. And I don't believe so much in the finished product, I believe, in...I mean they are so smart! They can come up with so much! More ideas than what you can think! So I believe in leaving the stuff there, the tools there and letting them create whatever they want. For me, that' my philosophy. And playing is like the most important thing. And learning to be social and not be shy and participate. I think that is the main thing they can get from preschool. You know if they learn to write their name and to read, good! But that's not my main purpose.

While this statement is somewhat consistent with naturalistic observations done in Carla's classroom (more detailed support for this will be described in the section on small group activities), Carla's circle time was primarily teacher directed and her children engaged in very little free play. Although Carla's children were involved in the large group via participation in music and movement activities, her large group time did not reflect the back and forth conversations and brainstorming called for by the Creative

Curriculum and CLASS. Rather, it was focused on teaching specific, predetermined skills.

Claudia's Large Group/Circle

Claudia's circle was the longest, lasting from 1:30 PM until 2:10 PM. She began her circle with a song about the days of the week: "Today is Tuesday, today is Tuesday all day long, all day long" The children sang and clapped to the song, and similar to the other classrooms, it was clear that this was a consistent routine. When Claudia asked the children what day it will be tomorrow they replied Thursday, and she corrected them by saying

> CLAUDIA: "No, Wednesday tomorrow is Wednesday, what was yesterday?
>
> CHILDREN: Saturday!
>
> CLAUDIA: Saturday? No Monday

This exchange is typical of those that I have seen over and over again during my time spent in preschool classrooms, in which children are unable to remember the days of the week, and another example of this was described in my presentation of Elizabeth's large group. Time is a concept that is too abstract for children in Piaget's (1962) preoperational stage of development and for this reason the DRDP-R measure related to time was removed from the revised DRDP 2010 instrument. After Claudia corrected the children and told them that yesterday was Monday, she led them in a song about it:

> CLAUDIA AND CHILDREN: Yesterday was Monday, yesterday was Monday all day long, all day long.

Claudia then took attendance in a similar manner as Elizabeth and Pamela, using cards with the children's names and pictures on them. The children sang the song sung by all

classrooms at Montgomery Head Start, and Claudia and her children also discussed who

was present and the reasons why some of the children were absent:

CLAUDIA: Who is not here today?

CHILDREN: Robby, Charlene

CLAUDIA: Jason went to get his eyes checked, Sergio who else?

Claudia then suggested that they count the number of friends who were at school and

when they counted to 18, Claudia and the children discussed that this meant that two

friends were at home. When asked during an interview if she started all of her large

group times in a similar way, Claudia replied:

CLAUDIA: Yes, well no, in the beginning we do who is here today so
they can identify themselves…you know they can know right away who is
here today,.....so they each go and say their name- their first name, their
last name and um after that then we do the alphabet or we talk about
depending if it is Monday we talk about how was your weekend, what did
you do for the weekend?

While Claudia stated that she discusses the days of the week in a contextualized way, this

was not observed as an enacted practice during my observations.

Claudia then transitioned to teaching about the alphabet and asked the children to

remember what letter they were learning about. When she got no response, she reminded

the children that they were learning about the letter O and showed them a picture of the

letter O with an octopus underneath. Claudia led the children in discussion about how

many legs it had by counting the legs and then asking the children how many legs the

octopus had. Claudia had a series of large flashcards, all with the letter O and pictures of

things that start with the letter O, and she showed the children another picture of an

object that began with the letter O. When the children told her that it was a monkey,

Claudia corrected them and stated that it was actually an orangutan, which is a big

monkey. A child made a comment in Spanish about bananas and Claudia acknowledged

and repeated the child's comment:

> CLAUDIA: Come bananas in su casa? (you eat bananas at home?)

She then showed a picture of an ostrich and told the children to write the letter O in the

air with their finger, and the children did this. When she showed them a picture of an

otter, Claudia stated:

> CLAUDIA: You know the sound he makes, an otter?

The children began making noises and talking about the otter. Claudia listened and

responded to their comments:

> CLAUDIA: Did you know what Brandon said? Otters eat fish.

> CLAUDIA: Ocean? You've been to the ocean?

Consistent with her stated beliefs and the results of the Emerging Academics Snapshot

and Treatment of Native Languages, Claudia's group time was conducted primarily in

English. Claudia continued to show the children pictures of things that start with the letter

O. When she had gone through all of the flashcards, she sang a song with the children,

using another set of flashcards. The goal of the activity was to teach the children about

the letters and their corresponding sounds, and I observed Claudia do this activity in both

a large and a small group setting several times during the data collection period.

> CLAUDIA AND CHILDREN: N says noodles, na, na, na, A says apple, a
> a a, e says elephant, e,e,e……

> When asked about this activity during the interview, Claudia stated that:

> CLAUDIA: Well, I try to encourage them to learn by singing or looking
> at the letter and recognizing the letter

> INTERVIEWER: What do you do, um, well go ahead

>CLAUDIA: They already know the song, so actually we started first by letting them understand the song and singing the song so after that we start showing them the letters and so at the same time they are learning the pronunciation of the letter.
>
>INTERVIEWER: Right, so you started with the song and then introduced the letters
>
>CLAUDIA: We start with the song and actually the song had flashcards and pictures and each pictures did not have the letters so I did not like that so after that I said OK they already know the song so I am going to show them the alphabet, the actual alphabet, so I started to show the actual alphabet, the letters, so they can start recognizing the letters

Claudia led the children through all of the letters of the alphabet, and the majority of the children were engaged and were actively participating by singing and doing body and hand movements. Following this activity, Claudia moved onto shapes and introduced and reviewed them in the same way that she did the alphabet, with flashcards and a song:

>CLAUDIA: We are now ready for shapes, hexagon, hexagon what do you see, I see a triangle looking at me…..

When the shape activity was over, the children continued to sing songs, including the Five Little Monkeys, a song about colors that involved body movements and a song about sticky, sticky bubble gum. The songs all involved rich language and the children remained engaged throughout the very long circle time. During the bubble gum song, the children pretended to blow bubbles and talked amongst themselves about getting stuck to each other; when the CD stuck and the music was interrupted, the children and Claudia began laughing when Claudia said that the CD was stuck, too. The large group time ended and the children and teachers prepared to go outside.

Claudia spoke frequently during her interviews about using songs to engage children and teach them school readiness skills and as noted in the discussion about the Emerging Academics Snapshot, the target children in Claudia's classroom were engaged

in oral language activities 35% of the time. Her discussion of her enacted practices during large group supports her espoused practices and her belief in using play to teach school readiness skills:

> CLAUDIA: There is many way of play I mean even numbers during circle time we play with the letter games, we have match games or we show the flashcards and we see who knows the alphabet. Sometimes they want to they like to challenge to see who knows the most alphabets and we have 5 or 6 that know all their alphabets now which is good and the children see that it is good to challenge themselves and that kind of gives them motivation to learn and, and listen.

It is important to note, however, that while both Claudia and Carla spoke about the importance of children learning through play, the Emerging Academics Snapshot indicated that the children in both classrooms engaged in very limited free choice activities, 6% in Carla's classroom and 21% in Claudia's, which was less than the amount of time spent in large group/circle. While the children were engaged in playful songs during both large group times, these songs and activities, similar to Claudia playing alphabet bingo with the children, were teacher directed.

When asked specifically what she does to prepare the children for kindergarten, Claudia mentioned the importance of large group/circle time:

> CLAUDIA: Circle time to me is the most important period of the day I give them books and especially for those that are going to kindergarten we talk about the you know we need to use our listening ears, remember if you listen you are going to learn, we um explain to them how important listening is using their listening skills, We play songs for them to follow so they can use their listening skills which is the very most important thing for them. And we do talk to them in circle time we take the time to make them feel that how important it, it is now that they are going to kindergarten to how old is ready for them it will make it easier for them if they know their numbers, write their name, much easier for them to going to school, going to kindergarten it is going to be more challenging period of their lives cause it is another it is more firmer education than preschool.

We talk to them a lot like I said reading books, singing songs, showing them the alphabet phonics, they enjoy it, too.

Claudia showed intentionality in her teaching practices when she spoke about how she developed the flashcards with the letter and the corresponding picture:

CLAUDIA: Well, yes, for example the a for apple the kind of make a something about the apple...b for baby and c for cat...so they go with the like that.........but yeah for each letter there is one sample...either a animal character or a fruit or you know or something

INTERVIEWER: So similar to zoophonics, did you ever learn zoo phonics?

CLAUDIA: Um ..it is similar to zoophonics, but this is different characters

INTERVIEWER: So somebody just shared it with you working at the center?

CLAUDIA: Ah, yes they did and I liked it from the beginning it was just song, but then by listening to the song for example apple with apple I did a picture of an apple with an a on it with a small a on it and so on but yeah at the beginning it was just the song, but I felt like it needed……….

INTERVIEWER: And then you added to it

CLAUDIA: Yeah…I needed to show it……the visual it would be much better

INTERVIEWER: Ah,...so you kind of created it yourself

CLAUDIA: Yeah and I made the flashcards and I shared with all my staff they were asking for it so I shared with my staff and then I decided they already know the alphabet through the pictures so now let's show them the actual alphabet ..o they can you know relate to the alphabet........believe it or not they know it.

The Creative Curriculum does not specifically address the use of flashcards, which were frequently used by Claudia. However, flashcards do not fit in with the curriculum's focus on child directed activities and designing the curriculum, including language and literacy activities, around the children's interests. Neuman (2006) described her observation of

literacy activities similar to those provided by Claudia by stating: "call it chiming, repeating, reciting, or recalling, it all has a similar effect. Not once did 1 see any effort to engage children's minds through stimulating content" (p. 29). The Creative Curriculum does state that the letters of the alphabet need to be taught explicitly but recommends that it be done in authentic and meaningful way, throughout the day.

Summary of Large Group/Circle Practices

There were several common features of large group time across the four classrooms at Montgomery Head Start. The first, which was identified in the analysis of the Emerging Academics Snapshot data, was that large group times were particularly long, ranging from 40 to 50 minutes. According to the Creative Curriculum, large group times should last no more than 5-20 minutes and the teachers at Montgomery Head Start doubled the recommended time. This is a common practice that I have observed and continue to observe during my career and in my various roles as an administrator, literacy coach, and provider of professional development. All of the teachers used large group time to teach children the specific skills they felt the children needed to be ready for school and, with the exception of Pamela, moved through a series of activities designed to teach specific skills in a predetermined manner that was teacher directed.

Analysis and review of the data from multiple sources on large group/circle time led me to conclude that the teachers at Montgomery Head Start viewed large group/circle time as their time to teach the children about the letters, numbers, and shapes. According to the Creative Curriculum, these concepts should be embedded throughout the course of the day and in various settings and every interaction between the teacher and child should be viewed as an opportunity for teaching language and literacy. A review of the

quantitative and qualitative data on large group time validated what I have felt about teacher's goals for large group: that this is the opportunity for them to "teach" and it is their responsibility to "skill and drill" school readiness concepts during large group time. This finding recalls the work of Sanders, Deihl and Kyler (20007) in which preschool teachers provided a strong academic focus and relied on teacher directed, didactic teaching methods to prepare children for school. The authors noted that teachers presented these activities in a fun and engaging way, which was the case in Carla and Claudia's classrooms, and although in Carla's classroom the children did become disengaged towards the end, children in both Carla and Claudia's classrooms actively participated in the teacher led activities.

The teachers used similar songs and techniques regarding taking attendance and focusing the group. Claudia shared during her interview that the teachers at Montgomery Head Start shared ideas and activities with one another, and this theme will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six when I review my data through a cultural communities lens. That many of these practices were not reflective of the curriculum is a significant finding of my research, the implications of which will be discussed Chapter Seven.

Small Group

Small group time is another staple of the preschool curriculum. According to the Creative Curriculum, teachers should interact with small groups of children throughout the day and small groups can be either teacher or child initiated. The following sections describe naturalistic observations of small group activities in each of the classrooms.

Pamela's Small Group

The small group activity that took place during my observation of Pamela's small group was sharing. Sharing day is a common feature of preschool classrooms and is typically the one day a week that children are allowed to bring a toy from home to share with their friends. While not promoted by the Creative Curriculum or any guidance provided by the Head Start program, sharing day was observed in Pamela's classroom and was discussed by Claudia as a strategy she uses to promote language development. On a personal note, my observation of Pamela's sharing time completely changed my opinion of this activity, as I had formerly believed that asking children to share and wait their turn to speak was not developmentally appropriate. In addition, I have observed that it is very hard for a preschool aged child to put the item brought for sharing back in the cubby and leave it there for the rest of the day and have witnessed many conflicts arise over toys brought from home. However, as the description below illustrates, Pamela's sharing time was a very rich language and literacy activity that was very meaningful to the children and presented language and literacy in a way that was very authentic and contextualized.

Pamela kept a small group of 9 children with her in the classroom while her associate teacher took the rest of the children to another classroom to do her own small group. This was actually a benefit of the physical environment of Montgomery Head Start because it allowed Pamela to be with a small group of children without the distraction of another group. During my observation of sharing time, one of the children (Tony, the boy described in Pamela's read aloud) had just returned from Disneyland and

had brought a map of the park and an autograph book to share. Tony showed the autograph book to the class and explained:

> TONY: People signed it

> PAMELA: Who?

Tony leafed through the pages of the book and said:

> TONY: Mr. Incredible, Buzz Lightyear, Mickey, Minnie, Pluto….

As Tony flipped through the pages and showed the children the autographs, it provided the other children with an opportunity to see print connected to their favorite Disney characters and to conceptualize how the characters wrote their names in the book, an important understanding of the uses of print. Pamela then asked Tony how he got the autographs and he replied that he for asked them. Pamela pointed out that:

> PAMELA: It is important to use nice manners and say "please can you sign?"

Pamela's group time was incredibly rich in both language and literacy, as the children carefully examined the map and discussed what they would see when they went to Disneyland. Throughout the activity, there were exclamations of "I can't wait to go to Disneyland!" "I am going to go there!" "Oh! I want to see Pluto!" I want to go see Goofy and Mickey Mouse!" I observed one of the target children intently studying the map and carefully turning it over and unfolding it so that she could examine the entire park. For children living in southern California, Disneyland is a frequent vacation spot and is immediately relatable and real to all children. The common experience of visiting Disneyland served as an important bridge for the dual language learners, as they were familiar with the characters, and Disneyland is a topic that instantly engages children. The map represented an authentic way to model how letters and words can be used to

learn more about something that the children cared deeply about. Likewise, the autograph book reflected an authentic use of print that had meaning and created excitement for the children. When presenting the autograph book to the group, the child who brought it carefully turned the pages and "read" to the children the names of all of the characters. Pamela's excitement and enthusiasm about what the children brought to share not only resulted in a rich oral language environment, but also in a warm and responsive social emotional environment, which is congruent with Pamela's high scores on the emotional support domain of the CLASS. The following was another example of how books were part of Pamela's sharing time:

> PAMELA: What did you bring to share? You have a painting of the frog and who? Oh the princess and the frog, let's see.

The child who brought the book looked through it and said:

> PEDRO: And then the princess kissed the frog!

> CHILDREN: ooh!

> PEDRO: Then and then and then the frog turns into a prince!

Two of the children were looking at the book very carefully and Pamela redirected the class to the sharing activity:

> PAMELA: OK, pass it along, thank you, Yesinia. Oh, it is Katie's turn. You have a bag, what is in the bag?

> PAMELA: Oh Katie brought in a ring toss, so tell us about this. (Katie took the ring toss out of the bag and was putting it together)

> PAMELA: Look what Katie brought! It is a ring toss

> CHILD: I want to play with that!

> PAMELA: She knows how to put it together, too

> CHILD: I want to play with that, Katie can I play with you?

> PAMELA: OK she is going to show us how to do it (Katie began tossing the rings)

> PAMELA: A ring toss wow, can we take this outside and can we use it Katie?

While Katie put together her ring toss, children continued to pass around the Disneyland information and Princess and the Frog book, and I observed one of the children slowly turning the pages of the autograph book and looking at it. As Pamela went around to the rest of the group, she encouraged the children who were reluctant to talk, and this is the setting described in an earlier section in which she encouraged one of the dual language learners to talk about her "pluma" (pen). She also reminded another child who did not bring anything to share that he did have something to share because he was going to be a big brother.

Pamela explained her reasons for doing sharing as a small group activity during the video elicited interview:

> PAMELA: Well I started sharing time like a couple months ago before that the kids would just bring things in randomly so I said well you know let's just go ahead and make it so kids can bring in things to share. So I started sharing day on Fridays and when you share we gonna talk about it and it gives you a chance to….like .pass it around so your friends can see and touch it and you are actually sharing it just trying to........particularly with the younger ones getting them with the concept of learning to take turns and share so when they get ready to be here for the second year they'll know the routine. So that is when I…….and as far as the books go I want them to be like able to be into reading and books and stuff like that. Not so much as those violent toys –guns, power rangers, stuff like that but to involve with sharing and um we used to do um like um the little DVD like educational DVDs things like that but we don't have a TV no more (laughing) it broke.

Pamela's statement reflects her earlier comments about books and the value that she placed on them. Pamela consistently used reading across all settings to provide language and literacy activities to the children, and Emerging Academics Snapshot data indicated

that the target children in her classroom engaged in pre-reading activities 14% of the

time, which was the highest of all of the classrooms.

Elizabeth's Small Group

Observation of Elizabeth's small group time took place after she read The Good

Shape Book to the class during large group. Elizabeth directed her children to two

different tables that were prepared for small group. Elizabeth went to the table that was

set up for the children to draw shapes in shaving cream and got smocks for the children

and helped the children put them on. There was limited conversations as children

transitioned to the activity (peer and teacher-child) and Elizabeth frequently ignored

children who called out "teacher, teacher" to get her attention. Elizabeth squirted the

shaving cream on the table and asked the children if they knew what it was. She

explained that it was shaving cream and instructed them not to eat it, but to feel it. She

let the children know that they would all get some shaving cream and asked them if the

shaving cream felt cold, which was typical of Elizabeth's style of questioning. Elizabeth

stood by the table and instructed the children to make various shapes or draw something

on their own. When a child told Elizabeth that she made a rainbow, Elizabeth responded

simply by stating "wow". Elizabeth drew a circle in the shaving cream and asked

"what's this?" The children told her that it was a circle, and Elizabeth then told the

children:

ELIZABETH: Not too fast, it will get on the floor, go slowly.

When a child asked her for more shaving cream, she responded:

ELIZABETH: You have a lot on the table already you don't need no more

Elizabeth remained very busy completing tasks such as hanging up art, putting on smocks, helping children wash their hands, and giving directions to a teacher assistant. She did speak to the children about their activity, but her questions and comments required little of the children as evidenced by several of her comments:

ELIZABETH: Put your shapes on the circle

ELIZABETH: It is fun

ELIZABETH: Yes it is it is sticky, does it feel soft or hard?

ELIZABETH: Evelyn you need a smock

ELIZABETH: Make a circle

ELIZABETH: Don't do that.

When a child wanted to rejoin the shaving cream activity, she told him:

ELIZABETH: Go play you did it already

Elizabeth's small group time reflected her low scores in several of the CLASS domains and her small group activity was consistent with her espoused practices on introducing a topic during circle time and then presenting it in other areas. Elizabeth only referred to small group time once during her interviews, and this was in response to a question about how to meet the needs of dual language learners and whether this effort is coordinated with her associate teacher.

ELIZABETH: Well most of the time I do circle time so you know maybe in small group you know because when we do large group we do it in there and then after that you know and when somebody does not use this room, she will come over here and she will do small group. She might read, I don't know because I am with my group and she is with her group.

INTERVIEWER: How do you decide which kids go in what group?

ELIZABETH: Oh, we have transitioning kids and we have small, you know, the ones that are going to stay here for another year. So we split,

you know, cause I do most of the observations here so one day I will take the transitioning kids.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, OK

ELIZABETH: And the next day I will take the younger kids.

INTERVIEWER: Right

ELIZABETH: And then she will take the older kids and the next day she will take the younger kids

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that's interesting

ELIZABETH: Cause I want to, you know, jot down so that way I can do my observations for all the kids.

Elizabeth's comments reflect her concern with getting the observations required for the portfolios rather than a real concern with intentional teaching or making sure that the children learned specific skills. In addition, her comment that she is not sure what her associate teacher does during small group echo her comments discussed earlier that she did not know if her associate teacher reads to the children in Spanish or not.

Carla's Small Group

Carla's small group took place during free choice time in the afternoon. An additional contextual variable that impacted Carla's classroom was the time that she took her planning time. All teachers in the Head Start program under investigation get two hours of planning time per day to work on their lesson plans, portfolios, etc. Carla took her planning time from 10-12 every day, a time of day that represented a major part of the curriculum and Carla was absent during a key part of the day. As an administrator, I know that this is often unavoidable, especially in large centers due to staffing issue, labor laws, and community care licensing regulations, however, this represents a structural variable that influenced the processes that took place at Montgomery Head Start.

On the day of my observation, there were two boys at the computer and two girls sitting on the couches in the library looking at a book. Carla was at the table with a small group of children. She passed out paper, markers, and sentence strips with the children's names written on them. Carla was very involved with the children and the comments below reflect the findings of the Emerging Academics Snapshot that indicated that encouraging (28%) and scaffolding (17%) were her most frequent type of engagement with the target children. As she sat at the table with the children, the use of encouragement and scaffolding were evident:

CARLA: Do the S and A

CARLA: Good job, Sandra

CARLA: What letter is this? What are you missing?

CARLA: Can you write your last name, too?"

When she asked the child to write her last name, too, Carla turned her paper over and added lines for her to write on. She also wrote her last name for the child to copy, providing evidence of scaffolding. This was also evident when she told a child who was writing his name:

CARLA: "It's backwards, aqui dice Alan (it says Alan here, Carla moved her hand left to right across Alan's name as she said this)

The younger children at the table were drawing pictures rather than their names, and Carla provided the same level of support to them as she did to the older children:

CARLA: Oh, that's you? Your mama, your papa, which one is your mama?

One of the younger children was drawing a snowman, and when she showed to Carla, Carla responded:

CARLA: Que le falta el snowman? (what is the snowman missing?)

Another child answered:

CHILD: La escoba (broom)

CARLA: Oh he needs a escoba también (broom, too).

Carla drew a broom on the child's picture while the children at the table discussed brooms and their various uses, making sweeping motions with their hands as they did so. Throughout this observation, Carla was very animated and engaging and gave the children her full attention.

Carla's small group activity was consistent with her belief in setting up the environment to allow children choices. In the activity described above, she presented the materials and allowed the children to interact with them, while she provided individualized support. This enacted practice was consistent with her teaching philosophy, as evidenced by the following quote:

> CARLA: Um, I, like I said, I give them the tools, the tools, but mainly let them be kids and choose what they want and teach them to be independent. Try to figure out each child, you know, individualize to the child, and give them materials that are according to their age and their level. So, I think that is important. Because if you give a child something very hard, sometimes they loose interest. Or if it is too easy it is not challenging enough. So you need to find the right thing for everybody.

This belief was evident in the small group described above, when the older children were working on writing his name and the younger children were drawing whatever they wanted. Consistent with her beliefs, Carla had made writing and drawing materials available to the children and let them use the tools in a way that was developmentally appropriate while Carla used scaffolding to introduce new ideas and vocabulary. Carla mentioned small group as a teaching strategy in the following quote from the CCI:

CARLA: We have a list of the things that supposedly children need to know before they start kindergarten. So we do try to work on those too. Since I have a lot of the children here for two years, the first year you know it's more like the social and the fun part and this and that. And more sort of, like now, the children who are going to go to kindergarten we start gathering in a table and teaching them to write their name and their phone number, stuff like that. So, I work more with the older kids as a small group. And I make sure they know how to cut, and they know their full names, and stuff like that. Ah huh. More, like right now. Starting from January, I mean we do that all year, even with the little ones. Because there are little ones that they want to do it. And they say, "Teacher, I want to write my name" so we invite them. But I worry more about the ones that are going to kindergarten to, "Ok! Now you are going to go to kindergarten so we need to work on this!" Some of them love it and some of them don't like it! But I still try to make it fun for them to learn to do it.

Carla's comments are similar to the findings reported by Sanders, Keihl, and Dahl (2006) in which the teacher tried to make learning academic content they felt was needed to prepare them for school fun and engaging for the children.

Claudia's Small Group.

When I observed Claudia's small group activity, she was sitting at the table with a group of children who were working on an activity related to their letter of the week. The activity was centered around the children cutting out a pre-drawn letter O and putting 10 stickers on it and came from the readiness curriculum used at Montgomery Head Start

The children were relatively quiet as they completed their work and Claudia's interaction was restricted primarily to giving instruction. While observing this activity, I felt that Claudia was moving children through a task that needed to be completed, as evidenced by the quotes below:

CLAUDIA: OK you're done; you've got 10, time to write your name

CLAUDIA: Get some scissors, get the letter, the letter O, cut it out.

Claudia did assist children who were having difficulty and worked with a child who was having a hard time writing her name. As the children worked, Claudia continued to

prepare more O's for the rest of the children. There was some discussion about the stickers, which were bugs. This may have been related to her project, but there was no discussion of this or attempt to make connections other than to name the bugs on the stickers.

Claudia also encouraged the children during the activity, which was consistent with the Emerging Academics Snapshot data:

CLAUDIA: Put your name on the back, yes!

CLAUDIA: You can do it, good job Joseph! Put stickers on your letter.

The low level cognitive demands of this activity, coupled with the paucity of language are consistent with Claudia's score of a 1.1 on the instructional support domain of the CLASS. Claudia did not mention the use of small group in any of her interviews, yet she did discuss the importance of giving children hands on activities based on real objects:

> CLAUDIA: And for example with my kids I like to do the real thing. I bring cockroaches I brought bugs things like that I know it is kind of ….they learn better though seeing the real thing and I am the kind of person that I bring snakes or whatever I can bring for them to see the actual thing and I feel that teacher them .more than showing pictures.

The small group described above, along with another small group that I observed in which the children made butterflies from precut materials, do not reflect Claudia's articulated practice. The limitations of the readiness curriculum could be responsible for this; however, none of my observations validate Claudia's espoused practices described above.

Summary of Small Group Practices

The analysis of small group time at Montgomery Head Start added another dimension to my description of espoused and enacted early language and literacy

practices used by teachers at Montgomery Head Start. In the case of Pamela's small group activity, observations were in support of her high score on the emotional support domain of the CLASS, yet are contradictory to the data provided by the Emerging Academics Snapshot data which indicated that Pamela used primarily monitoring and instruction as methods of engagement with the children. In addition, Pamela's sharing activity was one of the examples of exemplary teaching that I observed during my time at Montgomery Head Start, as it illustrated how teachers can connect language and literacy to meaningful events and objects in children's lives.

Carla's small group activity supported data from other sources, including her use of scaffolding and simultaneous translation, as well as her emotional availability to the children. Similarly, Elizabeth's small group activity reflected data from the CLASS and Emerging Academics Snapshot, which documented her detachment from the children, didactic teaching methods, and low levels of language use. Claudia's teacher directed activity was provided by the Readiness Curriculum and was consistent with other practices observed in her classroom, including the direct teaching of letters through common preschool activities such as singing and using scissors.

Mealtime

Meal time was selected as an activity setting to examine language and literacy practices because of the opportunity it provides for language development. As part of the Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development, Cote (2001) reported that children's language experiences during mealtimes were related to their language and literacy growth at the end of kindergarten and that mealtimes provide the opportunity for children to develop narrative and vocabulary skills through conversations with teachers.

In Head Start, meal times are recognized as providing opportunities for teachers and children to converse with one another, and the Head Start Performance Standards require that meal service contribute to the development of socialization by ensuring that children and teachers eat together family style. Research indicates that children growing up in poverty are less likely than their economically advantaged peers to experience extended discussions with their caregivers or to engage in interactive reading (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002) resulting in less exposure to decontextualized and rich talk that expands vocabulary, fosters narrative skills, and allows them to reflect on their learning experiences (Bierman et al., 2008). Mealtimes provide an excellent opportunity for preschool children to have these types of discussions as they occur in a setting that is familiar, and in the case of Head Start settings, the teacher is required to sit at the table with the children and eat. Cote (2001) found that this was a key factor in the quality of language experiences children were exposed to, as children whose teachers sat down with them engaged in more non present talk, which involves talk of future and past events, was been causally linked to improved literacy outcomes in the Harvard Home School Study. Building on this finding, the Creative Curriculum, advises teachers that meal times are "learning times when teachers sit with the children, have them serve their own food, and carry on conversations" (p. 89).

The following sections describe meal times in Carla, Elizabeth, and Claudia's classrooms and will be followed by a discussion of how these enacted practices relate to those called for by the program. None of the teachers discussed meal times in their interviews, making data on espoused practices unavailable. It is telling however, that

meal times were not cited by any of the teachers as an opportunity to teach language and

literacy skills. Meal time was not observed in Pamela's classroom.

Mealtime in Carla's Classroom

In Carla's classroom, the observation of meal time was conducted during

afternoon snack. When the children sat at the table, the food was not ready for the

children, which was most likely a function of the physical environment and the

challenges associated with feeding 5 classrooms in one area. While waiting for the food

to be prepared and placed on the table, Carla said:

> CARLA: Vamos a cantar (let's sing) while we wait for Luisa to get our
> snack, get your spiders ready!

The children and teachers sang the itsy bitsy spider in English, and when the song was

over, a child asked to sing about the big spider. Carla followed the child's lead and the

group sang, in Spanish, La Arana Grandote (the big spider), which was followed by La

Arana Pequenita (the itsy bitsy spider). Carla and the children continued to sing songs,

several of which were songs that had been sung earlier during large group.

While this transition could have proved very difficult for the children, as they

were required to wait for almost 10 minutes, Carla used this time as an opportunity to

provide a rich language activity for the children. She used strategies that required

children to make comparisons, such as singing about the big and then the small spider,

and singing a song fast and then slow. Carla followed the children's lead and allowed

them to play with language in a comfortable and fun way. As was typical of Carla's

teaching style, she was very animated while she sang and adjusted her voice and

mannerisms when signing about the big and small spider, highlighting the different meanings behind the words.

When the food was ready, the associate teacher asked for help and two children got up and helped set the table, a practice which was consistent with the regulations of the Head Start program and guidelines provided in the Creative Curriculum. The children sang "Open Shut Them", a song often used in preschools to orient the children to the table and transition them to mealtime. There was a steady stream of conversation at the tables, although most of the conversations were related to eating and the mealtime routine, as illustrated in the examples below:

> CHILD: Por favor puedes darme un tenedor? (may I have a fork please?)
>
> ASSOCIATE TEACHER: You said the palabras magicas (magic words)
>
> CARLA: Come on corazón, thank you Jessica, its OK, they can try it, do you like applesauce?
>
> CARLA: Say good bye to your friends (parents are picking up children)
>
> CARLA: You can try it, Open the galletas (crackers)

Meal time in Carla's classroom was a pleasant experience and although Carla completed administrative tasks associated with meal time during part of the meal, she was attentive to the children, smiled frequently and was clearly enjoying the time spent with the children. At one point during the meal, Carla and her associate teacher reminisced about something funny that one of the children had once said and shared the story with me, illustrating the point that in Carla's classroom the children were clearly a source of enjoyment for the teachers. Evidence of Carla's close relationships with the children was further evident when she discussed the necklace she was wearing with a child:

> CARLA: Oh, you like my necklace, your mom bought you one? Yes, the earrings and the necklace are the same; you have earrings, too, Ashley. You are beautiful!

And when a child got up from the table and went to play with legos, Carla redirected her by saying:

> CARLA: Megan, let'ss wait till our friends are done eating

When Megan continued to play, Carla reminded the child of her directive:

> CARLA: Megan, you need to come and sit with your friends, you need to follow the rules.

Megan then walked over to Carla to give her a hug, and Carla responded:

> CARLA: "Oh, you're going to give me a hug?

Carla hugged her back and said:

> CARLA: I like your hair it's soft

This exchange typifies Carla's interactional style with the children and reflected the classroom community that she has created with her children and associate teachers. It is important to note that Carla's CLASS scores in the emotional support domain do not reflect this, as her overall score on this domain was brought down because of her low score in regard for student perspectives during large group, highlighting the need to use multiple measures when assessing classroom quality.

Although there was conversation during snack time in Carla's classroom, it was not at the level described by Cote (2001) in the Home-Literacy study shown to correlate with improved performance on literacy tasks in kindergarten. Results from this study indicate that when teachers engage in non –present talk, defined as the discussion of past and future experiences, during mealtimes, it was predictive of their performance on literacy tasks in kindergarten. As illustrated above, the majority of talk during mealtime

was regarding the task at hand, which was eating snack, and the only example of decontextualized language was the limited discussion about Carla's necklace. While not specifically part of meal time, the singing that took place while waiting for the food provided the children with a rich language experience, and the fact that Carla used this wait time as a learning experience reflects her skills as a teacher and her recognition of the need to keep the children engaged. During my years observing preschool classrooms, I have seen similar situations dissolve into chaos because teachers are not prepared when children are required to wait.

The data on mealtimes from the Emerging Academics Snapshot supported the conclusions drawn from the naturalistic observation of mealtimes in Carla's classrooms. There were 15 observations of target children conducted during meal time. There were four instances of adult child language, and in all four the exchange was between the target child and the associate teacher. Two of the exchanges were in English and 2 were in Spanish. There were eleven instances of peer language, and 8 of the exchanges were in Spanish and 3 were bilingual. This data reflects low levels of teacher – child conversations during mealtime and is consistent with the overall Emerging Academics Snapshot data for Carla's classroom which indicates that the children primarily used Spanish when speaking with their peers and that teacher-child talk was balanced between English and Spanish.

Mealtime in Claudia's Classroom

Claudia's language during meal times was limited to providing mostly commands and directing the children's activities. She did not sing a song to orient the children to mealtime, and parents continued to drop off their children during the course of the meal.

An interesting feature of Claudia's mealtime was that the full day children in Carla's classroom were asleep on the other side of the room as Claudia's children arrived at 1:30. Because Claudia's children were being dropped off and eating at this time, Carla's children slept with the lights on in a very busy environment, and it is possible that this environmental factor could have limited the amount of conversation observed during Claudia's meal time.

Mealtime conversation was centered on where the children should sit and the functions of mealtime (how many pears each child should serve, making sure that a child had bread, passing the milk). Consistent with the data from the Treatment of Native Languages observation, Claudia spoke in Spanish when directing the children about meal time tasks. During meal time, Claudia completed administrative tasks and teacher – child talk was limited to her noting that a child dropped his apple and an associate teacher telling the child "it was an accident, it happens" Of the 154 academic snapshot observations done in Claudia's classroom, 4 were coded as taking place during meal time. There was no teacher-child language or peer language coded during these observations. Overall, mealtime was a subdued affair in Claudia's classroom, with the focus being on eating and paperwork.

Mealtime in Elizabeth's Classroom

Mealtime in Elizabeth's classroom was similar to mealtime in Claudia's classroom. The transition to meal time was very long and was impacted by the center environment. When Elizabeth's classroom came in from outdoor play, Pamela's classroom was still at the tables finishing their meal and Elizabeth was unable to begin her transition to mealtime. Instead, Elizabeth led her classroom to a corner of the big

room and did a short circle time while she waited for the tables to be available. Once Pamela's children had finished eating, the children in Elizabeth's classroom washed their hands, sat at the table, and sang the "Open Shut Them" song in English. Elizabeth then began to ask the children about the food they were eating:

ELIZABETH: What is it?

CHILD: Broccoli

ELIZABETH: We are having pasta, we are drinking milk.

The remainder of Elizabeth's conversation had to deal with directing the children on how to serve their food: "I just told you, serve your food, have you tried it, leave it on the plate if you don't like it, sit down, pass to your friend, 2 scoops, too much milk, c'mon eat". There were 8 observations of target children done during mealtime, and one instance of peer language, which was in English. Elizabeth spoke to only two of the target children during mealtime, indicating very limited conversation which was focused on giving directions and completing the task of feeding the children.

Summary of Mealtime Practices

In this setting, teacher practices are not consistent with those called for by the program's curriculum or the research (Cote, 2001). The results of my case study indicate that meal times remain an untapped resource for helping children expand their language skills through conversations with teachers and each other. The teachers in my study did not view mealtimes as a setting in which to encourage language development, despite funding and curricular mandates regarding the importance of conversations during mealtimes. Similar findings were reported by Early et al. (2010). Using the snapshot procedure, Early and colleagues reported that one third of the children's day was spent in

meals and routines and that 87% of this time was coded as a 'no learning activity',

indicating that the target children engaged in none of the 11 activities captured by the

snapshot. The researchers noted that the 11 categories used in the snapshot were very

broad and that coders were always required to "code up" if an activity began at the very

end of an observation cycle. Similar to results found in my study, Early et al. (2010)

concluded that there were large parts of the day in which the children were engaged in no

learning and that this was particularly salient during meal times and routines. When

considering mealtimes and other activity settings, it is important to consider the pervasive

impact of the physical environment on all aspects of the center's operations. It is possible

that the noise level, rotation system, and lack of easy access to materials and supplies

affected meal time conversations.

Conclusion

Several findings emerged from the analysis of my qualitative data. The first was

that teachers had difficulty naming both their own and research based practices of early

language and literacy, and that many of the practices they used were inconsistent with

those called for by current research and the program's curriculum. When triangulated

with the findings from my quantitative data, the validity of these findings was increased.

A review of my qualitative data also supports a major finding to emerge from my

quantitative data, that dual language learners received instruction almost exclusively in

English, with the exception of Carla's classroom. In this instance, enacted practices were

closely related to espoused practices, as all teachers' enacted practices were congruent

with their belief about how to best teach children English to ensure success in

kindergarten. The fact that teachers believed parents also wanted their children to learn

English at school and Spanish at home created a unique context in which beliefs of both teachers and parents led to teacher practices that not supported by research, best practices, or the program curriculum.

Another finding to emerge from the both quantitative and qualitative data was the mismatch between espoused and enacted practices in regards to the value of child directed learning and the role of play as a vehicle for learning. While all teachers stated that they believe children learn through play and supported a child initiated approach to learning, enacted practices indicated a mismatch between espoused and enacted practices. In addition, enacted practices were inconsistent with guidelines called for by the program curriculum, which is heavily based on play and the use of children's interests as a basis for all learning.

While the description of enacted practices illustrated that there were cases of exemplary teaching at Montgomery Head Start, there were many missed opportunities for teaching and learning, such as the lack of language during meal time and the overall lack of language in general. This finding is inline with the research detailed in which indicated that poor children in the United States do not receive the high quality language and literacy instruction which as been shown to produce positive outcomes in children at risk (Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta 2007; Powell, Burchinal, File, & Kontos, 2007; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006). While my data pointed to the presence of warm and caring relationships between the teachers and students (with the exception of Elizabeth's classroom), there was little evidence of ongoing, intentional teaching across settings. These findings helped to define the pedagogical culture of the center and will provide the backdrop for my examination of my fourth research question concerning the relationship

between teachers' participation in cultural communities and the language and literacy practices in their classrooms. My review of descriptive and relational data pointed to the role of teacher beliefs on enacted practices, and this will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter. Because my theoretical framework presupposes that beliefs and values are intricately related to practices, this framework was especially suited to my exploration of how teacher beliefs were related to espoused and enacted practices and helped to explain why espoused and enacted practices were incongruent in some instances.

CHAPTER SIX

Teacher Beliefs and Early Language and Literacy Practices

Rogoff (2003) defines a community as "people trying to accomplish some things together, with some stability of involvement and attention to the ways they relate to each other" (p. 80). The previous chapters have described a specific community in response to my first three research questions examining teachers' espoused and enacted early literacy practices, the relationships between espoused and enacted practices, and the goodness of fit with the program curriculum. The purpose of this chapter is to answer my fourth research question:

> 4. What is the relationship between teacher's experiences as members of a cultural community and the early literacy practices in their classroom?

By examining both the qualitative and quantitative data through a cultural communities lens, I will describe how teachers goals and beliefs about early learning contributed to the espoused and enacted practices described in earlier chapters. The examination of my data from a cultural communities framework highlighted the complexity of educational settings and provided evidence in support of the arguments presented in my first two chapters regarding the role of teacher beliefs on classroom instruction and educational interventions. My data furthered this argument by highlighting the fact that teacher beliefs and practices are rooted in cultural processes and practices, and built on the work of other researchers (Gutierrez, 2003, 2006, Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003, Wishard et al., 2003), who underscored the notion that viewing culture and ethnicity as static constructs denies the complicated nature of development and leads to reductive conceptualizations of development and learning. The application of a cultural communities framework to

the analysis of my data on espoused and enacted early literacy provided a more nuanced and fine grained examination of the role of the teacher in language and literacy interventions and moved beyond the use of static variables, such as teacher education level and years of experience, commonly used to help explain variations in classroom practices. Furthermore, when my data was viewed through a cultural communities lens, it provided a possible explanation as to why many recent early literacy interventions mandated in the aftermath of NCLB have failed to result in positive educational outcomes for children at risk. As described in earlier chapters, a major finding of my study s a research to practice gap between early language and literacy practices recommended by the literature and the practices observed at Montgomery Head Start, replicating the findings discussed in my review of literature. While some enacted practices were congruent with articulated practices, others were not, and my theoretical framework was used to better understand this dichotomy.

Throughout this chapter I will draw on my insider status to interpret data within the larger context of the Head Start program responsible for the operation of Montgomery Head Start. Because I have worked for this program for almost twenty years, I have a unique perspective on how the organizational culture of the agency affects, and is affected by, teacher practices. My positionality in this instance represented an important tool available to me during data analysis, supporting my earlier arguments about the merits of mixed methods designs in educational research. I have been careful to ground my conclusions in the data in order to minimize the bias that my insider status may cause, and took care to ensure that each statement I made was firmly supported by my data and/or the extant literature in the field.

Overlapping Cultural Communities

One of the key tenets of the cultural communities framework is that individuals participate in cultural communities that are overlapping and influence one another, and a review of the various cultural communities in which the teachers in my study participated illustrates this concept. During their interviews, each teacher spoke of the role of their ethnic and/or linguistic background when describing their experiences as a teacher and their beliefs about teaching. Elizabeth, Carla, and Pamela explicitly referred to their ethnic background as a defining aspect of their history and experiences, while Claudia, Elizabeth, and Carla discussed how their own experience as a dual language learner contributed to their beliefs about dual language learners and resulting classroom practices. It is important to note, however, that the ethnic and linguistic communities in which the teachers participated should not be treated as static variables that easily correlate to teacher practices. Rather, ethnicity and language interacted with other variables as teachers' participated in various cultural communities in complex and multifaceted ways. Elizabeth, for example, participated in the Hmong community in San Diego and spoke both Hmong and English at home, sometimes using both in the same sentence. Elizabeth's status as a refugee and her enculturation to the variations in American culture and practices represents the notion of overlapping cultural communities and was highlighted by the following quote about her first day in the classroom:

> ELIZABETH: The hardest thing for me for my first day because um I never worked with African American people. I am not trying to be prejudiced but I never worked with them before then. When I first saw them, I look at their skin as kind of dark and you know I thought "oh their skin must be really course because of the color". Then later I went and touched, you know, the child and I touch it and her skin was really

> smooth. I was shocked. Yeah, that is my first day I worked with the kids - that's what I noticed.
>
> INTERVIEWER: Was that hard to get used to or…
>
> ELIZABETH: No, after like a couple of months I get used to it. I adjust myself to it very well. Yeah.

While Elizabeth's story reflects an extreme example of differences between cultural communities, Pamela's experiences as the only African American teacher at Montgomery Head Start pointed to the more subtle effects of cultural experiences on teaching practices:

> PAMELA: The language gets challenging, the language barrier of course, that gets challenging, but for the most part I really haven't had any really big, big problems working at the center. The parents are really respectful and things like that. The kids are you know OK, so I really haven't had any problems throughout my five years here. I really haven't had a hard, hard time. You would think with me being African American, basically the only African American teacher, it would be hard, but I haven't had too much of an issue. I think in the beginning there were a couple of parents they thought the language barrier was hard.

Pamela carries with her the traditions and practices associated with being an African American who grew up in the south, and, similar to the teachers and directors described by Sanders, Deihl and Kyler (2006), had to negotiate relationships and work to develop trust and understanding with her Hispanic, Spanish speaking parents, something that came more naturally to Carla and Claudia because of a common language and shared norms resulting from a common cultural heritage. It is important to note, however, that while both Claudia and Carla immigrated to San Diego from Tijuana, their immigration stories are very different, highlighting a key assumption of the cultural communities framework. Gutierrez (2006), for example, noted that "culture is not just one thing" and that while individuals with a shared ethnic heritage may have generally practiced

customs, they are not always carried out by all members or carried out in similar ways and with the same frequency. While Claudia came to the United States with her family when she was six years old, Carla did not immigrate until she had finished college in Mexico. Although on the surface their experiences and backgrounds may seem very similar, their different immigrations stories impacted their beliefs and values with regards to the language environment of their classrooms. Claudia drew upon her own experience as a dual language learner to codify her ideas about speaking primarily in English to the children as a method of ensuring that they enter kindergarten ready to learn, while Carla, on the other hand, spoke of her belief in speaking both languages to her sons and the validity of her approach. These different belief systems and the practices that result from them support the need to attend to within group differences called for by Rogoff (2003) and Rogoff and Gutierrez (2006).

Differences and similarities of experiences were also evidenced by the fact that while Carla and Pamela came from very different regions of the world and were raised with different cultural traditions and practices, they both have participated in the military community as they followed their husbands around the United States during their careers. This experience gave Pamela and Carla a common reference point as well as access to and experience with the shared norms and values of the military community. These examples of the different yet overlapping cultural communities of the teachers at Montgomery Head Start reflect Rogoff's conceptualization of cultural communities that are much more complicated than the approach commonly used in research which places individuals in "boxes" based on racial and/or ethnic background (Rogoff, 2003; Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2006).   A review of my data indicted that teacher experiences, values,

beliefs, and goals for children's learning, developed via participation in various cultural communities, influenced espoused and enacted early literacy practices. Throughout this chapter, the discussion of teachers' goals for children will become a focal point of my analysis, as goals are intimately related to practices, as they are the mediating variable through which goals are achieved.

Teacher's Beliefs and Goals for Children

Rogoff (2003) noted that the cultural community framework's focus on individual's involvement in their communities helps to explain the "dynamic, generative nature of both individual lives and community practices" (p. 78). How teachers' individual experiences created a collective culture will be explored in more detail in the following sections, as I examine how each teacher at Montgomery Head Start came to be a teacher and the goals, values, and aspirations that influenced this decision. Adopting a developmental perspective, I will first begin by describing each teacher's experience as a child and student, as the development of values and norms begins at birth as children observe and participate in the repertoires of practice of their particular cultural community. Rogoff (2003) proposed that children are particularly alert to learning cultural processes and norms, which often involved tacit and taken for granted ways of doing things. As children develop, these spheres of influence widen as they are exposed to and participate in new and overlapping cultural communities, which continue to influence values, goals, and beliefs. Examples of these spheres of influence include teacher's early experiences in the classroom, their experiences in higher education, and the presence or absence of mentoring. I argue that these experiences are related to both

espoused and enacted early language and literacy practices in complex and varied ways, and throughout the following sections, I will provide evidence to support this claim.

Early Experiences

An examination of the teachers' reflections on how their childhood experiences in school affected their practices in the classroom gave insight into the role of teacher beliefs on classroom practices. During the CCI interview, teachers were asked to reflect on aspects of their childhood they wanted to pass on to the children in their classrooms and things that they would like to change. A common theme across all interviews was the value teachers placed on the social emotional components of early learning. This belief was evidenced in several ways, beginning with the fact that when reflecting on their own childhood experiences, all teachers discussed the importance of respecting childhood and the need for adults to listen to children and value their feelings. The teachers in my study named this as something they wanted to give to the children in their classroom that they did not experience as children. For example, when asked if there was anything she was trying to do differently with the children in her classroom from what she experienced as a child in school, Claudia stated:

> CLAUDIA: Oh yes, to respect childhood. Respect to hear what their needs are…… I feel that it is the difference from me growing up. They don't see that we are still a little person and we have our own needs and they don't hear us out as they see us as a little person.

Additionally, when asked to recall her experiences as a young child in school, Claudia referred to the positive, social emotional, components of early learning:

> CLAUDIA: Well, you know what I don't remember as much, all I can remember is the positive things. I remember having a celebration with a small cake and that is the only thing that I can remember. What they used to do in preschool when it was a birthday we had a tiny cake for their

birthday. I feel that the children will always remember a positive thing, maybe a bad thing, but I prefer that it is positive.

When asked if the approaches and practices she uses with the children in her classroom were similar or different than how she was taught as a child, Pamela stated that her upbringing was different than how children, including her own, are brought up today. She referred to not being able to express herself as a child and the repeated mantra of "do as I say, not as a do". Similar to Claudia, Pamela stated that she encouraged children in her classroom to speak up for themselves and express how they feel if someone is hurting or bothering them, and this practice was consistently observed in both Claudia and Pamela's classroom.

Carla also spoke of the need to respect childhood and recalled how her mother would make her come inside and do school work when she was a young child:

> CARLA: Ah, I think it is a little different because I was raised in Mexico. And in Mexico is like you learn learn learn, it's different. Here I think you have more freedom. Children have more freedom to play and things like that. When I was 4 and my mom was teaching me to read already. And sometimes she would call me inside when I was playing with my brother, or whatever, and she would call me in because it was time for me to start practicing again. And I was like, what? I wanted to play! I was 4!

In this instance, Carla's experiences as a child had a direct effect on her espoused practices, and she consistently referred to the importance of play throughout her interviews and that play is how children learn best.

Elizabeth's experience as a student in Laos also reflected the theme of respecting childhood. She shared that in Laos the teachers were allowed to hit the students with little consideration for the fact that they were just children. During the CCI interview, Elizabeth recounted a particularly painful experience she had while in school in Laos:

ELIZABETH: Yeah, I remember in Laos the teachers were allowed to hit the students. I remember one day he told me to finish, I think it is a lesson, I don't really remember, I think is a paragraph or something. He wanted me to recite a paragraph, so the next day I can go and stand in front of the classroom and read it, but don't look at the paper and just remember how to say it to a large group of children. So I got really scared and then I came home and I was crying. I think it was not the whole night but I was crying and I remember asking my older brothers to help me with it. I didn't go to sleep until I was able to recite the paragraph. Because if you don't, the next day you go he will put like two rocks on your palm and you stand up and your arm has to be straight like this. You can't go like this. I was a little girl and he didn't care.

INTERVIEWER: Oh standing on one leg with your arms out holding rocks

ELIZABETH: Yeah, one leg up and two arms spread up like this with two rocks. I remember that. So back in Laos, they were able to, the teacher was allowed to hit the students and I remember, I remember that this is the only time that I got in trouble and the rest the rest of the time I am OK.

This was a very powerful story that gave insight not only into the cultural nature of development and learning but into how cultural processes can be transmitted across time and location. In my work with teachers who attended school in other countries, I have heard many accounts of corporal punishment and teachers who were strict and uncaring towards their students. I have also heard similar stories from African American colleagues who attended school in the south in the middle part of the 20th century, highlighting Bronbenbrenner's model and the influence of the chronosystem on individual and collective development. Generational and geographical differences clearly influenced the experiences teachers had as students and these experiences in turn affected their goals for the children in their classroom, a major assumption of the cultural communities framework. Rogoff (2003) noted that "cultural processes can be thought of as practices and traditions of dynamically related cultural communities in which individuals participate and to which they contribute across generations" (p. 77).

When considered from a cultural communities framework, Elizabeth's statements about her fear of getting hit and never getting into trouble again after that incident offered a possible explanation as to why she took so seriously her responsibility to complete the paperwork requirements of Head Start. Elizabeth's story about her experience in school reflected the cultural norms and practices in her community, in which children were expected to follow the directives of teachers and other adults at all times with serious consequences for not doing so. It is also interesting that Elizabeth went to her older brother, another child, rather than an adult parent, to help her prepare for her speech, highlighting the collective view in her community that children need to do what adults say without question. Participation in this cultural community, coupled with Elizabeth's experience as a refugee, in which children undoubtedly had to listen to their parents for safety reasons, explained quite a bit about Elizabeth's accountability to authority and concern for completing the paperwork requirements of the Head Start program. This concern for authority was reflected in Elizabeth's statement when asked about the challenges of becoming a teacher:

> ELIZABETH: The center director will, you know, just come and just give you anything and say I need this by tomorrow, I need this by such and such a date. And you need to get it done.

Elizabeth was the only teacher who discussed the paperwork as a burden, and a review of her portfolios indicated that she came very close to meeting the program requirement of having 2-3 observations per measure. However, this was more closely related to meeting the responsibilities of her job as a teacher than to an interest in assessing the children's progress and developing activities to support the children's individual needs, and this lack of connection to her students was evident across data.

The examples provided above illustrate the complexity of teaching and the multitude of variables that affect teacher beliefs. The teachers in my study placed value on the sanctity of childhood and expressed the desire to do things differently than how they were raised as children in this regard. This value was reflected in their articulated goals for children, which will be described in the following section.

Goals for Children's Learning: Social Emotional Foundations of School Readiness

The teachers' responses to interview questions related to their school readiness goals for children emphasized their beliefs in the social emotional foundations of school readiness. Claudia's response typified that given by the other teachers:

> CLAUDIA: If you are not prepared social and emotionally you are not prepared for kindergarten. So that is the most important to me.

In the Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development (Dickinson and Tabors, 2002), the authors noted that almost every teacher in their study named the social aspects of preschool as its most important function and that this belief is in line with the recommendations of DAP and its firm grounding in social emotional development (Smith, 2002). Other researchers have also noted that kindergarten and preschool teachers consistently place academic skills at or near the bottom of their readiness priorities (Currie 2001; Lin et al., 2003; Wesley and Buyusse 2003). It is interesting to note, however, that while all teachers in my study spoke about the value of play and the need for the children to engage in child directed experiences, when asked about school readiness goals, the teachers referred most often to the socialization aspects of preschool, a subset of social emotional development. Carla stated that while it was important for children to learn to read and write their names, the most important part of preschool was

the development of social skills, including sharing, how to be social, and how to act in

front of people. Pamela echoed these sentiments when she described her school readiness

goals for children:

> PAMELA: For kindergarten, um, I think the basic, well; more or less I
> think they really should be able to have an academic learning. I think they
> really need to be able to have socialization skills that type of thing. To be
> able to have them, like, self discipline or self control things like that…

While Pamela named academic skills as being important for kindergarten, she elaborated

more fully on socialization goals for children in the form of self discipline and self

control. Likewise, Elizabeth also spoke about the importance of teaching children to

socialize with the other children, including how to share and the ability to talk about why

they are upset rather than resorting to hitting and/or pushing other children. These

sentiments were also echoed by Claudia and Pamela's statements regarding their desire to

help children use their words and speak up when someone is bothering them, and when

the teachers discussed social emotional development it was largely in the context of

socialization goals and teaching children how to behave.   Claudia was the only teacher to

speak about other aspects of social emotional development not related to socialization

goals or the value of play when she discussed the importance of making sure that the

children had a high self esteem and knew how to make friends before they went to

kindergarten.

An additional theme that was apparent from the teacher's childhood reflections

was the desire to depart from the didactic teaching methods they experienced as children.

Elizabeth's description of her experience in Laos clearly reflects this, and Carla also

shared that she wanted a different experience for the children in her classroom than that

which she had experienced as a child:

> CARLA: In Mexico it was different, because the teachers were more strict
> there. And since you are in kindergarten there, it is not a lot of fun! It's
> more like you are learning and memorizing a lot. Over there you
> memorize a lot! So I don't want to do that here. I want to let the kids be a
> little bit more free, and learn, but in a different way. Learn through play.
> Over there you do not through play!

The mantra that "play is the work of children" is very common in the field of early

childhood development. While the teachers in my study clearly valued play, an

examination of enacted practices indicated that this belief was not consistently translated

into practice as they often engaged in didactic teaching methods, highlighting the

complexity of early childhood settings. While the teachers knew that play was important,

they were unable to articulate why this was so or what they intentionally did to promote

learning through play throughout the day. The incongruence between the teachers's

articulated practices regarding the value of play and their didactic teaching methods point

to the complexity of the relationship between beliefs and enacted practices. All teachers

spoke about the need to allow children to express themselves and speak up, however, it

was always in the context of addressing conflicts with other children rather than giving

them the opportunity to direct their own learning. Supporting children to create,

brainstorm, and engage in back and forth exchanges about ideas are behavioral indicators

in the instructional support domain of the CLASS and are the foundation of the Creative

Curriculum studies. My data suggests that while the teachers encouraged the children to

speak up and express themselves, it was primarily to solve conflicts rather than as a way

to use social emotional development, in the form of children's interests and curiosity, as a scaffold for learning.

This rather limited view of the complexity of social emotional development was evident in data on enacted practices, including CLASS scores and results from the Emerging Academics Snapshot. The mean score on the social emotional domain of the CLASS was a 4.9, falling in the mid range of program quality. Naturalistic observations conducted in all classrooms, with the exception of Elizabeth's, indicated that the teachers had warm and caring relationships with the children, evidence of which has been provided in response to my first three research questions. However, the teachers in my study, with the exception of Pamela, did not engage in the behaviors measured by the emotional support domain, particularly teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives, at a level or intensity necessary to obtain a high quality rating on the CLASS. The theoretical underpinnings of both the CLASS and the Creative Curriculum state that social emotional development is the foundation for all learning, and the mid level CLASS scores on this domain reflect enacted practices in which learning was largely compartmentalized into circle time and other teacher directed opportunities for learning.

Interestingly, while Carla was the most emphatic about her belief in the importance of play and children's learning, target children in her classroom engaged in free play only 6% of the time. However, it is important to note that the children did spend a great deal of time outdoors, which is a form of free play. While it is possible that this was a function of the physical space at Montgomery Head Start, 6% is nevertheless a very low percentage of free play in a preschool classroom. Additionally, a major variable

of interest in the larger study in which this dissertation was embedded is the examination of the role of social pretend play on children's narrative development. Although not reported on in my study because of the inapplicability to my research questions, it is important to note the Emerging Academics Snapshot indicated very few instances of target children engaging in complex pretend play. While the teachers did use playful methods to encourage learning, such as music and movement, books, flannel board stories, and alphabet bingo, the activities were largely teacher directed with active child engagement. However, it is important to remember that Pamela scored a 6 on the regard for student perspective dimension of the CLASS and was also the teacher whose target children engaged in the highest percentage (47%) of free play, highlighting the variability of experiences children received at Montgomery Head Start.

When reviewing the espoused and enacted practices of teachers at Montgomery Head Start, it is clear that the value teacher's placed on child initiated learning and play was not translated into practice. This is evidenced by data on the relationship between espoused and enacted practices, as well as in my examination of the relationship between these practices and those that are called for by the Creative Curriculum, which is based heavily on the belief in the efficacy of child directed learning and play. This imbalance between espoused and enacted practices was a major finding of my research and will be explored in greater detail throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Teacher's School Readiness Goals for Cognitive Development

As document analysis of children's portfolios, CLASS scores on the instructional support domain, and observations of enacted practices suggest, cognitive goals for children were narrowly focused on a set of skills teachers assumed help children be

successful in school: knowing the letters of the alphabet and their sounds, knowing the colors and shapes, being able to write their names, and learning English. This limited view of school readiness skills does not reflect the goals of the Head Start program, operationalized in the Child Outcomes Framework, or of the Creative Curriculum, both of which propose that learning is integrated across developmental domains and that school readiness skills should be taught throughout the day using a variety of modalities. The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, similar to the DRDP-R assessment instrument, takes an expansive approach to early writing that is much broader than simply teaching children to write letters. Indicators in the Early Writing Domain of the Child Outcomes Framework indicate that children should: 1.) develop understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes, 2.) begin to represent stories and experiences through pictures, dictation, and in play, 3.) experiment with a growing variety of writing tools and materials, such as pencils, crayons, and computers, and 4.) progress from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words such as their own name. While there were instances of this type of work displayed on bulletin boards and in the portfolios, it was much less prominent than the letter tracing and letter recognition activities that predominated.

An area in which teacher beliefs and enacted practices were congruent was in the value teachers placed on reading and books. All teachers spoke about the importance of books, and books were displayed throughout the center, including on the playground. I visited the site during various times of the day throughout the data collection period and consistently observed teachers reading to the children, whether individually or in small or

large groups. With regards to dual language learners, however, books were read to the children in English, with the exception of Carla's classroom, an important implication for practice, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

Teacher's Goals for Dual Language Learners

When examining the relationship between espoused and enacted practices for dual language learners, espoused and enacted practices were congruent, with teachers' beliefs about dual language learning clearly reflected in their practices. While all teachers had the same goal, to help children learn English and be successful in school, they all had a different belief system about the way this should be accomplished based on their experiences as a dual language learner themselves. Claudia spoke about how her experience in school as a dual language learner influenced her beliefs on the efficacy of her immersion approach to teaching the children English:

> CLAUDIA: I am an English second language learner. When I first started, my first language was Spanish. When I got into school I learned English very quickly because by that time there was only English speakers. There were not so many Spanish speakers. It is hard for Spanish to learn both languages because you want to learn both. I'm all for just English and I notice that they speak more and they learn English faster if you just speak English to them. The Spanish, they can learn that at home.

Claudia's beliefs on the nature of dual language learning come from her own experiences in school and, as documented in the earlier section on practices used with dual language learners, were consistent with observed practices. Elizabeth also shared her own experience as a dual language learner:

> ELIZABETH: When I came here I have to start all over again, like a baby. I didn't even know how to say my alphabets. I have to start learning again. It's like a baby start learning how to say words, yeah.

Elizabeth spoke about the importance of showing dual language learners how to do things rather than expecting them to understand through speaking. This belief was evidenced in her practices as she frequently used props and real objects (the pinwheel and bubbles in her video taped lesson and the props while reading the book about shapes) when working with the children. Carla, who learned English as an adult, had a much more sophisticated view of dual language learning than Claudia and Elizabeth, as she discussed the need to use the children's home language as a scaffold for learning English. When considering these different belief systems, it is important to consider the age at which each teacher came to the United States. Claudia learned English as a very young child and most likely has a very limited memory of this experience. In her mind, she simply learned English through exposure, and not surprisingly believed that an immersion approach is the most effective. Elizabeth, who entered the country at nine years old, remembered the difficulty of the experience and her espoused goal was to show the children in her classroom how to do things rather than just tell them what to do. Finally, Carla, who struggled to learn English as an adult, passionately believed in the need to support the home language in the classroom. Interestingly, Carla was the only teacher to use scaffolding as a teaching technique, and her belief in this method could be the result of her experience using her home language as a bridge to connect her knowledge of Spanish to her new language. In line with my theoretical framework, interview data indicated that teachers' experiences as dual language learners influenced both espoused and enacted practices in very complex ways.

Summary

When interview data on teachers' school readiness goals for children were examined, the influence of goals, experiences and values on the espoused and enacted early literacy practices described in earlier chapters became clear. The fact that in some cases espoused early language and literacy practices were congruent with enacted practices while others were not highlights the complexity of educational settings by pointing to the dynamic interplay between teacher beliefs, the physical environment, the activity setting and the children themselves. It is evident that early language and literacy practices cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered within the contexts of teacher beliefs about social emotional development, the nature of teaching and learning, and their own experiences in various cultural communities. The teachers in my study tended to have a limited view of social emotional development as the development of socialization skills and viewed social emotional development as separate from cognitive development, with social emotional skills being taught throughout the day while activities designed to promote cognitive or school readiness skills being presented primarily during large group/circle time. When considering this from a cultural communities perspective, one is reminded that a major assertion of this perspective is that norms and practices are passed down generationally. This will be explored in greater detail in the following section, as I describe the interview data on how each teacher came to the profession and her goals, aspirations, and motivations for entering the field.

Pathway to Becoming a Teacher

When analyzing the interview data on how each teacher came to the profession, several themes emerged that helped to explain the role of beliefs, values, and

participation in cultural communities on teacher practices. Data from the CCI interview provided information about how and why each teacher entered the field as well as information about her early experiences as a teacher. A theme to emerge across all data sources was the similarity between each teacher's educational background and teacher preparation experiences. Pathways to becoming a preschool teacher have been explored by other researchers (Bowman et al., 2000; Early et al., 2006; Early et al. 2007; Fuligini et al. 2010; Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003; Howes, 1997; NICHD ECCRN, 2002a; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), and the examination of how teachers enter the field and the level of preparation needed to be successful is timely topic as researchers and practitioners seek ways to respond to the increased accountability placed on early childhood education to improve child outcomes.   The examination of the role of teacher preparation and early experiences in the classroom helps to explain the research to practice gap described in the examination of my first three research questions as well as the imbalance between espoused and enacted early literacy practices and those called for by the program curriculum. All four teachers were hired to work in classrooms with little formal education on the theory and practices of early childhood education and returned to and/or continued their education while working in the field. Dickinson (2002) noted that the teachers in the Harvard-Home Study of Language and Literacy had similar experiences and often dealt with the competing demands of work, home, and school, and presents this as a possible reason for the research to practice gap, an assertion that is supported by the results of my study.

The following sections will describe how each teacher became involved with preschool teaching and her goals and motivations for working with young children, her

education and early experiences in the classroom, and the absence or presence of a mentor. Analysis of each teachers' pathway to becoming a teacher indicates several common themes including the desire to work with low income children and families and goals for children that were primarily social emotional in nature. In addition, all teachers shared a similar pathway to becoming a teacher which included working in a classroom while completing coursework in child development. The following sections will unpack these experiences in order to explore the relationships between experiences, goals, beliefs, and practices.

Pamela. Pamela referred to teaching as her calling and explained that she has always had a passion for children:

> PAMELA: Teaching, working with kids has always been a passion of mine since childhood. I always wanted to play school; I always wanted to be the teacher with my siblings. They always knew that when it is playtime and we were going to play I was always the one to play school. So I think I just had a long childhood of, as far as like teaching goes, I have a strong back ground in my family with education. There is a lot of teachers in my family. One of my sisters, well she is my aunt but we grew up together so like my sister, she just got her doctorate in education um so it its been something that has always been a passion of mine, to work with all children.

Pamela's innate love of children coincided with being raised in a family that valued education, and Pamela shared that she was always the one taking care of her siblings, cousins, and other family members as a child. Pamela's oldest daughter attended Montgomery Head Start, and Pamela credits Ms. Margaret with encouraging her to enter the field of early childhood education:

> PAMELA: Ms Margaret, yeah, she was like, you should go back to school, you should do this and that, and I was like oh no I don't want to. But then she kept talking to me and talking to me and I used to volunteer all the time and so once I finally got into that, after I got into the field I

> was like OK, I might like it. So I would say I would really say she was really the one that kind of pushed me right in there, yeah, yeah.

Pamela's story reflects a major goal of the Head Start program, which is that as result of volunteering in the program, low income parents will gain skills needed to enter the job market, will become self sufficient, and will no longer need the program. The Head Start Performance Standards encourage this practice by requiring programs to give additional weight to former parents during the hiring process. The fact that Pamela's first child, not her second or third, attended Head Start, reflect her success as a program participant as well as the influence of macro level policy mandates on individual development. Of all of the teachers participating in this study, Pamela spoke most often about the need to involve parents in their children's education, perhaps a reflection of her own status as a former Head Start parent and child.

Another motivation for Pamela to become a teacher was her desire to work with children and to be a steady and positive force in their lives:

> PAMELA: I just wanted to be like……some kids they have it hard and some kids have stability. I wanted to be somebody that kids come in and be like "Oh Ms. Pamela" and talk to you and just build a rapport with the kids. And they can trust you and look up to you and be excited about coming in and seeing you.

Enacted practices observed in Pamela's classroom, and described in earlier chapters, are congruent with her stated goals. One of the strengths of Pamela's classroom was her ability to form relationships with the children, the most salient indicator of this being her high score on the emotional support domain of the CLASS. Throughout the description of Pamela's enacted practices were examples of her rapport building with the children. It is important to note, however, that while Pamela tried to make connections with her

Spanish speaking children, she frequently referred to the language barrier as a challenge

she faced, and unfortunately, the Spanish speaking children in her classroom missed out

on many of the rich language opportunities Pamela provided. During the read aloud

described in the video elicited literacy lesson, for example, the conversations that took

place among children and between Pamela and the children were all in English. Many of

these conversations encouraged children's higher level thinking skills, such as Pamela's

questioning about frogs and where they live, and the Spanish speaking children did not

participate in these conversations. This is very different than the instructional climate in

Carla's room, where all children were able to participate in a very sophisticated

discussion about helmet use, because the conversation moved fluidly between English

and Spanish.

Claudia. Similar to Pamela, Claudia became interested in teaching when she

began volunteering in her daughter's kindergarten classroom. Claudia described herself

as a housewife who stayed at home for 22 years raising her children. When her youngest

child started kindergarten, Claudia began taking child development classes and

volunteering at a local preschool:

> CLAUDIA: Yeah I finally had time to do something for myself so I stared
> going to school when she was in kindergarten in the mornings and after
> than I decided to continue on and I started doing more volunteer through
> my work experience class at KIP Kommunity preschool in La Fonda. I
> went there for four years doing, you know, volunteer work and work
> experience classes so that really got me into it, to continue with it.

Claudia stated that she wanted to become a teacher so that she could help children,

particularly those whose parents worked:

> CLAUDIA: Yeah my volunteer work that I was doing, that inspired me. I
> really wanted to be around children and helping them emotionally. My

main concern at that time was emotionally because I know it is hard for working parents to take care of their children and I felt that I, you know, wanted to be there and encourage them and teach them.

Claudia's statement reflected a deficit view of working families, which is interesting given her experience as a stay-at-home mom and reflects the cultural communities view that beliefs and values lead to practices. Claudia enjoyed the family focused nature of the Head Start program, and frequently discussed her desire to work with and help low income families:

> CLAUDIA: Well, I would just like to say that I really like this program because it is not just about children, it is about families. I really enjoy helping out the families with anything that I can do with them- looking for resources…. I will go out of my way to find something for them to do. You know, like going to school, looking for some kind of employment. That is really my goal for now, helping the parents and the families and the children.

Claudia's goals for helping families reflect the Head Start philosophy, based on Bronbenbrenner's bio-ecological model, of providing support within the nested systems of children, families, and the community. Interview data indicated that it was important for Claudia to be emotionally available for the children and families and to develop relationships with them, and during my naturalistic observations, I observed Claudia greeting the parents and children warmly and spending time conversing with them during pick up and drop off. Although she did not discuss her passion for teaching or her love of the children in the effusive manner that Pamela and Carla did, analysis of Claudia's interview data indicated that she had a strong emotional tie to teaching and that she was pleased with her chosen profession:

> CLAUDIA: Because I feel a kid myself when I am around them. I play with them and um I joke with them and they feel comfortable with me and I feel comfortable with them. We have a relationship there and I notice

children changing their behavior when I am there from the beginning to the end. I see a lot of changes in children when they interact with you and they see a friend in you. Up to a certain point though, cause you also want to keep that firmness of a teacher so they can follow directions.

Although her score in the emotional support domain of the CLASS was brought down by her low score on the regard for student perspective dimension, Claudia's connection with the children was evident during naturalistic observations and in interview responses, highlighting the need for multiple measures in educational research. Claudia was not overly demonstrative with her physical and verbal affection with the children, however, Emerging Academics Snapshot data indicated that she was the teacher that most frequently used encouragement as an interaction style, and observations of her classroom indicated that she was clearly invested in the children's success. Claudia intentionally planned activities for the children that she believed would help them be successful in kindergarten, such as the large group/circle time activity designed to teach the children the names of the letters and their sounds.

Carla. Although Carla's original goal was to become a child psychologist, she earned a degree in accounting because a degree in psychology was not offered at the public university in Mexico, and her family could not afford to send her to a private university. Carla entered the field of child development when her son was two years old as a way to both work and be with her son. As she explained:

CARLA: Like I said, I always loved children. I wanted to be a children's psychologist. So when I had my son I wanted to go to work and start working but at the same time I had my accounting degree and I could go and do that, but I didn't want to leave my two year old just anywhere. So I said, well, how about I go and take some classes and I go, as a preschool teacher and I bring my son with me. And that's what I did and I love it! I was fascinated. And I started taking more and more classes until, you know, I work in so many different preschools during the years with

different ages. I worked with the one and a half to two year olds for six years. Then I went to Oklahoma and worked with the kindergartners and the older children over there. And then I came back here and work with the three to five year olds now for seven years.

While Carla alternated between teaching and doing accounting, and often did them both at the same time, she always returned to teaching:

> CARLA: So there were periods when I stopped teaching and was working in accounting. But since this is what I love…My husband thinks I am crazy because I make more money in accounting.

Carla's interviews were characterized by frequent references to how much she loved teaching and being with the children and this passion was evident throughout the espoused and enacted practices described in earlier chapters. Carla stated that she could not imagine doing anything else but be a teacher, and shared that her goal has always been to work with children from background similar to hers:

> CARLA: Um, I think I always want to make a difference in the children that have a hard time. That's always my goal. Like inspire them. Especially I wanted to work with children in Head Start. Most of these kids here are from where I am from. And the same culture and stuff like that. And I know that sometimes at home they have a hard time…….I think this is where I fit. And like I said before, that was one of my goals, to work with Hispanic families and try to make a difference in the children.

The quote reflects the role that her ethnicity and participation in a cultural community has on her career choice and her goals for working with children. Carla's beliefs about dual language learning have been translated into practices which she believes will help the children in her classroom be successful. Carla clearly loved being a teacher and wanted to make a difference in the lives of children:

> CARLA: And I know you can make a difference in the children. You know if they don't have the stability at home, if they don't have the love, if they…..I know you can give them, at least not all day, but part of the day, you can give them that. And I wanted to do that.

Carla's frequent use of endearments, hugs, and smiles reflected her articulated goals for becoming a preschool teacher. Carla's desire to do things differently from how she was treated as a child are evident in her practices as she made learning fun for the children through her excitement and use of strategies designed to encourage children's engagement in learning, such as songs, books, and art materials.

 Elizabeth. Elizabeth began teaching during a summer internship program during high school:

> ELIZABETH: I uh got this job and before I got the job they said what did you want to work? And I said there is a day care that is close to my house. Where do you want to work? And I said I would like to work with little children. So they send me there and that was my summer job and I started working there for two months and then you know, Neighborhood House, and they hired me. And I just started working and I started working. My first and permanent job was in 1984.

Although Elizabeth stated that she wanted to work with little children, interviews coded for relationships with the children or enjoyment of the children indicated that Elizabeth never spoke about her love of teaching or her relationships with the children. Instead, when asked about being a teacher, Elizabeth referred to the patience that is needed to work with children and that if a teacher did not have patience she would not be successful. While Pamela, Claudia, and Carla spoke of becoming a teacher because they enjoyed being with the children and wanted to make a difference in their lives, a review of Elizabeth's interview data indicated that in many ways teaching was more of a job to her than a calling or passion:

> ELIZABETH: So I just said I want a part time job working and during the summer so they said oh what do you like? I just say working with children cause I didn't know any other jobs. So, yes, that is my first job, yeah working for two months.

When asked why she chose to study child development, Elizabeth responded that she needed a job and even though her friends questioned why she studied child development, she felt she had already started in the field and did not want to start over. Elizabeth's lack of enthusiasm for the profession is consistent with enacted practices in her classroom, including her low scores on the CLASS, her didactic teaching methods, and the lack of responsiveness and connection to the children observed during naturalistic observations.

Summary

An examination of the teacher's motivations for entering the field, indicate that Carla, Pamela, and Claudia had a deep desire to help children, particularly the population served by Head Start, and, as described in Chapter Four, their center is located in one of the poorest sections of San Diego. Wanting to be available to children and to make a difference in their lives was also a common theme across interviews for Carla, Pamela, and Claudia. Elizabeth's responses to why she entered the field reflected a pattern I have seen often during the course of my career, that rather than teaching being a chosen profession, many women, particularly those who are poor and/or are recent immigrants, enter the field because, as Elizabeth stated, she "didn't know any other job". Recently, one of the site supervisors who works with me spoke of one of his teachers by noting that "she was a mom, so she thought she could be a teacher," highlighting this point. This is also a manifestation of the Head Start philosophy of hiring parents, as there exists the belief, supported by policy, that if you are a Head Start parent there is a built in career path for you to become a teacher. Additionally, many of the welfare to work programs push women to enter the field of childcare, which is viewed as a viable option for low

income women lacking in education and employable skills. This is very different than a teacher in the K-12 system who decides that teaching will be his/her profession, studies for four years, student teaches, and then enters the classroom. This will be a recurring theme throughout the remainder of this chapter and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven as an implication for practice.

Early Classroom Experiences

An important pattern that emerged across interviews was that all four teachers began working in a preschool setting with very limited coursework in early childhood education. In California, to be hired as a teacher assistant requires 2 child development classes, and aides can be hired with no units as long as they are supervised at all times by a qualified teacher. All teachers in my study began working in classrooms as volunteers, but quickly became staff members and continued to take child development courses while working in the classroom. Both Pamela and Claudia began their careers by volunteering in their children's classrooms, and began teaching and taking classes concurrently. Elizabeth also began her career as a high school internship and returned to school while already working as a teacher assistant. Carla started as a substitute, quickly got hired as a teacher's aide, and had her own classroom after being in the classroom for only three months. Again, this is very different from the highly professional nature of becoming a teacher in the K-12 system, in which a four year degree, a teaching certificate, and a year of student teaching is required before being hired as a teacher. It has been my experience that due to the high turnover rate, (Barnett (2003) estimated a 25-50% turnover rate for preschool teachers), and shortage of staff, preschool teachers are often hired and/or

promoted with little consideration for their experience, skill level, or enthusiasm for

teaching.

When asked about their first day as a classroom teacher, all four teachers

discussed how unprepared they were for the task, as evidenced by Carla's description of

her first day as a teacher:

> CARLA: Well, I think the hardest part was that when I started in
> Jefferson...when I was assisting in Loma Verde it wasn't too hard because
> the teacher was there, there was another assistant. But when I worked in
> Jefferson I was thrown in that classroom and I only had 3 months
> experience. And you know I never worked at another preschool except
> those three months before, and I was never a teacher or nothing like that.
> So this lady went on maternity leave and they needed somebody right
> away. And so I had...there were 6 or 8 children in the class. It wasn't that
> many because they were that little, little ones. But I was there by myself.
> And then I had to come up with meetings for the parents, and the children
> were biting, and all that kind of stuff. So I had to learn quick. But, I mean,
> it was OK.

Pamela described being assigned to an infant classroom and feeling very nervous about

taking care of someone else's baby, even though she had experience as a mother and had

taken coursework on infant toddler development. Claudia also spoke about feeling

nervous and being afraid that the children would not listen to her. Claudia stated that her

biggest challenge she faced as a new teacher was dealing with children with challenging

behaviors:

> CLAUDIA: The hardest part? Dealing with behavior problems; that was
> my hardest part. I really wanted to learn more about how to approach child
> behavior problems- how to talk to them and how to interact with them so
> they can um so I could kind of I understand their needs. That was kind of
> hard for me to get so I started taking classes of children with
> developmental approaches and things like that. I started going to trainings
> to better myself and um that helped me a lot, yes.

Claudia's comment that she returned to school to learn more about children's

development and how to handle behavior problems in the classroom, reflects a common

theme in the literature (Beirman, et al., 2008), that preschool teachers are rarely prepared

with either the theoretical or practical knowledge needed to meet the social emotional and

cognitive needs of children in their classroom. I remember being a first year teacher and

having a child in my classroom that was being raised by his great grandmother because

his mother was in jail due to substance abuse problems. I had no idea how to help this

child and a great deal of my time was spent trying to keep the other children safe from his

violent and unpredictable behavior.   I remember actively seeking out advice from early

intervention staff and attending workshops on children prenatally exposed to drugs, yet

feeling frustrated that I could help neither this child nor the others in my classroom.

Because of the requirement for Head Start to serve the neediest children and families,

children often come to the classroom with a variety of behavioral challenges that teachers

are ill equipped to face. As noted in my review of literature, Wasik, Bond, and Hindman

(2006) noted that oftentimes the culture of Head Start classrooms specifically, and

preschool classrooms in general, is to keep order and manage the classroom.   In my role

as a literacy coach in a publically funded preschool program serving low income

children, I often found that I first had to assist the teacher in addressing behavioral and

classroom management concerns before we could begin to address language and literacy

instruction in the classroom. This is not surprising given the data that indicates that over

40% of children growing up in poverty demonstrate delays in social competencies and

communication abilities at school entry and over 20% exhibit high rates of disruptive

behavior that undermine school adjustment (Kaiser et al., 2000). These deficits reflect

the deleterious affects of poverty, such as exposure to violence, stress and maternal

depression, on parenting practices (Lengua, Honorado, & Bush, 2007; Li-Grining, 2007).

When considered in this context, it is not surprising that the teachers in my study most

frequently referred to the socialization aspects of preschool.

Not surprisingly, when asked to remember her first day as a teacher, Elizabeth

referenced the paperwork as being the most challenging part of the job:

> ELIZABETH: I think the hardest part is getting used to the to the
> paperwork getting the paperwork because paperwork is it is not just you
> know its not just like um regular paper its not just like your daily
> paperwork that you do um like the center director will you know just come
> and through just give you anything and say I need this by tomorrow I need
> this by such and such a date and you need to get it done you know that it
> kind of…..

As described in earlier sections, Elizabeth's frequently referenced the paperwork

demands of the Head Start program during her interviews, and her nervousness about

paperwork rather than her ability to meet the needs of the children was congruent with

data from other sources. It is important to note that the paperwork requirements of the

Head Start program are substantial, and as with any subsidized program, documentation

must be in place to justify federal dollars. This is another task that competes with

teacher's time and ability to attend to the children and no doubt contributes to the

teachers feeling that portfolios are just another paperwork requirement of the program as

opposed to an integral part of the curriculum.

Summary

When reflecting on my own path to becoming a preschool teacher, I had a

comparable experience to those described by the teachers in my study in that while I had

a Bachelor's degree in another field (similar to Carla's experience) I took my child

development coursework after having been hired as a teacher. I remember my supervisor asking me for a lesson plan on my first day in the classroom and having no idea how to write one, and feeling overwhelmed by behavior issues and unsure of how to communicate with my Spanish speaking children and families. Again, this was quite a different experience than that of elementary school teachers, who undergo extensive training prior to entering their own classroom.

All of the teachers in my study discussed being unprepared for their new role as a classroom teacher and names strategies used to acquire knowledge and skills. Carla and Pamela discussed specific mentors who helped them during their early years as teachers by "showing them the ropes". The concept of mentoring as a means to provide early childhood professional development has received more attention in recent years, and the use of literacy coaches was a prominent feature of Early Reading First grants. Additionally, the Head Start program now funds mentor teacher positions as a means to improve teacher practices and support the implementation of the Child Outcomes Framework. Pamela and Carla were the only teachers to speak explicitly about their mentors, and their experiences will be described in the following section. When asked about mentors, both Claudia and Elizabeth stated that they relied on themselves and were self motivated to continue with their schooling and become a teacher, and their experiences will be detailed in a later section.

Mentoring

Mentoring, being an apprentice, and being a student teacher have all been cited as important parts of preservice teacher preparation (Spodek & Saracho, 1990, Beirman, et al., 2008). The CCI interview specifically asked about mentors and if the teachers had

anyone that mentored them in the early stages of their career. Both Carla and Pamela

named specific mentors and discussed the ways in which these mentors supported them

as they entered the profession. Pamela spoke of several mentors who supported her,

beginning when Ms Margaret encouraged her to return to school to take the classes

necessary to become a teacher. Pamela also spoke of the mentoring that she received

from her site supervisor, Theresa, once she was hired as a teacher at Head Start.

> PAMELA: So she got transferred to TNC in 95 or 96 I believe and she asked me to come with her. So that showed me that maybe I was doing something right. Out of all the staff she just took me so yeah, yeah that is how I ended up at TNC. She was very, very good to me, very good, she was real patient and she showed me, and she talked to me about this and that and what to expect so it was really good.

A common theme in Pamela's description of her mentors is that they believed in her and

encouraged her to continue her education. In the case of Theresa, she also told her what

to expect and spent time listening to her and providing feedback, characteristics of a

successful mentor. Carla spoke very effusively about her mentor:

> CARLA: Well, let me tell you who inspired me. I was taking classes. I mean that's how I loved being a preschool teacher, because Karin Singe from McAlister College, she was my teacher for a lot of the classes that I took for child development and she is great! I mean she is so good! I mean she is an excellent person, an excellent teacher and just seeing her with all that energy and fun…and she always told me "You're going to be a great teacher! You need to keep going in this field!" Because I took, you know, a few classes there, when I start being a teacher, so you need to keep going. She even was looking for jobs for me. She was so good! She was my inspiration!

Carla described how fun the classes she attended with this professor were and that she

listened and gave her advice about becoming a preschool teacher and the issues that arose

in her classroom. Interestingly, I remember being a young teacher and taking a workshop

from the professor referred to by Carla. The workshop I attended was on emergent

curriculum and this was the first time I had been exposed to this concept. I remember

feeling as if I had finally found an approach that made sense to me, and similar to the

feelings that Carla described above, I felt energized and excited about all of the

possibilities for teaching children in meaningful and fun ways. Evidence of this influence

on Carla's practices was evident in her garden project and her full and enthusiastic

participation in an art show sponsored by the Head Start program. As part of this show,

teachers and children selected famous works of American art and had the children make

their own representations of the portrait they selected. Carla gathered many materials and

allowed the children to select how they wanted to replicate the portraits. She then framed

their work and displayed it in the big room on tables covered in white table cloths. Carla

shared her excitement about the process:

> CARLA: Oh the art show! I love art since I was little. I think children can
> produce some magnificent pieces of art but you just need to like I said
> again just put the um materials there, put the tools there, give them some
> guidance, some steps and um you know if they follow directions the art is
> gonna be wonderful! And another thing is make it very important, you
> know, display it in a very nice way so that way children will feel proud of
> what they did and they will want to continue to do it. I explained to the
> kids that we're going to have an art show and we were going to be
> working the whole week on different art. So we did chalk, watercolors, we
> did liquid water colors and we did acrylics so um they were excited
> because most of them like to paint, I said oh I want you guys to help me
> or......we're going have so much time and we're going to be painting!

Carla referred to the need to attend to the process over the product when doing art

activities with the children, a best practice recommended by DAP. Carla's espoused and

enacted practices related to the art show, when juxtaposed with her long, teacher directed

circle time and lack of opportunities for play, underscore the complexity of teaching and

learning and the need for more research into how teachers goals for children and affect

classroom practices. Claudia also participated in the art show, and her children made wonderful, child initiated pictures of flamingos that were in stark contrast to the adult model, craft-like art activities that I observed in her classroom.

The role of mentorship in relationship to early language and literacy development has been addressed by several researchers. Howes, James, and Ritchie (2003) reported that after controlling for formal education levels, the extent to which teachers were supervised and mentored predicted teachers' responsive involvement and engagement of children in language play. In addition, other researchers found that teachers' provision of language arts activities was predicted by their formal education, being mentored, and being supervised (Bellm, Whitebook, Cohen, & Stevenson, 2005). It is possible that the presences of a mentoring relationship accounted for some of the quality teaching observed in Carla and Pamela's classrooms, such as the use of scaffolding by Carla and Pamela's high and mid level CLASS scores.

While mentorship is a well recognized form of professional development, Rogoff's notion of apprenticeship (2008) is also useful in describing how cultural practices are transmitted both generationally and within institutions. This concept will be explored in greater detail in the next section, and will be proposed as possible explanation for the transmission of practices that are not research based or inline with curricular guidelines.

Apprenticeship

Rogoff (2008) used the term apprenticeship to describe the active process of individuals participating with others in culturally organized activities allowing for the development of mature participation in the activity by a less experienced individual. This

concept extends the traditional idea of craft apprenticeship to include participation in any other culturally organized activity, such as other kinds of work, schooling, and family relations. The idea of apprenticeship applies to both the specific nature of the activity, as well as the practices and institutions of the community in which the activity takes place.

This construct can be used to understand how practices get passed down from one teacher to another and why these practices might not be grounded in theory or research. What distinguishes apprenticeship from mentoring is that it is unstructured and takes place through observation of a more experienced individual in a particular setting. Mentoring is often more of a formal relationship, where a mentor can be named, as in the case of Pamela and Carla described above. All four teachers in my study discussed observing other teachers and learning from them the expected ways of doing things in that particular setting. Pamela spoke of her experiences working at the lab school at a local community college:

> PAMELA: Well you know what once I got in there and I started doing a lot of volunteer work around there and at the lab at City College and talking to the people there and just kind of looking and observing that way….
>
> INTERVIEWER: So the faculty who taught your classes.. …
>
> PAMELA: Mm hmm yes, yes. And then I kind o f saw how they were doing, how the teachers were teaching with my daughter so I kind of I got the chance to do a lot of hands on which was good, yeah.

Similar to Pamela, Claudia also referenced learning from other teachers:

> CLAUDIA: Yes some teachers did help me how to approach them and how to be more firm because I am very sensitive. In reference to approaching them before then I would just see it emotionally but at the same time I wasn't using my firmness so of course some teachers said you need to use your firmness also. I noticed some children do take advantage of them if you show them your emotional respect so I um felt that I learned the process from some teachers.

INTERVIEWER: And they helped you learn strategies?

CLAUDIA: Yes, I saw a lot of strategies from the way they interacted with children and, you know, art activities and you know I did learn a lot.

I remember having a similar experience during my first year as a teacher when a more seasoned teacher patiently explained to me the best way to talk to children in order to get them to comply with my requests. She described the need to rephrase directives such as "don't run" to "we use our walking feet in the classroom" and to phrase my directives as commands rather than requests. In this instance, I had to change my practices to accommodate the norms of my center and the interactional style that the children and teachers were accustomed to.

While Carla began her career as a teacher alone in a toddler classroom and discussed the difficulties that this posed, she also revealed strategies she used to address the problems and concerns that came up in her classroom:

CARLA: No, I think it's just that I didn't have nobody else there. I had to figure it out on my own. You know whatever it was I had to just figure it out. If the kids were biting, you know I had to figure it out. What to do to get the kids to stop biting.

INTERVIEWER: So what resources did you turn to to figure that out? How did you get through it?

CARLA: Well, I read books, that's one thing. And I asked co-workers and I asked my director, and the teachers at school. Since I was taking classes I would ask in my class, "Well, what would you do in this situation?" So they would help.

Both Carla and Claudia spoke about the problems they faced dealing with behavior issues, and, similar to own experience, sought more information about how to address these concerns in the classroom by taking classes and talking to and observing other teachers.

Elizabeth also referred to the teacher that she worked with when she was a teacher assistant:

> ELIZABETH: Um yes, I remember it was, I didn't know what to do but the teacher there she was very nice and she helped me she showed me around. She helped me a lot.

By observing other teachers, the teachers in my study picked up the habits and cultural norms of the preschool centers in which they were working. Rogoff (2003) noted that institutions are in effect cultural habits, in which previous generations' innovations become routine and are regarded as natural. Shotter (1978) defined this as "the-way-things-are-done", and all teachers spoke about observing and working with other teachers to learn how things worked in their particular setting.   In the case of preschool teachers, these practices passed down may not be based on the latest research in child development and this notion of institutionalized practices helps to explain the inconsistencies between espoused and enacted early literacy practices and those called for by both the research and the Creative Curriculum. This helps to explain the teacher's narrow views of language and literacy learning and their reliance on practices not supported by current research, such as rote memorization activities that are divorced from context.

Rogoff's (2003) conceptualization of cultural communities purports that each generation participates in the practices and traditions of their elders, within the context of shared engagement in valued and routine cultural activities. I argue that there is a cultural community at the preschool teacher level in which teachers believe, based on practices observed by other teachers and the culture of education in our society, that they need to use didactic teaching methods during circle time, use worksheets to help children obtain school readiness skills, and teach children the days of the week by reviewing the

calendar. The presence of these institutionalized norms was made apparent to me recently when I conducted a workshop for teachers on the CLASS. One of the teachers asked me if it was a program requirement that they sing the "Open Shut Them" song, which is a song commonly sung in preschool classrooms before children begin eating. Although my answer was that this song is not required, it has become such an institutionalized practice that the teacher asking the question assumed that it was a requirement of the program. Reflecting on my own experiences, I remember being a new teacher and observing the other teachers sing this song with the children. I quickly added this practice into my repertoire without a clear understanding of why the song was sung, rather, it was simply something everyone did.

During my time in Head Start, administrators and education specialists have discouraged the use of certain practices that seem to be an inherent part of the preschool culture. The idea of apprenticeship and inexperienced teachers learning on the job from more experienced teachers could explain why inappropriate practices were observed at Montgomery Head Start and why I continue to see them at the centers that I am responsible for. An example of this is the use of craft like art projects that require children to replicate an adult model. These types of art activities, such as having the children make turkeys at Thanksgiving or rabbits in the springtime are common in preschool classrooms despite guidelines such as DAP and those found in the Creative Curriculum that promote open ended art projects that emphasize the process of learning over the final product. Although the teachers referred to their studies during the interviews, these studies were actually more like themes, with teacher directed activities predominating. The activities that I observed as part of Claudia's bug project, for

example, were provided by her, rather resulting from children's brainstorming, questioning, and curiosity about bugs.

In terms of literacy, tracing letters is another common practice in preschools that is discouraged by DAP and the Creative Curriculum. However, despite curricular guidance and professional development that advises teachers not to engage in this practice, it continues to take place as evidenced by the review of the portfolios. Dickinson (2001) referred to this as a single-minded focus on the print-related dimensions of literacy, and data from my study are congruent with this. Work samples, observations, and interview data all pointed to the fact that the teachers in my study equated literacy to book reading, teaching the letters and their sounds, and teaching them how to write their names. This is very different from the integrated, content rich language and literacy approach called for by the research (Dickinson, 2003; Neuman, 2006) and supported by the Creative Curriculum.

Historical Approaches to Education

When considering why teachers have such a difficult time letting go of these practices deemed inappropriate by mainstream child development guidelines, it is important to consider a variety of factors at both proximal and distal levels, such as teacher's beliefs and goals for children and the norms, values, and traditions found in various cultural communities. It appears as if while the teachers in my study adapted some of their practices from those experienced as a child, they have not totally given up these practices, despite their stated beliefs in the practices promoted by the Creative Curriculum and DAP.

A criticism of the CLASS (Smagorinsky, 2009) has been that it does not address cultural variations in the classroom but rather seeks to "impose the qualities of affluent suburban schools on all classrooms" (p. 524). In some cultural communities, for example, asking questions or questioning an adult, rather than being a valued activity, is viewed as being impertinent and rude. It is possible that the teacher's inability to engage in the types of teaching practices required for a high score on the instructional support domain of the CLASS is a reflection of their beliefs about how children should interact with adults. All teachers spoke of the need not only for adults to respect children, but also for children to respect adults, and it seems as if this belief was ingrained in the teachers based on their cultural and linguistic heritage and participation in cultural communities. Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) noted that practices, more than quality, appear to be deeply embedded within value and belief systems that are rooted in ethnicity, community, and social class, and my research supports this assertion.

Recalling Bronfenbrenner's chrono and macrosystem, the focus on teacher led instruction to teach specific skills is rooted in the U.S. elementary school system, which relies heavily on an adult-run instructional model (Bennett and LeCompte. 1990; Cuban, 1984; McDermott. 1993). In this model, children are viewed as passive recipients or "empty vessels, who need to be filled by the teacher and have little engagement other than to receive information from the teacher (Silbeman, 1970). Rogoff, Matusov, and White (1996) attributed this to the nature of educational philosophy and practices which comes from educational policy makers, administrators, teachers and parents. The prevalence of this philosophy in our society leads to powerful norms and expectations that contradict the guidelines of DAP, the Creative Curriculum, and several of the

CLASS dimensions, which all call for children's ideas and interests to guide the curriculum.

An additional explanation for reliance on worksheets, didactic teaching methods, and the predominance of the empty vessel viewpoint was the belief expressed by the teachers in my study that teachers must prepare children for kindergarten by teaching them specific skills. This idea was apparent in all of the interviews, and Pamela specifically referred to sending home packets of worksheets so that the parents and children would know what to expect in kindergarten. This belief system was evident in research reviewed in Chapter Two, as teachers in the preschool programs studied by Wishard et al. (2003) used teacher directed practices to teach literacy and numeracy skills to the children, and similar to the enacted practices observed in my study, these practices were based on the teachers' beliefs that it was their responsibility to directly teach children basic skills. Wishard and colleagues (2003) noted that in their study, these skills were predetermined by the teacher, who believed that her task was to "deliver this information to the children and to make sure that the children learned it. These participants appeared to believe that knowledge was in the hand (heads) of the teachers and that in order to succeed at school, children must acquire it from them" (p. 84), reflecting the predominant educational paradigm in the United States.

These findings are similar to those reported by Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler (2007), These researchers reported that child care director's beliefs about the role of early childhood education reflected the notion that academic instruction was necessary to prepare the children in their care for participation in a society affected by racism and discrimination. Teacher practices reflected these beliefs and involved the use of activities

such as worksheets and other teacher directed activities. The teachers studied by Sanders, Deihl, and Kyler presented activities to the children in a fun and engaging way, recalling practices observed in my research, including Claudia's use of a song and flashcards to teach the letters of the alphabet. While flashcards are generally prohibited by DAP, Claudia presented them in a way that was entertaining and meaningful to the children.

Conclusion

The teachers in my study clearly knew the rhetoric of early childhood education, including the notion that "play is the work of children" and that child initiated learning should be encouraged, and were able to articulate these concepts. However, my data points to the fact that the relationship between espoused and enacted practices was very fluid and situational, with enacted practices both reflecting and contradicting articulated practices. Pamela's warm and responsive read aloud, for example, was very different than the Emerging Academics Snapshot data that indicated monitoring as her primary form of child engagement, and Carla's use of scaffolding and relationship based teaching style conflicted with her long, teacher directed circle time. Supporting my theoretical framework and sociocultural approach to literacy learning, my examination of teacher early literacy practices during data analysis evolved to become more about the teacher's overall goals for children rather than specific practices used to help children gain pre-literacy skills. This could be due to the lack of sophistication of the teachers in my study and their inability to name and implement research based early language and literacy practices, which emerged as a major finding of my study. Overall, the results of my data indicated that teaching and learning are very complex processes and that teacher practices

are influenced by various overlapping, and sometimes conflicting, norms, values, and

belief systems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary of Findings and Implications for Practice

Smith (2001) noted that "central to what happens in every early childhood classroom is the teacher" (p.149). The purpose of this research was to describe teacher early literacy practices in a particular setting and explore the complexity of variables influencing the experiences of teachers and children in a Head Start center. Rogoff (2003) highlighted the complexity of conducting research from a cultural communities perspective by noting that:

> "The dilemma is that for research to be valuable, it needs both to reflect
> the phenomena from a perspective that makes sense locally and to go
> beyond simply presenting the details of a particular local. The issue is one
> of effectively combining depth of understanding of the people and setting
> studied and going beyond particularities to make a more general statement
> about a phenomena" (p. 29)

The goal of this chapter is to address this dilemma by discussing how my findings in a particular context can build upon the extant literature on teacher early literacy practices and add to the growing knowledge base of how teacher beliefs and ideologies affect the teacher practices and the experiences of low income preschoolers. The major findings to emerge from my data analysis will be reviewed first, followed by implications for practice and areas for future research.

Major Findings

Research to Practice Gap

The presence of a research to practice gap was evidenced by data collected in response to all four of my research questions. An examination of espoused and enacted early literacy practices and the relationship between them indicated that teachers used

research based practices infrequently and were unable to name them during interviews. My concern with the importance of teachers' inability to name research based practices stems from my desire to propel early childhood education, particularly for at risk children, towards excellence. Given the fact the meaning is conveyed through language, and in keeping with my socio-cultural framework, I believe that teachers should be aware of and intentionally implement research based strategies into their instruction and ongoing, relationship based interactions with children. This finding is consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, which pointed to the poor quality of preschool programs serving low income children, including dual language learners. Findings from my study support this earlier research, and while there were examples of exemplary teaching described in response to my first research question, these examples were not of the duration or frequency required to result in improved outcomes for children at risk. The teachers in my study were not able to name the research based literacy strategies described in my review of literature, and exhibited a narrow view of early literacy learning that was oftentimes disconnected from other areas of development, including social emotional and language development.

In addition to not being able to articulate research based practices, my analysis of enacted practices indicated that the teachers used research based instructional strategies infrequently. This was most evident in the lack of conversations that took place between the teachers and children, as research points to the critical role that language development plays in the development of early literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). The conversations that were observed were generally limited in depth and lacked

intentionality on the part of the teachers to encourage higher order thinking skills, the use of analysis or reasoning, and the introduction of new and varied vocabulary.

In addition, Emerging Academics Snapshot data indicated that teachers engaged in intense interactions with target children not at all (Pamela and Claudia) or rarely (Elizabeth and Carla). This type of interaction style is at the highest end of the continuum measured by the snapshot procedure and was coded when teachers provide one on one attention to the children in a manner designed to scaffold learning within the context of the teacher child relationship. Another particularly salient indicator of the research to practice gap was the lack of scaffolding as an instructional strategy, with Emerging Academics Snapshot data indicating that Carla was the only teacher to use this strategy with the children.

An additional area in which the research to practice gap was evident was in the enacted practices observed for dual language learners. Research clearly documents the benefits of supporting children's home language while they are learning a second language, and this practice was observed in only one of the four classrooms under investigation. My research pointed to several variables at both distal and proximal levels that affected teacher practices for dual language learners. At the most proximal level, teachers' beliefs about the purpose of preschool and the nature of language learning led to the use of specific strategies teachers' believed would help children learn English and thus be successful in school. According to teacher report, these beliefs were also echoed by the parents, who told teachers that their goal for sending their children to preschool was for the children to learn English, leading to the creation of a collective belief system on the efficacy of an English immersion approach to teaching children English. This

collective ideology was mediated in Carla's classroom, however, by her beliefs about the value of maintaining the home language as way to support the development of English, and further points to the role of teacher beliefs on the type of instructional support children receive.

At the more distal level, how to meet the needs of dual language learners is just beginning to be addressed at the federal Head Start level and at the state level, as evidenced by recent Head Start webinars, publications, and institutes and the addition of EL measures to the DRDP 2010 (CDE, 2010). As the result of my insider status with the agency under investigation, I know that this issue has not yet been addressed at the overall program level, despite the fact that the program is located in a city that borders Mexico. This finding reflected the assertions by Vaughan et at (2006) and Gutiérrez, Zepeda, and Castro (2010) that the needs of dual language learners are generally neglected in the research, and it is therefore not surprising that practices that conflict with best practices were observed in my study. There clearly exists a need to explore not only teacher practices for dual language learners, but the role of beliefs and values on these practices, and this represents a timely and important area for future research.

While the video taped literacy lessons (with the exception of Elizabeth) and several naturalistic and CLASS observations pointed to practices that were inline with the research, these practices were infrequent and not sustained throughout the day. The snapshot procedure indicated many times when the target children were engaged in no learning at all and adult child engagement that was at the low end of complexity. Despite research on the efficacy of intervention in the early years and the increased accountability being placed on early childhood education, results from my study support earlier research

indicating that the effects of research and policy have yet to make it to the practitioner level.

Incongruence between Espoused and Enacted Practices

My data points to a complex relationship between espoused and enacted practices, highlighting the multifaceted nature of teaching and learning. Rather than integrating learning into all components of the day, teachers in my study tended to compartmentalize literacy learning, and viewed circle time/large group as the opportunity to directly teach academic skills. Despite being familiar with the rhetoric of the field and the notion that children learn through play, this belief system was not consistently translated into practice. Although teachers did engage in playful methods to teach the children literacy and numeracy skills, enacted practices were not inline with the child initiated, play based foundations of the Creative Curriculum. It appears as if the teachers in my study lacked a comprehensive understanding of the integrated nature of early learning, and tended to view the development of socialization skills as the primary form of social emotional development. The CLASS and Creative Curriculum, both of which are based on the latest research in the field, rely heavily on the role of the teacher as a decision maker and on his/her ability to extend children's natural curiosity and interests into meaningful learning experiences. During the data collection period, I observed many missed opportunities for teachers to build on children's interests and provide them with meaningful activities that required higher order thinking skills. Dickinson (2001) described this as intentional teaching, and when considering teacher level supports needed to result in improved language and literacy outcomes for children noted that:

> "For a teacher to provide children optimal supports in all these areas, he or she must have a deep understanding of what children need, skillful ability to provide appropriate experiences throughout the day, and the willingness to expend the energy needed to support children's development all day long" (p. 286).

The teachers in my study lacked this deep understanding of children's development described by Dickinson, and this resulted in enacted practices that were not always consistent with those articulated by the teachers and/or called for by the program curriculum.

Findings Based on Theoretical Framework

My research pointed to the role of teacher beliefs and goals for children on the educational setting and the saliency of these beliefs despite curricular guidance and policy mandates. In addition to teacher beliefs, cultural norms about the way things are done affected teacher practices in ways that were often inconsistent with guidelines provided by best practices in the field. My research highlighted how the convergence of many variables, such as immigration status, country/state of origin, and childhood educational and linguistic experiences affected teacher beliefs and practices. Teacher participation in diverse and overlapping cultural communities influenced practices in complex and dynamic ways that were intimately tied not only to their own experiences and goals for children, but also to their beliefs about how to best meet these goals. The teachers in my study, for example, all wanted the children in their classroom to learn English in order to be successful in school, but employed different practices to reach this goal. As Maxwell (2004) stated, all interventions are filtered through the beliefs, values and goals of participants, and this notion, supported by my research, could explain the

poor or modest magnitude of large scale, standardized interventions, such as ERF and PCERS.

The findings of my research have implications for practice at several levels, and are especially timely given the increased focus on early childhood outcomes and the debate as to the type of instructional strategies and methods best suited to meeting national, states, and local school readiness goals. These implications will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Implications for Practice and Areas for Future Research

Implications for Preschool Teacher Pre Service

The results of this study add to the extant literature in the field regarding the level of education and quality of experiences that are optimal for effective teaching and learning in preschool classrooms. These teachers became teachers prior to earning their degree and participated in on the job training, mentoring and/or apprenticeship experiences. Unlike elementary school teachers, who participate in student teaching with experienced teachers in a classroom setting prior to having their own classroom, the teachers at Montgomery Head Start began teaching with little practical or theoretical knowledge and reflected on the difficulties that this posed during interviews. A supervised student teacher experience encourages teachers to reflect on their practice, discuss their classroom experiences with university professors and a mentor teacher, and refine their skills while still in school, a practice that is missing from many early education professional development programs. Although community colleges offer a work experience class as part of the requirement for obtaining an AA degree, formal and

sustained mentoring is not part of these classes offered by the community colleges or four year universities located in the area where my study took place.

It is important to note, however, that formalized student teaching experiences at the preschool level and a four year degree may exclude individuals interested in entering the field who are unable to attend a four year university in which classes are generally held during the day. Due to economic circumstances, the teachers in my study, as well as many of the teachers that I work with, worked during the day and took classes in the evening. My own circumstances were similar, in that I originally investigated becoming an elementary school teacher, however, could not financially complete a year of student teaching. Becoming a preschool teacher was a viable option for me, as it allowed me to work and attend school in the evening. Additionally, requiring Head Start parents to have a four year degree and student teaching experience would be an employment barrier to many Head Start parents, such as Pamela, and would diminish one of the strengths of the Head Start program which is parent involvement and hiring of staff that reflect the communities served.

My research added to the extant literature indicating various pathways to becoming a teacher and the often times conflicting evidence as to what type of education is needed to be an effective preschool teachers. Early et al. (2007) found that policies focused solely on increasing teachers' education were not sufficient to improve classroom quality or maximizing children's academic gains. These researchers noted that raising the effectiveness of early childhood education requires a broad range of professional development activities and that support should be targeted towards teachers' interactions with children. Other researchers (James, Howes, & Richie, 2003; Fuligini et

at, 2010) have identified diverse pathways to becoming a preschool teacher that include

formal education, child development training and supervision and mentoring. Of the

teachers in my study, although Elizabeth was the only teacher to attend a four year public

university with a department of child and family development, she struggled the most to

implement evidence based practices and struggled the most when naming her practices.

Carla and Pamela, on the other hand, attended a private four year university and spoke of

the mentoring they received early in their careers. Clearly, more research is needed in

this area, and the implications for practice of my research are especially timely given the

Head Start mandate that at least 50% of Head Start teachers will have a Bachelor's

degree by 2013. My research supported the notion that there are various and diverse

pathways to becoming an effective preschool teacher, and that simply having a

Bachelor's degree does not guarantee high quality teaching.

Implications for Dual Language Learners

Findings related to teacher practices with dual language learners are particularly

timely given the increasing number of children entering preschool as dual language

learners. Espinoza (2010) cited the need for a clear program vision and measurable and

achievable goals as the foundation of high quality and effective programs for dual

language learners.   In my study, the lack of vision and leadership about how to best serve

dual language learners at the center and program level resulted in classrooms that

sounded very different based on teacher's beliefs about the nature of dual language

learning. This is interesting given that Head Start is a highly regulated program with

specific guidelines on how to provide program services. However, until recently there

has been a conspicuous lack of attention paid to how to meet the needs of dual language

learners at the federal and state level, and this macro level variable understandably affected classroom level practices. My research highlighted the role of teacher beliefs on practices for dual language learners, and propels researchers and practitioners to examine dual language learning in a more fine grained manner than has been done in the past. The fact that the teachers in my study, with the exception of Carla, used practices that are contrary to research on effective strategies for dual language learners, is an important implication for practice that I will address at the Head Start program under investigation in my role as the director of educational services.

The finding that Spanish was used for direction and English was used for instruction, as well as the fact that Carla was the only teacher to read to the children in Spanish, has serious implications for practice, especially when viewed from a sociocultural perspective. Research has shown that when children enter a school setting in which their home language is not valued, can suffer from   In addition, the fact that English was used for "learning" and Spanish was used to manage behavior, reflects assumptions about the power of each language and the dominance of English over Spanish for learning. As noted by Genesee et al. (2004) as children leave the cultural community of the home and family, and enter the cultural community of school they are at risk for cultural and linguistic identity displacement as the language, norms and values of the school and dominant culture replace or compete with those learned at home. Through their use of English as the language of academic instruction and Spanish as the language of discipline and behavior management, the teachers in my study sent powerful messages to the children about which language was preferred. This finding recalls the work of ethnographic researchers such as Heath (1983) and Moll, Velez-Ibanez and

Greenberg (1990) who pointed to the cultural nature of early learning and the differences between home and school. Unfortunately, teachers in my study, failed to use children's funds of knowledge to enhance learning and build a bridge between the practices of home and the practices of school.

Leadership Implications

The finding that practices can vary widely across classrooms and be disconnected from both best practices and program guidelines recalls the notion of loose coupling used in the K-12 system. Spillane (2006) described loose coupling as the weak ties between policy and administration and classroom work, while Elmore (2000) noted that the effect of loose coupling is that "teachers, working in isolated classrooms, under highly uncertain conditions, manage the technical core of teaching" (p.6). Because loose-coupling has been proposed as a reason why research based instructional practices are rarely implemented in more than a small proportion of classrooms and schools (Cuban, 1984; Cuban, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Elmore, 1996), it can help to explain why teachers in my study were unable to articulate or implement research based strategies in their classrooms. Loose coupling was evidenced by the fact that there was no cohesive vision at the center or program for how to meet the needs of dual language learners and that teachers were left to their own devices based on what they believed was best for their children. A lack of administrative oversight was also evident in the portfolio review, as it was clear that administrators had not reviewed portfolios for accuracy or completeness.

Just as teachers need to have the skills needed to articulate and enact research based practices in their classrooms, so too do site supervisors and other leaders in the field of early childhood education. In my own work as an area director and director of

educational services, I have worked hard to empower supervisory staff to see themselves as instructional leaders and to have a more hands on role in what takes place in the classroom. My finding on the research to practice gap observed at Montgomery Head Start has important implications for practice, as the field of early childhood education needs to grow leaders that can support teachers in the new demands being placed on them. While Margaret was a very hands on site supervisor, and was often seen in the classrooms supporting her teachers, she did not assume the role of instructional leader as evidenced by the presence of very long circle times, review of the portfolios, and mismatch between enacted practices and those called for by the curriculum. While she did spearhead the Dr. Seuss week, which was a very fun week for the children and teachers, the week was mainly built around teacher directed art activities and the reading of his books. While the introduction of books by Dr. Seuss had the potential to introduce the children to complicated story plots and for the development of phonological awareness, these opportunities were not capitalized on. Rather, activities that took place during Dr. Seuss week addressed surface level skills and did not take the children, or the teachers, to a deeper understanding of language and literacy. It has been my experience, that many site supervisors are promoted to the position without consideration of their teaching ability or ability to lead and manage staff. Reflecting again on my own experience, I was promoted to a site supervisor after three years of teaching and was woefully unprepared for this role. Supporting and developing leadership in early childhood education is an important step towards closing the research to practice gap.

Next Steps

Many questions arise from this work. The research to practice gap represents a critical area for further investigation given the data presented in earlier chapters regarding the poor quality of programs serving low income preschool children. The exploration of what can be done at a theoretical and practical level to close both the research to practice gap and the school readiness gap is critical. My research points to several key areas that warrant additional study, including continued investigation of how teacher beliefs affect classroom instruction, particularly for dual language learners. This topic has not been fully addressed in the extant early childhood literature and provides a new framework for examining the both the roots of the research to practice gap as well as possible ways to close it.

An additional area that my research draws attention to is the role of the leader and collective leadership in the field of early childhood education. While there is a rich theoretical knowledge base surrounding evidence based practices that lead to improved outcomes for children at risk, including dual language learners, this knowledge base is not being translated to the practitioner level. More examination of the leadership implications discussed above is essential if we are going to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be successful.

Finally, my findings point to the contextualized nature of early learning and the need for researchers to ask questions and employ methodological designs that uncover the nuance and complexity of development. The use of a mixed methods design allows for the quantitative outcome data critical to increasing our understanding of "what

works," while qualitative data allows for the examination of the deeper and more complicated processes that affect teaching, learning, and development.

Conclusion

When describing the pedagogical culture at Montgomery Head Start, it has been helpful for me to use the Dr. Seuss books on Margaret's bookshelf as a metaphor for the overall quality of the center: the books were good, but were not of sufficient difficulty or complexity to give the students the support needed to enter kindergarten with the skills and competencies needed to overcome the school readiness gap. While there was evidence of warm and caring relationships between the children and the teachers and moments of exemplary teaching, the early language and literacy practices detailed in this study were not of the quality or frequency needed to improve outcomes for children at risk, including dual language learners. The various and complex influences of participation in cultural communities and how this affects teachers' beliefs and practices is an area that warrants more attention as the field struggles to understand why many large scale early literacy interventions have failed to produce the results hoped for.

Adult Involvement Scale

Peer Play Scale

Pre-Academics/Emergent Literacy Scale

The snapshot is a time-sampling procedure used to capture aspects of adult-child interaction, teaching style, and the activities in which children are engaged. Over the course of a program morning, a minimum of 50 observations are collected for each child. Four target children who are study participants are observed in sequential order throughout the morning. To complete a Snapshot the observer locates the target child, observes for 20 seconds and records his/her social interactions and activities. The observer then moves on to the next child on the list. The process is repeated in four-minute blocks of time. Each sheet should take 20 minutes, for a total of 3 hrs and 20 minutes of observations.

ACTIVITY SETTING:

This set of codes captures the activity that the teacher has set up for the children to do. This is based on the schedule of the day an the different activities that children engage in throughout each day

Routine- code when a child is engaged in:

> naps, toileting, standing in line, clean-up, wait time between activities

Meals/snacks-code when child is engaged in:

> Eating lunch, breakfast or snacks, or enjoying food that they cooked during a cooking project

Circle-time-code when a child is engaged in:

> Circle time activities where the whole group is gathered with a teacher for a **adult directed** activity. Activities include stories, songs, conversations, rhymes, calendar,

Free-choice/Center-code when a child is engaged in:

> Free choice activities. During this time **children are able to select** what and where they would like to play or learn. Activities include individual art projects, blocks, pretend area, puzzles, reading, puppets, computers, science areas etc.

<u>Outside time</u>-code when a child is engaged in:

> Outside play including bike-riding, climbing structures, wading pools, water and sand play, easel painting, jump rope, run and chase games, structured sports like hop scotch, catch, bean bag throw.

<u>Small group time-</u>code when child is engaged in:

Small group activities that are teacher organized and/or teacher led, (by teacher organized it means that teachers decide what children are to be doing, even if they are not participating in the group themselves.)

PEER INTERACTION

This section refers to the complexity of the child's social interactions with other children. The categories are listed from the simplest to the most complex. Code only one category per interval, choosing the category reflecting the highest, or most complex level of social interaction with peers that occurred regardless of duration. If a "nonplay category" was marked, don't code a "social" category on the same intervalgroup art projects, writing stories, collective building, cooking projects, small group instruction, science experiments, etc.

CHILD ENGAGEMENT
This section captures . This includes their work with letters, words, numbers, counting, shapes, number and science concepts, and their use of books, pencils, markers, paper, magnifying glasses, measuring cups, graphs etc. **More than one category can be coded**.

<u>Pre-reading</u>:- code when a child is:

> engaged in reading stories, being read to, pretending to read, identifying words, is involved in a sequencing activity, is recognizing symbols, and pictures as having meaning, is visually tracking, is 'reading the environment' (i.e.: looking for labels to identify the right place to put away toys), is reading words from a flip chart or practicing a class poem with visual support, reading off the board. Essentially this is a WHOLE LANGUAGE engagement for children

<u>Letter/sound learning:</u> code when a child is involved in adult initiated:

> chants, alliterations, rhymes that help them recognize sounds, talking about sound-letter relationships, sounding out words. Essentially this is a PHONICS based engagement for children.

<u>Oral language development:</u> code when a child is engaging with providers. Children may also be interacting with each other, but there must be adult support.

talking about stories, telling stories of their own,(narratives that have meaning) answering and asking questions, is engaged in singing, is practicing new vocabulary, is learning new words or expressions in a second language.

NOTE: In order to code this you must also be able to code ENCOURAGES or SCAFFOLDS in the Adult-Child engagement section. We are only talking about oral-language development that is supported by adults.

<u>Pre-writing:</u> code when a child is:

practicing writing, pretending to write, using a computer keyboard, playing with alphabet letters or puzzles, practicing writing her name, incorporating writing into play, such as writing grocery lists or taking orders. Also code for tracing, using alphabet stamps or telling a story to a teacher who is writing it for them. Be careful to distinguish pre-writing from drawing. It will be important to note the context of the activity in order to discern the difference.

NOTE: This category encompasses writing of both numbers and letters, and moves across the curriculum in reading, math, science, and social studies

<u>Math:</u> code when a child is:

rote counting, counting with 1:1 correspondence, skip counting, identifying written numerals, matching numbers to pictures, making graphs, playing counting games (e.g.; dice, dominoes, Candyland, Chutes and Ladders), keeping track of how many days until a special event, counting marbles in a jar, playing concentration with numbers. Code when children are working on math work sheets and are, for example, using counters or fingers as strategies to figure out the answers. Also code when child is identifying shapes, talking about the properties of shapes (how many sides), finding shapes in the room, identifying same and different, comparing (big/little, biggest), sorting (by color, size, shape), discerning patterns (red blue red blue, or green rectangle, blue triangle), measuring for cooking, or figuring out inches/feet.

<u>Science:</u> code when a child is:

identifying and exploring natural phenomena in their environment (e.g.: bugs, leaves, weather), using science equipment (e.g.: mirrors, magnets, magnifying glasses). Reading books, identifying or talking about animals, body parts, life cycle of the butterfly, birth, class pets. This may often be double coded with pre-reading. Children may hypothesize, guess, estimate. Includes conversation or use of 5 senses. Children may be planting seeds, gathering rocks etc.

Aesthetics: Code when a child is:

> engaged in art or music activities/ projects. Children may be painting, illustrating stories, sharing art work, making original drawings, using pastels or watercolors, modeling with clay or play doh, making collages, making jewelry. Children may be listening to music (double-code with other activity if teacher **purposefully** has music playing during other activities), using musical instruments, dancing, or taking parts in a play.

Computer: Code when a child is:

> engaged in an activity at the computer. The content of the software will be captured in other child engagement codes.

ADULT-CHILD ENGAGEMENT

This section complements the "Adult Interaction" section above and provides more detail about the specific ways in which the caregiver interacts with the target child individually, in relation to the development of emergent literacy skills.

Organization: Code if the teacher is getting the class settled, taking roll, assigning homework, transitioning between activities:

Encourages: Code if the teacher:

> encourages children to read books, practice writing, engage in play with literacy themes, displays and **praises** children's work, **provides opportunitie**s for children to participate in activities designed to develop pre-academic skills **provides motivating materials** such as flannel board stories or BIG books, or finger puppets, masks, counting games, collections, cooking projects, science experiments, multi-skin color crayons, paper etc, encourages children to talk with one another about what they are doing or thinking.

Scaffolds: Code if the teacher uses any of the following methods to build on children's initiations:

> The teacher is using the curiosity of the children and responding to add to their learning, uses visuals and concrete objects to help children learn new vocabulary, and new concepts, uses gestures and body language to convey ideas, speaks slowly and carefully, repeats, supplies words to describe actions, elicits responses, refers to children's experiences, narrates what children are doing, asks questions, helps children expand on their answers and thoughts works to link classroom activities to children's lives and experiences. **The teacher is NOT searching for a right answer. There are multiple solutions, and it is acceptable for children to think about solving problems, in many ways.**

Reads: Code if the adult:

> reads to a group of children or the target child alone.

Instructs: Code if the adult is teaching in a DIDACTIC manner. This is teacher-led instruction:

> identifies labels and signs in the environment, points out letters and provides corresponding sounds. Helps children understand that print is everywhere around them and that reading and writing are ways to get ideas, information and knowledge. Helps children know how to hold a book, and turn pages. Helps a child complete an alphabet puzzle or provides support while they are practicing letter writing. **The teacher is searching for ONE right answer.**

ADULT INTERACTION:

This section reflects the level of complexity of the adult's interaction with the child either individually or during whole group activities (e.g., group story-time, sharing, rote drill and practice). These categories are listed from least to most complex. Choose only one code per interval, the one that reflects the highest level of interaction reached in that interval, regardless of duration. This section **must** be coded if the teacher and the child are within approximately 3 feet of each other. It **must** also be coded if either the teacher or child attempts interaction (could be from across the room).

Monitor: Code if the teacher and target child:

> are within three feet of each other and the teacher is unaware of the child, ignores child, or does not notice or attempt to engage and "rope in" a child who's clearly not paying attention during whole group activities (although rest of class is engaged in the activity). Example: During group story-reading time, the teacher doesn't notice and/or does nothing to help involve **target child** with group although the child is clearly "spacing out," off-task, misbehaving, etc.

Routine: Code if the teacher:

> interacts with target child during routine caregiving (e.g.,opens a milk container, wipes child's nose, passes out materials) but makes no verbal response to the child.

Minimal: Code if the adult:

> answers direct requests for help, or gives verbal directives with no reply encouraged. Or during whole group activities, adult verbally responds with

simple, one-word sentences (e.g., "okay," "that's right," "good,") or with mere nodding of head

Simple: Code if the adult:

uses some warm or helpful physical contact (beyond the essential routine care) or verbally answers the child's verbal bids but does not elaborate. Or during whole group activities, adult responds to child/children with short sentences or adult initiates simple-social interaction (e.g., adult says, "Yes, you need to glue that piece." "You're doing such a good job listening!")

Elaborated: Code if the teacher:

engages in some physical response,(thumbs up, big smile, high fives, touch to the shoulder etc.) maintains a close proximity to the target child, acknowledges the child's statements and responds, but does not restate "Yes you need to glue that piece-what would happen if you did not glue it down?", "You're doing such a good job-you are writing so very carefully", sits with the child during play, suggests materials, expands play or engagement in activities etc.

Elaborated Group-Code if the adult is:

engaging a small or large purposeful grouping in stories, songs, questions and answers, Simon Says, etc. We are looking at the attempt of the adult here to bring in the entire group. IF the child is engaged with the central adult or another adult while the group activity is going on, than that code SUPERCEDES all group codes.

Intense: Code if the teacher:

hugs or holds the target child, restates the child's statement, thus acknowledging them and providing answers or helping the child figure out their own answers, , engages in conversation, plays interactively with the child, works 1:1 to develop pre-academic skills…works on a puzzle, talks about dinosaur eggs, or sits and eats with the child in a social atmosphere.

APPENDIX B
Treatment of Native Languages

NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER NATIVE LANGUAGE

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
Number of Children with English as their first language				
Number of children with Spanish as their first language				

LANGUAGE OF CONVERSATION & INSTRUCTION

Language	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
Conversation & Instruction in Spanish				
Occasional greetings/speaking in Spanish (<10%)				

PROPORTION OF LANGUAGE USE

Proportion of Language Use	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
90% English, 10% native language				
70% English, 30% native language				
50% - 50%				
30% English, 70% native language				
10% English, 90% native language				

USE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE IN CLASSROOM

What percentage would you say the children's native language, to whatever extent it is used, is used for managing the children's behavior versus for encouraging thinking?

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
Managing behavior				
Encouraging thinking				

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
The teacher speaks to children in their native language.				
An aide speaks to children in their native language.				
A parent or other volunteer speaks to children in their native language.				
Children are actively discouraged from speaking in their native language				
Native English-speaking children are encouraged to speak native language of LEP or NEP students				
Classroom has books in children's native language				
Classroom has signs or labels in children's native language.				
Teacher uses simultaneous translation.				
An aide uses simultaneous translation.				

Cultural Interview Protocol aimed at Preschool Teachers (Revised from Cultural Change
Interview, Rosenblatt, Garza-Mourino, & Howes, 2004)

*We are going to start talking about how you came to be a part of this community, both
the community where you live in San Diego and the community that are part of as one of
the preschool teachers here.*

First, I would like to follow up with you a bit on the information you gave me about
where you are from.

You said that you were from:_____

(Get information from geographic background form)

Migration/Immigration story (adjust based on whether teacher is an immigrant)

*NOTE: This section may not apply to all preschool teachers. Consider removing and
only using sections focusing on pathways to becoming a teacher.*

   1.) How did you end up living here (San Diego and/or the United States)?

   2.) What were you doing before coming here?

   3.) Before coming here, did you already know someone who was here?

      And did someone in particular put a bug in your ear to come?

      And how did they explain it to convince your?

   4.) Do you remember the first day you arrived?

How was it?

Did you adjust right away?

What was the hardest part?

5.) Do you feel now like you are home? Like this is your home community? What makes you feel this way or not?

Now we will shift to talking about how you came to be a preschool teacher generally and specifically a member of this school community.

6.) How did you end up being a preschool teacher?

7.) What were you doing before you started teaching?

8.) Before becoming a preschool teacher, did you already know someone doing this?

And did someone in particular put a bug in your ear to do this?

And how much did they explain to you to convince you?

9.) Do you remember your first day in the classroom?

How was it?

Did you adjust right away?

What was the hardest part?

10.) And have you been teaching the children the way you were taught as a child, or have you done something different?

11.) What customs from the US or your own childhood would you like the children in your classrooms to know?

12.) What would you like to be able to give them that you did not have in your childhood?

13.) What would you like to be able to give them that you had in your childhood?

14.) To what extent do you believe you have achieved your goals from when you decided to become a preschool teacher?

15.) What skills do you believe children need to be successful in kindergarten?

We are now going to ask some questions specifically related to language and literacy practices in your classroom.

16.) With regards to language and literacy, what do you do in your classroom to prepare children for kindergarten?

17.) What literacy skills do you think children need for kindergarten and/or to be ready to learn to read?

18.) How do you make sure that children learn these skills in your classroom?

19.) Do you think that children learn these skills through adult directed or child directed activities?

20.) What is your favorite type of literacy activity to do with the children?

21.) What is your favorite language activity to do with the children?

22.) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your classroom or working at this center?

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