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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Scaffolded Dialogic Reading Professional Development for Transitional Kindergarten Teachers of Dual Language Learners

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This article presents the results of a study examining a 6-month project funded by the U.S. Department of Education that focused on enhancing teacher learning and instructional practices in transitional kindergarten (TK) in a large urban California school district. The project integrated and adapted the Doing What Works (2012) dialogic reading practices[1] into ongoing professional development for 28 TK teachers working in classrooms with high percentages of 4- and 5-year-old dual language learners (DLLs). We employed a quasi-experimental design that used a comparison group to examine how teaching practices changed both with and without the project's coaching support. Data from classroom observations, teacher surveys, and coaching reflections indicate that implementation of scaffolded dialogic reading practices improved TK teachers' knowledge and oral language instructional strategies for teaching DLLs.

Keywords: dual language learners, dialogic reading, transitional kindergarten, teaching practices

A growing body of research confirms that a positive early learning experience before kindergarten significantly narrows the school-readiness gap (Isaacs, 2012; National Council de La Raza [NCLR], 2011) and that children's engagement is central to learning pre-academic skills—oral language, reading readiness, print awareness, and early math and science (Cross, Woods, & Schweingruber, 2009; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Pianta et al., 2005). The unprecedented growth in the diversity of the student population (Garcia & Jensen, 2009) demands the promotion of high-quality instruction for all learners that meets the unique and

[1] Doing What Works (DWW) was a website established by the What Works Clearinghouse at the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW's mission was to support teachers and administrators to implement evidence-based practices in daily K-12 classroom instruction. The site was suspended in 2013. Visit http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

varied needs of children with different abilities and differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Castro, García, & Markos, 2013; Vitiello, 2013). Although effective instruction is indispensable to all students, dual language learners (DLLs) need additional support to fully engage in daily learning practices (Goldenberg, 2008). In particular, the use of storybooks by teachers of DLLs has been identified as a successful method of supporting language and literacy development. Working with stories helps DLLs develop a wide range of skills such as vocabulary and reading comprehension of story elements, including storyline, actions, and events, all of which are closely linked to literacy success in later years (Bus, Van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). DLL teachers must be culturally competent and fully prepared and equipped with at least a working knowledge of how DLLs learn and develop language and literacy as well as social, emotional, and cognitive skills (California Department of Education, 2011; Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2013). However, the early learning field is experiencing a shortage of both multilingual and monolingual teachers who are knowledgeable in children's development of languages and cultural awareness (Alliance for a Better Community, 2012). Equally important, early learning educators also lack ongoing support to enhance their knowledge of how to integrate DLL strategies with evidence-based practices that promote oral language and literacy development (Castro et al., 2013).

We present the results of a 6-month study funded by the U.S. Department of Education that focused on enhancing teacher learning and improving instruction in culturally and linguistically diverse transitional kindergarten (TK) programs.[2] This article covers four topics: (a) research on language and literacy development for DLLs and DLL teacher development, (b) the study methods and design, (c) the study results, and (d) implications for language and literacy instruction and practice in diverse early childhood settings.

RESEARCH IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR DLLS

DLLs are children who are born in bilingual or multilingual environments that support learning more than one language concurrently or children who are raised in a single-language medium and exposed to an additional language—generally English—later in their childhood (Office of Head Start, 2009). The language development of DLLs varies significantly based on several factors: their language proficiency and exposure; their family, schools, and community; their household income; their attendance in a dual language program; the quality of community and societal interactions in terms of the acceptance, encouragement, and valuing of diversity; and their citizenship or immigration status (Castro et al., 2013; Garcia & Jensen, 2009; Urzúa & Gomez, 2008). Moreover, researchers claim that learning more than one language does not delay, confuse, or hinder development; by contrast, it bolsters English language and literacy development (see Dixon et al., 2012; Hammer et al., 2012; and Petitto, 2009). DLL children use what they know in their first language to develop literacy competence in the second language (August, Calderón, & Carlo, 2002; Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, & Pollard-Durodola, 2007). DLL students' rates of language learning vary depending on several factors, including the need to master two language systems, attendance at English-only schools, the opportunities to access the home language in the communities of residence and participation, and the ability of their

[2] Instituted in 2010, California transitional kindergarten programs are state funded.

teachers to respond to DLLs' specific language and literacy needs (California Department of Education, 2013; Castro et al., 2013).

Findings from brain studies show that bilingual children access and process new information in more efficient ways and that bilingualism has long-term positive effects (Bialistok, 2001; Garcia-Sierra et al., 2011; Kuhl, 2011; Mechelli et al., 2004). The benefits of bilingualism are unquestionable. Nevertheless, DLL children living in poverty or less advantaged households face challenges in learning and development (American Institutes for Research, 2012) and therefore need additional individualized support to strengthen their home language use, to learn English, and to improve overall learning outcomes (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Marcelletti, 2013).

Oral Language Development

High-quality teacher-child interactions, physical surroundings, and instructional support systems are found to be vital to ensuring school readiness for DLLs (Castro et al., 2013; Espinosa, 2010; Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa, & Matera, 2013). Research suggests that oral language development plays an essential role in facilitating young children's learning and development in school and in other aspects of life (Dickinson & Porche, 2011). Notably, research supports developing both the home language and English for DLLs (Hakuta & García, 1989; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996; Slavin & Cheung, 2003; Tabors, 1997; Tabors & Snow, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Research also demonstrates the multiple advantages of continuing the development of a home language and the learning of English at a young age. Such benefits include cognitive enhancement (Bialystok, 2001; Castro et al., 2011; Diaz, 1985; Jessner, 2008; Kessler & Quinn, 1980; Zelasko & Antunez, 2000); improved school readiness (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000); and the transfer of reading knowledge in a second language (Páez & Rinaldi, 2006).

As a result, early childhood teachers—whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual—must be purposeful in using language strategies in the classroom that facilitate both home and English language development by DLLs (Burchinal, Field, López, Howes, & Pianta, 2012; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996; Slavin & Cheung, 2003; Tabors, 1997; Tabors & Snow, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Teachers of young DLLs can develop a systematic approach to learning about their students' language experiences outside of school at the beginning of the year, monitoring their home and English language development, using explicit and intentional support and strategies, and collaborating with families to encourage the use of their home language. These practices help DLLs to acquire critical English language skills and promote a strong foundation for language and literacy in any language.

Bridging Language and Literacy Development with Dual Language Learners: Dialogic Reading Practices

Language and literacy—the abilities to speak, listen, read, and write—begin in early childhood. Oral language plays a critical role in children's learning to read and write (Dickinson & Porche, 2011). Young learners further develop language skills in the early academic years—learning

more words, understanding language concepts, and developing alphabetic knowledge. In particular, vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension practice foster skills critical to reading and writing. These skills are learned in a developmental continuum and through direct participation in communication-based experiences. Developmental learning milestones for children have a direct impact on their school readiness, future academic success, and ability to manage other opportunities in life (Sénéchal, LeFebre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998). However, DLLs need additional support to facilitate their ability to make connections between prior knowledge and new concepts, ideas, and vocabulary in English (California Department of Education, 2013).

Dialogic reading is an instructional practice based on dialogue generated between adults and small groups of children through the use of a storybook. The story serves as an anchor and platform through which participants can engage in methodological and creative conversations that make connections with their prior experiences, interests, and ideas. Dialogic reading is designed to promote language learning through three distinct levels: Level 1, which focuses on vocabulary instruction; Level 2, which focuses on building comprehension and expanding children's responses; and Level 3, which focuses on promoting children's retelling of stories and making connections with their lives and experiences outside of school. These levels are organized within a framework in which teachers prepare lessons by following specific implementation criteria, such as using small groups of three to five children, using stories with clear plots, and satisfying the need for repeated readings of the same story. By using questioning strategies and directly teaching vocabulary, teachers ensure that children experience language in rich and inspiring ways that lead them to understand the plot of the story and engage in retelling the story while making connections with their own personal life experiences and culture (Lonigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer, & Samwel, 1999; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998).

Dialogic reading was originally developed to foster family and child engagement through strategies for storytelling (Whitehurst, 1998) and was later broadly replicated with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Chow, McBride-Chang, & Cheung, 2008; Jimenez, Filippini, & Gerber, 2006; Lim & Cole, 2002; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). Studies showing positive effects of dialogic reading practices on children's language development have led to the use of such practices as classroom interventions, which have yielded robust results, particularly for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). Dialogic reading studies were vetted by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (2004) at the Institute of Educational Sciences and published on the online Doing What Works website. Additional instructional guidance was produced to support preschool teachers in implementing evidence-based practices (Doing What Works Library, 2012). Newer research, albeit scant, shows positive effects of implementing dialogic reading practices in classrooms with DLL children through professional development (Blamey, Beauchat, & Sweetman, 2012; Cohen, Kramer-Vida, & Frye, 2012a). Although these studies focus on only the first level of dialogic reading (namely, the teaching of vocabulary), the results demonstrate the success of showing teachers how to use explicit strategies and techniques to enhance vocabulary and to deliberately use academic language to engage children. More studies are needed to explore and evaluate the efficacy of professional development across the entire dialogic reading framework.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO FACILITATE EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR DLLS

Effective language instruction and the implementation of successful DLL teaching strategies are imperative, both in classrooms with English instruction and in those with Spanish instruction (Cohen, Kramer-Vida, & Frye, 2012b). By employing instructional language approaches, teachers systematically incorporate children's home languages into their teaching to maximize engagement and access to the curriculum. The strategies employed in classrooms with either English- or Spanish-based instruction bridge children's existing knowledge about a topic as well as the new knowledge and understanding introduced in the classroom.

The literature contains little information about how professional development can support monolingual and bilingual teachers to systematically build language and literacy skills for young DLLs, particularly in classrooms where English instruction is used (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006). A more comprehensive understanding of how to develop teachers' working knowledge of scaffolds and ongoing support is needed to ensure that all children can more meaningfully benefit from language and literacy instruction (Garcia, Jensen, & Cueller, 2006; Zepeda, Castro, & Cronin, 2011). Teachers typically receive pre-service professional development training on various separate topics (e.g., early language and literacy development and English language development). This includes dialogic reading, which is often taught without instruction on DLL scaffolding.

A sufficient body of research demonstrates also that "one-shot" trainings for in-service teachers alone do not lead to positive changes in instruction and improved learning outcomes for children. To meet the unique needs of young children, especially DLLs, teachers need well-defined and continuous support in the implementation of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices in different classroom contexts. Teachers also need effective training in evidence-based strategies that significantly improve children's English language skills (Castro et al., 2013; Espinosa, 2010; Saunders et al., 2013). Moreover, to increase teacher expertise in oral language and instructional support for DLLs, professional development must integrate all curriculum areas and must be contextualized for each classroom setting.

THE SCAFFOLDED DIALOGIC READING FRAMEWORK: SUPPORTING TEACHERS OF DLLS

The original dialogic reading framework (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998) does not address the specific needs of DLLs or identify scaffolding practices targeting DLLs. Given the substantial research findings indicating that effective language instruction and instructional strategies for DLLs are imperative (Cohen et al., 2012b; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008), this study developed the scaffolded dialogic reading framework (see Table 1), in which teachers systematically incorporate DLL supports as strategies to maximize engagement and access to the curriculum. These research-informed strategies assist teachers in teaching new vocabulary, expand their use of visuals and realia, and help them to assess prior knowledge.

TABLE 1.
Supporting DLLs in Dialogic Reading: The Scaffolded Dialogic Reading Framework

DR Level and Focus	Original Dialogic Reading	Required DLL Supports
Pre-Level	Non-existent in original Dialogic Reading framework	Pre-Level: Background Knowledge and Engagement Using differentiated questions, discover and document vocabulary from children's prior knowledge in English and home language Progressive examples: -What do you see here? (point to object in picture) -Can you describe what you see on this page? -What do you think/predict this story is about? Summarize the story without giving the end away (motivation to engage)
Level 1: Develop Vocabulary	Identify 3-4 academic words related to story	Identify 3-4 academic words related to the story based on children's prior knowledge assessment in pre-level session (see Pre-Level)
Academic Language	Use new words throughout the day in other contexts	Use movement, gestures, realia, songs, photographs in teaching the academic words Use home language to develop and review vocabulary Create experiential opportunities to preview story concepts and vocabulary Contextualize the words in the story and give examples of how the words are used in a different context

DR Level and Focus	Original Dialogic Reading	Required DLL Supports
Level 2: Prompt Descriptions	Focus on the key parts of the story	Ask differentiated questions based on child's English proficiency level
Comprehension and Expressive & Receptive Language	Expand children's comments and responses and ask connecting questions	Use home language to review vocabulary and ask clarifying questions
		Use movement, realia, songs, gestures, and visuals to enhance comprehensibility
	Create experiential opportunities to preview story concepts and vocabulary	Repeat child's response and ask him/her to repeat
		Check for understanding of storyline, assess vocabulary knowledge, and expand language based on child's response
		Provide materials for parents to discuss story at home in home language
Level 3: Encourage Retelling	Teachers set the stage, listen and document	Assess receptive and expressive language skills in English and home language (based on the State's Preschool Learning Foundations)
Personalizing the Story Experience	Encourage demonstrating parts of the story	Assess productive and interpretive English language development and usage (based on State's ELD standards)
	Elicit retelling story in own words through different activities (e.g. using felt board, role-playing, inventing different endings)	Assess and encourage use of vocabulary and language structures included the story
		Use movement, realia, songs, gestures, and visuals to retell story
	Extend conversations beyond story plot	Use home language to support retelling and comparison of story to students' own lives
	Elicit personal connections with real life	Provide materials for parents to retell story at home in home language

COACHING AS PART OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS OF DLLS

Teachers' knowledge of the language and literacy development of DLLs and related practices can be enhanced by instructional coaching. Indeed, in their study of 291 early childhood educators, Neuman and Cunningham (2009) found that professional development alone had only negligible effects on teachers' practices. When coaching was combined with professional development sessions, both teachers' knowledge and their competency in teaching this population increased in statistically significant ways. Other research notes that instructional coaching benefits K-12 teachers in the same way that early childhood educators may benefit from professional development designed to promote the translation of research into practice through reflection and evidence-based support (Kohler, McCullough, & Buchan, 1995; Miller, 1994; Skiffington, Washburn, & Elliott, 2011). Overall, the literature clearly indicates that coaching is essential to support early childhood educators in developing young children's language and literacy. However, additional guidance on high-impact teaching practices for DLLs in the context of language and content knowledge instruction is still needed.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In September 2010, California's governor signed into law the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010. The rationale behind this mandate for TK lies in the growing body of research confirming that high-quality early learning and preschool experiences significantly reduce the school-readiness gap, which begins by age three (NCLR, 2011). Research indicates that engaging children in pre-academic skills (oral language, reading readiness, print awareness, and early math and science) and facilitating oral language development are critical for all learners (Cross et al., 2009; Dickinson & Porche, 2011; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Pianta et al., 2005; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), especially children from non-English-speaking homes (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012).

The 2010 law requires school districts to provide kindergarten to students who turn 5 years old by the first of September. Additionally, California's school districts are required to provide a noncompulsory TK program to 4-year-olds who turn five by the second of December. Based on these changes, TK provides the youngest children (4-year-olds) in the kindergarten-elementary system with the first year of a 2-year educational program taught by a credentialed elementary school teacher.[3] The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 indicates that TK differs from traditional kindergarten instruction in the implementation of a modified, age-appropriate curriculum. TK is taught by elementary school teachers with little or no preparation in early childhood language and literacy instruction for young DLLs. Hence, our study focused on advancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and expertise in implementing evidence-based instructional practices and strategies that enhance DLLs' oral language development. This focus

[3] Children who turn 5 years old by September 1 are enrolled in *traditional* kindergarten. *Transitional* kindergarten is the first year of a 2-year voluntary kindergarten experience for those 4-year-olds whose fifth birthday falls between September 2 and December 2. The CA Education Code was amended in 2015 to permit local education agencies and charter schools to have the option of TK admission for children who will be five after December 2 during that same school year. Specifications can be found at http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr15ltr0717.asp?print=yes

also recognized the need in the TK programs of large urban school districts to provide sound and novel teaching practices (Espinosa & Matera, 2010) that respond to a growing ethnically and linguistically diverse student population (Espinosa & Zepeda, 2009).

Purpose

This study aimed to examine changes in teaching practices related to effective language and literacy instruction for DLLs in TK classrooms as a result of the implementation of professional development and coaching on scaffolded dialogic reading.

Research Question

The following research question g"uided our inquiry: What is the impact of scaffolded dialogic reading professional development on DLL classroom practices for participants with and without coaching support, as measured by the Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL©) and the Dialogic Reading Teacher Survey (Lavadenz, Armas, & Matera, 2011)?

METHODOLOGY

Procedure

The study was a joint venture between a large urban school district's TK program and a research center at an institution of higher education. Over a 6-month period, we employed a quasi-experimental nonequivalent, posttest-only design (Cook & Campbell, 1979) using a comparison group to evaluate changes resulting from scaffolded dialogic reading professional development with presence and absence of coaching support in teaching practices within classrooms having young dual language learners. The participants in this study were elementary school teachers who taught TK in a large urban district in Southern California with 31% of English learners, and 48% of TK/K students identified as English learners/DLLs (see Table 2). We randomly selected half of the group of 28 participants into the coaching treatment group and the scaffolded dialogic reading group. The coaching treatment group was identified through a random selection process that was structured by clustering all participating schools into a total of seven geographic regions across the large urban school district. Within each of these regions, a proportionate number of schools was chosen. This resulted in a randomly selected group of 14 teachers, or 50% of the overall number of teachers who received in-classroom instructional coaching (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009) by a total of 4 coaches. The remaining 14 teachers were placed into the control group, where they participated in six training sessions on scaffolded dialogic reading.

TABLE 2.
Participant Age Range, Ethnicity, and Gender (N=25)

Demographic Variable	*N*	%
Age Range		
26-30	1	4
31-35	4	16
36-40	5	20
41-45	4	16
46-50	1	4
51-56+	10	40
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	2	8
Hispanic/Latino/a	13	52
White/Caucasian	9	36
Other	1	4
Gender		
Female	25	100
Male	0	0

Note: A total of 28 teachers were recruited for this project. However, only 25 teachers responded to demographic data inquiries.

TABLE 3
Average Years of Teaching, Authorization, and Degree (N=25)

Demographic Variable	*M*	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Years of Teaching	17.00	7.81	6	38
Years of Teaching in Early Childhood/Preschool Setting	12.48	9.32	1	40
	n		%	
Type of Teaching Credential				
Multiple Subject	25		100	
Administrative Services	4		16	
Other Authorization				
Bilingual Authorization	9		38	
Cross-Cultural Language and Development	13		54	
Other (SB 1969, LDS)	2		8	
Degrees Obtained				
Bachelor's	25		100	
Master's	11		44	

Note: A total of 28 teachers were recruited for this project. However, only 25 teachers responded to demographic data inquiries.

Two researchers conducted classroom observations at the end of the study and one researcher served on the professional development training team. Monthly scaffolded dialogic reading professional development sessions targeted crucial components of TK such as the use of preschool standards, beginning in the 48-month age range and building into the kindergarten standards. Other topics included teaching language across the curriculum, embedding evidence-based language practices, and developing language enrichment activities and instructional strategies for DLLs. During the second part of the academic year (January-June), scaffolded dialogic reading practice was incorporated into the monthly professional development trainings and implemented by teachers in their classrooms twice per week (August 2010-January 2011). Table 4 details the topics presented for each of the six sessions.

Table 4
Professional Development Sessions and Coaching Plan Overview, January-June 2011

Session # and Month	Topics	Length of Session	Coaching Component
1. January	**Overview:** Dialogic Reading overview and evidence with dual language learners.	1 hour	Assign coaches to schools/ teachers
	Open-Ended Questions: Follow the CAR *(Comment-Wait, Ask, and Respond by adding more)* strategy	1 hour 15 min.	Establish and communicate number of visits and duration
	Focus on Dual Language Learning: Meeting the language needs of students	1 hour 15 min.	Negotiate release time for teachers/meeting time for pre- and post-conferences
	Model Dialogic Reading: Role play using *Butterfly, Butterfly* and *Spat the Cat*	1 hour 45 min.	
2. February	**Introduction/Overview of the Three Level Framework** for interactive dialogic reading	2 hours	Provide OPAL Training for coaches
	Parent Connection: Sample activities - Use of Follow the CAR dialogic reading strategies with parents	1 hour	Establish and communicate coaching model: Phase 1 – Demonstration Lesson; Phase 2 – Co-teaching; Phase 3 – Observation

3. March	**Dialogic Reading for DLLs - Level 1 Focus** **Lesson Planning Strategies:** PEER *(Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, and Repeat)* and CROWD ***(****Completion, Recall, Open-ended, Wh-questions, Distancing)* strategies **Modeling:** Modeling using *Tough Boris* and *The Cow That Went Oink*	1 hour 15 min.	Coaches conduct Phase 1 visits and support Meet with coaches network to support and debrief experience
4. April	**Dialogic Reading for DLLs - Level 2 Focus** Book selection process, planning a dialogic reading lesson focusing on Type 2 questions **Modeling:** Level 1 and Level 2 questions using *The Cow That Went Oink* and *Tough Boris*	1 hour 45 min.	Coaches conduct Phase 2 visits and support Meet with coaches network to support and debrief experience
5. May	**Dialogic Reading for DLLs - Level 3 Focus** Planning a dialogic reading lesson focusing on Level 3 questions	1 hour 45 min.	Coaches conduct Phase 3 visits and support Meet with coaches network to support and debrief experience
6. June	**Doing What Works Overview** Nation-wide Project Dialogic Reading – Foundation for Literacy Development Teacher Survey Celebration of Product	1 hour 45 min.	Conduct closure debrief session with coaches

While participants in the control group only participated in the scaffolded dialogic reading professional development sessions, participants in the treatment group received coaching

support in addition to the sessions. The coaching model followed a traditional three-part trajectory: (a) a pre-observation dialogue between coach and teacher, (b) the actual observation, and (c) the post-observation dialogue between coach and teacher. In this way, coaching included "pre-, mid-, and post-sessions" for the randomly selected subset (n = 14) of the total number of teacher participants (n = 28) across the three distinct phases of coaching implementation. Each pre-session required the coach and teacher team to identify a focus area, such as questioning strategies during Stage 1 of the dialogic reading process. This pre-session typically occurred in-person before or after school or via email or telephone conferences. The mid-session involved the coach visiting the teacher's classroom to demonstrate, co-teach, or observe a lesson, as described in the phases below. The post-session also occurred in-person before or after school and included a debriefing conversation focused on evidence recorded during in the session. Consequently, each teacher participant in the coaching group was engaged in three sessions during each of the three TK coaching phases described here.

In-Classroom Coaching Phase 1: Demonstration lesson and establishment of rapport (3 sessions, "pre-mid-post"). This phase involved an introductory session between the teacher and coach. The coaches and TK teachers met or communicated prior to the demonstration lesson regarding the type of lesson or strategy that they preferred to have demonstrated with their students (pre-session). The coach delivered a demonstration lesson (mid-session) while the teacher observed and collected evidence using the OPAL protocol. The post-session discussion included an evidenced-based conversation surrounding the elements of effective practice for DLLs integrated within the scaffolded dialogic reading framework.

In-Classroom Coaching Phase 2: Co-teaching (3 sessions, "pre-mid-post"). The Doing What Works (2012) book selection criterion was used to select books for the TK program that were donated by an independent foundation. Each TK teacher and his or her respective coach developed lessons collaboratively based on the book *Leo the Late Bloomer*. This planning occurred primarily via electronic communications (pre-session). The coach and teacher delivered the co-developed lesson plans collaboratively while recording anecdotal evidence using the OPAL tool (mid-session). The post-session discussion included an evidenced-based conversation about the elements of effective practice for DLLs integrated within the scaffolded dialogic reading framework.

In-Classroom Coaching Phase 3: OPAL-dialogic reading observation (3 sessions, "pre-mid-post"). The teachers worked collaboratively during the professional development sessions to plan a lesson that would be observed by a coach (pre-session). The coach and teacher identified areas of focus based on the Comprehensibility domain of the OPAL with dialogic reading (Lavadenz et al., 2011). Each coach observed his or her teacher(s) using the selected criteria (mid-session). The post-session discussion included an evidenced-based conversation regarding the elements of effective practice for DLLs integrated within the scaffolded dialogic reading framework.

Measures and Analysis

Data were collected for all teacher participants, where available. Of the 28 participants, 23 consented to a post-project observation using a validated classroom observation measure—the OPAL© (Lavadenz & Armas, 2010), an 18-item Likert scale used to examine in-classroom project implementation; 25 participants responded to the electronic administration of a dialogic reading TK teacher survey. Accordingly, the following quantitative and qualitative data were collected using three key instruments: (a) 23 classroom post-project observations using the OPAL instrument (aligned with dialogic reading strategies, Table 5), along with documented evidence of TK teachers' implementation of dialogic reading practices; (b) 25 surveys administered to teacher-participants to assess their knowledge of dialogic reading practices before and after all the professional development sessions; and (c) reflections from the four coaches on implementation and support for control group teachers. Each of the instruments, data collection methods, and analysis is described below (see Table 6).

TABLE 5
OPAL Domains and Indicators

Construct	Indicator
Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum	1.1 Emphasizes problem solving and critical thinking
	1.2 Access to materials, technology, resources
	1.3 Access to content in primary language
	1.4 Organization of curriculum and teaching
	1.5 Allows transfer of skills from primary language
	1.6 Establishes high expectations
Connections	2.1 Relates instructional concepts to students' realities
	2.2 Helps students make connections
	2.3 Makes learning relevant and meaningful
Comprehensibility	3.1 Scaffolds instruction
	3.2 Amplifies student input
	3.3 Explains key terms
	3.4 Provides feedback and checks for comprehension
	3.5 Uses informal assessments
Interactions	4.1 Facilitates student autonomy
	4.2 Modifies procedures to support learning
	4.3 Communicates subject matter knowledge
	4.4 Uses flexible groupings

The Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL). The OPAL is a research-based classroom observation tool that measures classroom practices and interactions from sociocultural and language acquisition perspectives (Lavadenz & Armas, 2010). The protocol uses a 6-point Likert scale (1-6, *Low to High*) to rate instruction for academic literacy, defined as a set of 21st century skills, abilities, and dispositions. Table 5 provides an overview of the OPAL.

TABLE 6.
Study Measures

Instrument	Purpose	Type of data	Analysis
OPAL	Classroom observation protocol aligned with Scaffolded Dialogic Reading Practices to determine levels of implementation	Quantitative – Likert Scale 1-6 Qualitative- anecdotal notes	Post-Analyses ANOVA
TK Teacher Survey	To gather demographic information and knowledge of Dialogic Reading pre- and post of participants	Quantitative Qualitative	Descriptive Constant Comparative using open coding
Coach Reflection Logs	To gather post-program evidence from the coaches' perspectives	Qualitative- narrative journal entries	Constant Comparative using open coding

Dialogic reading TK teacher survey. The dialogic reading TK teacher survey was administered once at the end of the study. This survey was a self-reported measure to gather information about participants' perceived awareness and knowledge of scaffolded dialogic reading (pre- and post-program). Survey items related to scaffolded dialogic reading, language routines for DLLs and coaching were based on research-based elements of the scaffolded dialogic reading approach and effective practices for working with young DLLs. Content experts reviewed all items and provided feedback on the clarity of items and their alignment to practice. The survey was administered electronically, and the participants answered questions organized into five sections: (a) demographic information (14 multiple-choice and open-entry responses), (b) perceived awareness and knowledge of scaffolded dialogic reading prior to training (7 Likert scale items), (c) perceived awareness and knowledge of dialogic reading after training (8 Likert scale items), (d) open responses about implementation aligned with OPAL domains (5 total), and

(e) open responses regarding coaching (3 total; only the teachers who received coaching completed these items).

Coaches' reflection logs. Twelve reflection forms were collected from the coaches to gather information about how coaching affects classroom practice but also to highlight any commonalities emerging from each of the coaching phases. These forms included the following: (a) a log of the date, time, teacher, and focus of each coaching visit; (b) pre-session (visit) reflection, including questions posed, materials used, and lesson focus; (c) mid-session (visit) reflection regarding reactions to lesson delivery and use of the OPAL to generate evidence-based statements during the lesson; and (d) post-session (visit) reflection on what went well, aspects to change, teacher questions, and notes on debriefing the lesson using the OPAL. Coaches' reflections were analyzed using the Dialogic Reading TK Teacher Survey questions: (a) open responses about implementation aligned with OPAL domains (5 total), and (b) open responses regarding coaching.

Analytical Approach

Mann-Whitney tests (Cohen, 1988) were conducted to determine the differences in the implementation of Doing What Works (2012) (DWW) practices for the random sample of teachers who received coaching and those who received only DWW professional development. These tests were used instead of the more common *t* tests for independent means due to the small sample size (N = 23). Additionally, data triangulation was conducted through the use of a dialogic reading TK teacher survey and the collection of coaching reflection logs.

RESULTS

Results obtained from our data analyses allowed us to answer the research question: "What is the impact of scaffolded dialogic reading professional development on DLL classroom practices for participants with and without coaching support, as measured by the Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL©) and the Dialogic Reading Teacher Survey (Lavadenz, Armas, & Matera, 2011)?"

The Mann-Whitney tests conducted for the classroom observation data include a total of 23 out of 28 teacher participants who consented to the OPAL post-classroom observation (see Table 7). Additional analyses reported for the background-demographic questionnaire and Dialogic Reading TK Teacher Survey included a total of 25 respondents who responded to the electronic survey. The results for all data sources: (a) classroom observations, (b) teacher surveys, and (c) coaches' reflection logs are discussed in the following section.

TABLE 7
Dialogic Reading Coaching Phases

	Coach	Phase 1 Demonstration Lesson	Phase 2 Co-Teaching	Phase 3 Observation - Feedback
Teacher 001	1	X	X	X
Teacher 002	1	X	X	Participant hospitalized at the end of school year.
Teacher 004	1	X	X	X
Teacher 008	3			
Teacher 009	3	X	X	X
Teacher 011	2	Participant not assigned to a coach.	X	X
Teacher 012	3	X	X	Teacher dropped out of project.
Teacher 014	2	X	X	X
Teacher 017	4	X	X	X
Teacher 018	4	X	X	X
Teacher 019	4	X	X	X
Teacher 021	2	X	X	X
Teacher 024	2	X	X	X
Teacher 015		Did not consent to coaching support.		

OPAL Post-Classroom Observation Results

To answer the research question, Mann-Whitney tests were used (see Table 8). The results of these analyses allow us to report levels of statistical significance between the coached and uncoached groups. This yielded the following results as reported in Table 8: (a) Total Score, r_s = .25, d = .51, p = .24; (b) Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum, r_s = .22, d = .48, p = .31; (c) Connections, r_s = .34, d = .67, p = .11; (d) Comprehensibility, r_s = .23, d = .34, p = .28; and (e) Interactions, r_s = .21 d = .44, p = .32.

Cohen (1988) suggested guidelines for interpreting the Cohen's d statistic. He suggested that a weak effect had a value of d = .20, a moderate effect had a value of d = .50, and a strong effect had a value of d = .80, Using these criteria, moderate effects were noted for the overall OPAL rating (d = .51) and the connections domain (d = .67) (Table 8).

Overall, quantitative data from the OPAL observations revealed mid-range ratings across the OPAL domains for both the coached and uncoached groups, particularly in the area of addressing rigorous and relevant curricula through meaningful interactions.

Table 8
Comparison of OPAL Ratings Based on Whether Coaching Occurred. Mann-Whitney Tests (N = 23)

Scale (Aggregated Indicators) [a]	Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*z*	*d*	r_s	
Overall OPAL (all 18 indicators)					1.17	.51	.25	.24
	No	12	3.52	0.67				
	Yes	11	3.85	0.61				
Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum Domain (1.1 to 1.6)					1.02	.48	.22	.31
	No	12	3.29	0.66				
	Yes	11	3.62	0.71				
Connections Domain (2.1 to 2.3)					1.59	.67	.34	.11
	No	12	3.25	0.71				
	Yes	11	3.7	0.62				
Comprehensibility Domain (3.1 to 3.5)					1.09	.34	.23	.28
	No	12	3.77	0.75				
	Yes	11	4.02	0.73				
Interactions Domain (4.1 to 4.4)					0.99	.44	.21	.32
	No	12	3.77	0.83				
	Yes	11	4.09	0.59				

Teacher Survey Results

Insights from the dialogic reading TK teacher surveys and classroom observations indicated that the initial implementation of dialogic reading supported TK teachers' development of knowledge and practices with DLLs. However, the vast majority of respondents and classroom observations indicated that (a) more time was needed to fully integrate dialogic reading practices into routine instruction and (b) more support is required to improve teachers' learning of practices (coaching through video, demonstration, or peer observation). Teachers' self-reported ratings for dialogic reading awareness and knowledge before and after the professional development sessions indicate that all teachers were fully credentialed with English Learner Authorization. Their years of teaching in early childhood or preschool settings ranged from 1 year (minimum) to 40 years (maximum). Each participant was from a different school site, and site demographic data revealed that the English learners served ranged from 9.1% to 76.7% (*M* = 43.48%, *SD* 18.70). Two participants taught in a bilingual program for TK students, and the remaining teachers instructed DLLs using a structured English immersion model that included some opportunities for primary language support. Tables 2 and 3 present additional demographic data regarding the program participants.

Coaches' Reflection Logs

Across all coaching phases, reflection logs indicated that all coaches were utilizing the dialogic reading framework to plan, deliver, and observe instruction in each of the classrooms. Additionally, all coaches reported a need for more time to preview and debrief lessons and for more information about the students in the classroom. Logs revealed that the OPAL helped the coaches identify key elements in lesson planning and delivery. The coaches reported planning together and considering DLL needs with dialogic reading using the OPAL Comprehensibility Domain as a guide for planning. Another common theme identified in the coaching logs indicated that all teachers had many questions about grouping and preparedness for dialogic reading lessons, particularly at Level 3. Furthermore, the coaches reported that the teachers welcomed the in-classroom support and collaborative work with their respective coach. The next section highlights some of the coaches' statements from each of the coaching phases:

Coaches' reflections from Phase 1: Demonstration lesson and establishment of rapport. The coaches and teachers planned together and considered DLL needs with dialogic reading using the OPAL Comprehensibility Domain to guide these conversations. Communication between the teachers and coaches occurred primarily through email prior to the classroom visits. All coaches reported that the OPAL tool helped ensure attention to key elements in lesson planning. However, the coaches consistently reported that time restrictions prevented them from planning thoroughly and holding debriefing sessions after lesson delivery.

Coaches' reflections from Phase 2: Co-Teaching. For the co-teaching phase, the coach led the introduction of vocabulary, and the teacher conducted the story reading and developed Wh questions (what, where, why, who, for example). This planning occurred primarily by email and by phone. The coaches reflected on the minimal amount of time available to meet in the classroom before the lesson. Discussions were short and limited to the logistics of the lesson. However, all coaches reported that the co-teaching experience was valuable in that it presented an opportunity to apply and refine practice with a co-instructor in an applied context. Coach 3's comment provides insight into how this collaborative lesson delivery provided time for both teaching and in-the-moment reflection: "Students were engaged and active. After touching on the vocabulary, they were responsive when I asked Wh questions. They were able to connect the realia photos and identify places that matched the vocabulary."

Coaches' reflections from Phase 3: OPAL-dialogic reading observation. During Phase 3, the coaches conducted observations using a pre-, mid-, and post-observation approach to maximize opportunities for reflection. Post-observation reflections revealed that all teachers had many questions about grouping and preparedness for Level 3 lessons, and some teachers struggled with how to apply the dialogic reading routine and expressed concern that using the same story might bore their students. The teachers welcomed the coaching experience but also indicated a need for additional support sessions to increase their knowledge, implementation skills, and level of comfort with coaching observations. Such reflection is illustrated in the following comment: "Teachers were worried that they weren't 'doing it right.' They both felt that these strategies (dialogic reading) are excellent and that they just had to dive in and build it into their weekly routine. Both wanted to 'make time' to fit this in."

A follow-up meeting with the coaches and research team members affirmed the written reflections indicating that teachers found it challenging to release responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student during the implementation of dialogic reading Levels 1-3. These comments underscore the need for sustained professional development coupled with evidenced-based coaching conversations to support the shift from a surface-level understanding of scaffolded dialogic reading to a deeper level of teachers' understanding that ultimately improves students' understanding.

DISCUSSION

The recent passage of legislation mandating TK in California provides expanded learning opportunities for children with no preschool experience and young 5-year-olds, including the critical developmental and readiness skills and abilities required to meet the challenges encountered in traditional kindergarten. The centrality of teachers' expertise in fostering oral language and literacy skills for DLLs in specific TK classrooms in California and other states has rarely been examined. Nevertheless, the implications of our study can apply to both the professional preparation and development of teachers of DLLs and to additional research on this topic. This will be helpful since little information has been available about how professional development can support early learning monolingual and bilingual teachers in systematically building language and literacy skills for DLLs (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006).

In summary, despite the short duration of the professional development project, quantitative and qualitative data sources provide evidence of the impact of program implementation. The TK teachers in this study increased their knowledge and skills related to dialogic reading and DLL strategies by using scaffolded dialogic reading practices, as revealed by implementation-level ratings on the OPAL and dialogic reading survey. Additionally, it appeared that coaching helped to improve the implementation of scaffolded dialogic reading, as reflected by the measures of impact, which yielded moderate effect size for the OPAL overall composite score and the connections domain. As reflective practitioners themselves, the coaches used their observations to inform their approach to supporting TK teachers' knowledge and skills in using scaffolded dialogic reading practices. This was documented through coaches' reflections and appeared to contribute to determining the necessary type of support (co-teaching, demonstration, or observation); the timing of observations; and procedures for communicating with teachers (face-to-face communication, email, video, or phone calls). The additional value of coaching in the project is consistent with the literature on the impact of coaching and the professional development of teachers of young children (Kohler et al., 1995; Miller, 1994; Skiffington et al., 2011). As such, our findings intersect with those for the research-based practice of dialogic reading (Lonigan et al., 1999) as applied by teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse TK students and the developing body of research on the professional development that is needed to build language and literacy skills for DLLs (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006). Overall, the findings show a need for teachers to continue to gain knowledge about each of the levels of scaffolded dialogic reading to reach a more sophisticated level of implementation that can maximize students' engagement in language and literacy practice.

CONCLUSION

The body of research on young bilingual learners is expanding at the state, national, and international levels. As we concurrently improve programs and practices for teaching DLLs in the United States, we must continue to emphasize additive approaches that support and sustain these children's developing language skills in English and consider their dual language abilities throughout their education.

The findings of the present study have several implications for teacher professional development and research on the language and literacy development of DLLs.

Implications for the Professional Development of Teachers of DLLs

The implications of three key findings are discussed below:

1. The duration and intensity of professional development affect the depth of teacher learning and confidence. However, professional development alone does not ensure depth of implementation. As in Neuman and Cunningham's (2009) study, the TK teachers in the current study increased their dialogic reading knowledge and skills. This suggests the value of instruction in and application of scaffolded dialogic reading, and adds support for the effectiveness of professional development that includes embedded classroom practice.
2. Evidence-based feedback facilitated by peers and coaches using the OPAL can provide effective support for teachers and their implementation of instructional practices for young DLLs.
3. Improving teachers' implementation of research-based practices entails flexibility in order to facilitate embedded professional development based on observations of diverse student learning needs.

For states that have enacted policies such as TK classrooms, this research also has implications for evaluating the longitudinal effects of such policies.

Implications for Research on the Language and Literacy Development of DLLs

Additional research that examines the impact of scaffolded dialogic reading on DLLs is needed. Addressing the learning needs of DLL children requires continuous support for early childhood teachers to implement evidence-based language and literacy practices in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Studies should include nested research designs that examine teacher knowledge and skills, along with measures of the oral language and literacy development and growth of DLLs. Although this study did not directly examine the impact of scaffolded dialogic reading on children's vocabulary or reading development, the teachers did report that coaching support augmented the children's *knowledge in use* (Lavadenz, Armas, & Matera, 2012). Based on this finding and research on scaffolded dialogic reading, improving DLL teachers' abilities to implement research-based language and literacy practices will support their students' literacy development (Zepeda et al., 2011).

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