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HEAD START TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON LANGUAGE  
MODELING AND CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: A SEQUENTIAL  
MIXED METHODS DESIGN

---

A Dissertation  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership

---

by  
LaTrenda Terrell  
December 2017

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LaTrenda Terrell  
December 2017  
Approved by:

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Dr. Marita Mahoney, Committee Member

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## ABSTRACT

Poverty is known to affect many areas of life for poor children, particularly young children's language development. To address language development issues as well as other educational needs, the Head Start Program was created. The purpose of this sequential mixed-methods study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning.

Analysis of the data revealed that teachers wanted more training and workshops, to be paired with a mentor/coach, pay raises for achieving higher education, strategies for working with children, and encouragement from administration to effectively achieve their professional development plans and goals. Additionally, teachers demonstrated an understanding of the importance of language modeling for children to build vocabulary, to improve school readiness goals, and to communicate and express their needs. Finally, teachers felt very strongly that they use frequent conversations, wait for student responses during conversations, use back and forth conversations, encourage peer conversations, use more than one word as well as a variety of words to support children's language development.

Findings from this study may be utilized to provide the necessary support teachers need to improve their language modeling skills and to help programs in their planning and evaluation of an ongoing professional development model. This study adds to the literature on bridging the gap between learning about practices and using them in the classroom to improve children's language development by including teacher voices into their professional development and how to effectively implement coaching practices to promote teacher knowledge and skills.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book in loving memory of my Grandmother and Grandfather Zellie and Hope Terrell, my aunt Ethel Terrell-Hodges, and my uncles George Terrell, Hope Terrell Jr. and ET Terrell.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Poverty is known to affect many areas of life for poor children, particularly young children's language development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Hart & Risley, 2003). Many times, the stressor of getting basic needs met such as food, clothing and shelter takes precedence over setting a good foundation for language development. This disadvantage in language development escalates as children progress through school and life (Hart & Risley, 2003). According to Isaacs (2012):

Fewer than half (48 percent) of poor children are school ready at age five, on the other hand children born to parents with moderate or higher incomes are much more likely to enter school ready to learn. Comparatively about 75 percent of these children are ready for school at age 5, which is a 27 percent point gap in school readiness between poor children and those from moderate or higher income families. (p. 3)

This school readiness gap is problematic for children living in poverty, as it is difficult to catch up after being placed with such a lengthy gap.

## Problem Statement

According to the U.S Census Bureau (2015), there are 46.1 million people living in poverty in the United States and of those approximately 22% are young children under 5 years old (U.S Census Bureau, 2015).

Research has identified a need to improve language and literacy skills provided by preschool programs for children living in poverty (National Early Literacy Panel, 2009). Without proper support children may enter kindergarten with underdeveloped language and literacy skills which are foundational for future learning and reading development. Butler (2012) stated, “Preschool children experiencing difficulties with acquiring early literacy and language skills are at an increased risk of entering kindergarten without the foundational skills necessary for continued academic success” (p. 52). To counteract this challenge teacher professional development and skill building is needed.

Teacher professional development (PD) is largely viewed as the most effective approach to adequately prepare teachers and improve their instructional and interventional practices (Buisse, Winton & Rous, 2009; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Wasik & Hindman, 2011; Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker & Lavelle, 2010). Buisse et al., (2009) identified the type of PD needed in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field as focused on professional practices and content specific, aligned with instructional goals, learning standards, curriculum, intensive learning opportunities that are sustained over time. Professional development should also include guidance and feedback through coaching, consultation, and facilitated



collaborations (Buysse et al., 2009). Teachers modeling language for children living in poverty is essential and understanding how teachers can best support those efforts is the topic of discussion among the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this sequential mixed-methods study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. There were multiple studies that were reviewed demonstrating the need for language development for low income children (Brice- Heath, 1983; Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Hart & Risley, 2003). Of these studies, one of the most notable was conducted by Hart and Risley (2003). They found a 30-million-word gap between poor children and the professional class children and a 13-million-word gap between poor children and their middle-class peers. These statistics are important because they further support the need for language development intervention for children living in poverty.

Additionally, there is little to no research on including teacher voice regarding their professional development experiences in early childhood education. According to Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) teacher voices are rarely heard, and when teachers do speak, "...what teachers desire to accomplish is

frequently disregarded in educational decision-making” (p. 29). Because teachers are the direct link to children and have relevant and rich information to bring to the field, it is important to take their voices into consideration when creating, implementing and assessing their professional development needs. In the ECE field we often talk about child-centered activities and environments, in professional development we need to have teacher-centered activities and PD program models for building teachers’ skill sets. In essence, this study sought to contribute to the discussion on the need for teacher PD around language modeling and an ongoing coaching model for the ECE field.

### Research Questions or Hypotheses

Based upon the literature and the gaps noted in teacher professional development around language modeling, the following questions were developed to guide this study:

1. How does Head Start teachers describe their participation in professional development?
2. What are Head Start teachers’ views on language modeling for children?
3. What are the language modeling activities that Head Start teachers find most effective?

## Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is paramount as it contributed to a better understanding of Head Start teacher professional development experiences on language modeling. In addition, it explored teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they found most effective to support student learning. It adds to the literature on the need for teacher professional development which includes coaching models that are evidence-based within early childhood education field. These coaching models need to also include how to implement those evidence-based practices. Coaching as a way to improve teachers' skills can be delivered in several forms such as web-based coaching, expert coaching and peer coaching. Implementation Science has found coaching to be one of the important competency components in providing evidence-based practices (National Implementation Research Network, 2013). NIRN (2013) states that "Coaching needs to be work based, opportunistic, readily available, and reflective" (p.1). Justice et al., (2008) indicated that further investigations are needed that evaluate the impact of professional development models, ensuring that the model is sensitive to high quality language and literacy instruction. The findings of this study also raised awareness of the need for exemplar teacher voices in the early childhood education field that can lead to gains in child learning outcomes.

## Theoretical Underpinnings

The purpose of this study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. Professional development is essential as it supports building skills and relationships among teachers and their students (ECLKC, 2017). Social interactions between teachers' and children can lead to more in depth conversations, advance language opportunities, increase language scaffolding, and improve the quality of question/answer sessions in classrooms for children of poverty. According to Vygotsky (1978), Sociocultural Learning Theory stresses the importance of social interactions occurring with an adult or more competent person who are within the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is described by Vygotsky (1978) as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

The Zone of Proximal Development is where children engage in rich verbal interactions with more experienced individuals, it is based on these interactions they are able to use those acquired skills to improve language development (Bouchard et al., 2010). This requires teachers to be highly intentional and in tune with each individual child's skill level. It is through improving teachers'

professional development and skills around modeling language in everyday social contexts that can improve children's language development in classrooms and in turn, to language usage outside of the classroom.

### Assumptions

The study focused on the need for professional development for teachers and rested on the following assumptions as truths:

- There is a need for teacher professional development to improve children's language modeling skills.
- Professional development is one of the most effective approaches to preparing teachers and improve their practices.
- Head Start teachers are in need of ongoing professional development to include goal setting, action planning, follow-up, reflection and feedback.
- There is a need for valid and reliable professional development models.
- Professional development must include an ongoing process of goal setting/planning, action planning, reflection and follow-up.
- There is a need for onboarding of new staff to include orienting, training, "how to-do" of the job, completing forms and shadowing of more seasoned staff.
- The sample participants responded to the survey items accurately and

honestly to the best of their knowledge.

- The interpretation of the data is an accurate representation of the views of the sample population.

### Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were not to examine the effects of Head Start or does it work for children. Further, it was not to examine the impact of Head Start on children or teachers. Finally, this study did not take into consideration any other potential influences in other domains outside of teacher professional development and language modeling for children.

### Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined as listed below:

- Language is defined as the systematic and conventional use of sounds (or signs or written symbols) for the purpose of communication or self-expression (Hoff, 2014).
- Head Start is defined as a program that promote the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families to support their development in school and life beyond school (ECLKC, 2017).
- Child Development is defined as the ordered emergence of interdependent skills of sensorimotor, cognitive-language, and social-

emotional functioning, which depend on the child's physical well-being, the family context, and the larger social network (Engle & Black, 2008).

- High Quality Early Childhood Education is defined as programs structural components such as the number of children in a classroom, the staff-child ratio, and the physical environment of the room, the kinds of experiences children have within classrooms on a day-to-day basis, consider how children develop and learn, and how that development and learning might best be supported, as well as teacher education and training (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).
- Poverty is defined as the state of not having enough money to take care of one's basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, etc. (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997)
- Professional Development is defined as the facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and disposition as well as the application of this practice (National Professional Development Center on Inclusion, 2008)
- School Readiness is defined as a broad set of skills that affect children's ability to learn in school: physical health, motor skills, self-care, emotional and behavioral self-regulation, social skills, communication skills, pre-academic skills, attention, and curiosity and motivation to learn (Engle & Black, 2008).

- Socioeconomic Status is defined as the social standing or class of an individual or group and is measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation which afford individuals access to resources, privilege, power and control (American Psychological Association, 2016)

## Summary

In this chapter, the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study theoretical underpinnings, assumptions, delimitations, and the definitions of key terms were all discussed to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the findings in the following chapters. Improving teachers' professional development and skills on language modeling can lead to improved language development skills for children. According to Buysse et al., (2009), professional development is viewed as the most effective approach to adequately prepare teachers and improve their instructional and interventional practices. It is through professional development teachers gain opportunities to develop and improve their practices and skills.

The next chapter will review the scholarly literature that examines the effect of poverty on children language developmental outcomes as well as how teacher professional development supports language modeling activities. Additionally, it will detail the theoretical framework supporting the study and demonstrate the need to bring teachers' voices into the development of meaningful professional development for early childhood educators.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared “The War on Poverty” to improve the wellbeing of all Americans living in poverty (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2017). Improving the lives of individuals living in poverty was a top priority as it would improve the whole country. It gave hope and help to a population of individuals who lived in destitute conditions. President Johnson made the “War on Poverty” one of his top priorities, which could ultimately break the cycle of poverty and subsequently make the nation stronger.

The “War on Poverty” addressed the need for health care, jobs, and education for the poor. This provided young children living in poverty with a chance to get an early start on their education, and enter school much more prepared than prior to the “War on Poverty”. It also meant that children living in rural and urban communities would get the much-needed resources they would not have otherwise received. During this time, there was growing research which showed the effects of poverty and its impact on social and educational opportunities (Harrington, 1962; MacDonald, 1963; Osler & Cooke, 1965). Harrington (1962) discussed in great length the effects of poverty and the need to improve the lives of those for whom mainstream media seemed to have forgotten about during the 1950’s. Harrington (1962) identified that the poor lacked proper

nutrition, education, housing and medical care and essentially were “socially invisible” as “the affluent society” was becoming more and more prosperous (p. 10). These findings were instrumental in sparking the “War on Poverty” and provided mainstream America with a look inside the lives of those living in poverty. These included the unskilled worker, migrant farm workers, and minorities (Harrington, 1962).

Some Americans agreed with the government, Osler, Cooke, MacDonald and Harrington, that there was a need to start early in laying the foundation for the education of poor children (Harrington, 1962; MacDonald, 1963; Osler & Cooke, 1965). At the White House on May 18, 1965 President Johnson stated:

Nearly half the preschool children of poverty will get a head start on their future. These children will receive preschool training to prepare them for regular school in September. They will get medical and dental attention that they badly need, and parents will receive counseling on improving the home environment. (Johnson, L.B., 1965)

This not only addressed the need for parent education to improve the way they interacted with their children in the home environment but also stressed the need for children to be healthy and ready to attend school to learn. It was during this initial phase of the “War on Poverty” that the Head Start program was developed. According to the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC), the Head Start program was designed to help break the cycle of poverty providing children and their families with much needed skills such as

social skills, and services to meet their educational, nutrition, and health needs (ECLKC, 2017). As a result of the research on poverty and its impact on children's education, the federal government put together a panel of experts, chaired by Dr. Robert Cooke to create this comprehensive program for young children.

Today, some Americans continue to agree with the federal government and support the research on the need to start early in laying the foundation for a good education for all children. However, due to the inherent lack of resources and vulnerabilities, children of poverty are especially impacted (Isaac, 2012). This idea was again revisited and brought back to the forefront as a national discourse on Feb 14, 2013 during a press release, when President Barack Obama stated, "Education has to start at the earliest possible age, the earlier a child begins learning the better the child will do down the road" (Obama, 2013). Yet again, on January 28, 2014 President Barack Obama stated in his State of the Union address the importance of early education for all children (Obama, 2014).

To be eligible for the Head Start program, to qualify one must be low-income (at or below the poverty guidelines), a pregnant teen, a child under five years of age, a child or parent with a special need, or a foster child (ECLKC, 2017). For example, to qualify for services a family of four can make no more than \$22,025 a year (ECLKC, 2017).

Head Start has undergone changes and reauthorizations since its inception. It began as a summer program in 1965 through the Office of Economic

Opportunity and by 1966 it was a funded for nine months (ECLKC, 2017). In 1972, PL 92-424 mandated that at least 10% of children enrolled in Head Start programs were children with disabilities (ECLKC, 2017). By 1979 Congress reauthorized Head Start for five years thereby providing access to more children living in poverty (ECLKC, 2017). This meant additional children would have the opportunity to start early in laying the foundation for their education. In 2007 President George W. Bush signed Public Law 110-134, the “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act” which promoted quality improvements and standards for programs servicing Head Start children (Congress.gov). Head Start continued to serve children and their families in all 50 states in the U.S, the District of Columbia and six territories to improve their lives and future learning outcomes. Head Start has served over 34 million children since its inception in 1965 (Office of Head Start, 2017). Today, the program services over a million children annually, is available in all 50 states, and has a current budget of \$9,168,095,000 dollars (Office of Head Start, 2017).

Building upon the current work being done in Head Start and early childhood education, this review of the literature focused on the role of poverty on children’s language development. It reviewed the need for early education for economically disadvantaged children, the need for high quality preschool programs, practices that support young children living in poverty school readiness, and teacher professional development. This review demonstrated the need for information around the “Teachers Learning and Collaboration” (TLC)

process within the Practice Base Coaching (PBC) Model as well as its role in the development of high quality and intentional teaching practices for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field. Due to the lack of research on including teachers voice into their professional development and how to effectively implement coaching practices to promote teacher knowledge and skills, this study added to the literature on bridging the gap between learning about practices and using them in the classroom to improve children's language skills. The purpose of this study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. Each of these issues will be looked at, and in turn, the literature review will highlight the relevant research on language modeling under the broad area of language development for young children of poverty.

#### Disparities in Language Development Between Poor Children and More Affluent Peers

Poverty is known to affect many areas of life for poor children, particularly young children's language development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Hart & Risley, 2003). Many times, the stressor of getting basic needs met such as the need for food, clothing and shelter takes precedence over setting a good foundation for language development. This disadvantage in language development escalates as children progress through school and life (Hart &

Risley, 2003).

The link between language development and poverty was explored by Hart and Risley (2003), where they examined 42 families from different Socioeconomic Status (SES); professional families, middle class, working class, and poor families on welfare with children between the ages of one and two years old. Of the 42 families thirteen were from upper class (professional) families, ten were from middle class families, thirteen were from working class families, and six were families on welfare (nineteen were considered poverty-working class and families on welfare). Hart and Risley found poor children heard far less word utterances daily than professional class families by the time they turned three years old. In fact, after calculating the daily number of words spoken during visits between the groups, there was a 30-million-word gap between poor children and the professional class children and a 13-million-word gap between poor children and their middle-class peers (Hart & Risley, 2003).

Similarly, Brice-Heath (1983) discovered that there were differences between three communities of children Townspeople (professional class), Roadville (working class poor families) and Trackton (working class poor families). Brice-Heath sought to answer the question “what were the effects of preschool home and community environments on the learning of those language structures and uses which were needed in classrooms and job settings” (Brice-Heath, 1983 p. 2). Brice-Heath, (1983) noted that the professional class Black and White community (Townspeople) and the working class White community

(Roadville) exposed their children to a variety of language building activities with the use of pretend play, reading, educational toys, describing events, use of imagination, storytelling and through everyday conversations. Although the Roadville community initially started their children out with rich language experiences, for the parents' reading and writing were not a normal practice in their lives. These children tended to fall behind and by 16 years of age many would dropped out of school. On the other hand, the working class Black community (Trackton), whom tended to work in the mills generationally, did not provide their children with extensive language modeling in the home (Brice-Heath, 1983). Those particular children fell into a pattern of failure in school from the start and often dropped out of school and continued working in the mills just as their parents had done (Brice-Heath, 1983).

Subsequently, it was the Townspeople who provided their children with more extensive exposure to language and engaged them in a back and forth exchange by asking more open-ended questions to explain or elaborate on different topics or ideas. Those children tended to do well in school because of the exposure to a variety of conversations which included questioning, reasoning, and probing for thoughts and answers.

Likewise, Lareau (2011) studied twelve families with nine and ten-year-old children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, middle class, working class and poor families. Lareau (2011) found a larger social systemic issue that working class and poor families face as they navigate through life. Lareau (2011)

stated, middle class Black and White families raise their children according to a “Concerted Cultivation” process. Based on concerted cultivation theory children are encouraged to engage in discussions with adults, ask and answer questions, give their opinion, and engage in adult organized activities (Lareau, 2011). From this process, middle class children gain “a sense of entitlement” which would be useful in navigating institutional settings for the future (Lareau, 2011 p. 2).

Conversely, working class and poor families raise their children based on an “Accomplishment of Natural Growth” process. According to Lareau (2011), accomplishment of natural growth involves “stretches of Leisure time for children, child -initiated play, clear boundaries between adults and children, and daily interactions with kin” (p. 4).

According to Lareau (2011), school systems share concerted cultivation practices as do middle class families, which were not in line with working and poor families. Although middle class families help their children navigate institutional system in a likeminded manner, working class and poor families wanted the best for their children and wanted to see them succeed in life as well (Lareau, 2011). As did Brice-Heath (1983), Lareau (2011) found differences in middle class, working class and poor families’ language development. Lareau (2011) found,

There was quite a bit more talking in middle-class homes than in working-class and poor homes, leading to the development of greater verbal agility, larger vocabularies, more comfort with authority figures, and more familiarity



with abstract concepts. (p. 5)

To support children, one needs to take the holistic approach by examining the family and community dynamics to provide them with a more individualized plan to promote school success (Rockwell, 2006). The founding fathers of Head Start seem to have understood this concept very well as they included the family as part of the program and their child's educational experiences. Those experiences need to be grounded in rich language in both the home and the school.

Building a strong foundation in language experiences (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002) is a catalyst for future reading success. Dickinson and Tabors (2002) discovered children benefited from conversations which included more varied vocabulary as they interacted in their environment. They noted high quality preschools compensated for children coming from low income families with little language support in the home. However, Yosso (2012) stated that children possess an array of cultural wealth including "aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant" (p. 77). Yosso (2012) also stated, children bring linguistic capital which often includes multiple languages and styles, including engagement with adults about their family history and traditions. Children enter classrooms with assets to include "knowledge, skills, abilities and social contacts" (Yosso, 2012 p. 69). Children are receiving language support in the home to expand their vocabulary, however that language may not be English. Children need to be supported in school and home to build vocabulary. It is not surprising

that “the more words children know makes it easier for them to learn new words” (Neuman & Dwyer, 2011, p. 104). Therefore, the sooner children begin to learn new words to expand their vocabulary the better it is for their language and literacy development.

### Poverty and Young Children’s Language Development

Research has identified a need to improve language and literacy skills provided by preschool programs for children living in poverty (National Early Literacy Panel, 2009). Without proper support children, may enter kindergarten with underdeveloped language and literacy skills which are foundational for future learning and reading development. Butler (2012) stated, “Preschool children experiencing difficulties with acquiring early literacy and language skills are at an increased risk of entering kindergarten without the foundational skills necessary for continued academic success” (p. 52). Starting kindergarten at a deficit means that these children will need support in building those necessary language and literacy skills. Educators in various preschool programs can support children from low-income families to develop those much-needed language skills that will be needed for lifelong learning.

Children attending preschool programs that provide high-quality language and literacy instruction is viewed as one of the most important instruments for improving children who have been placed at-risk, progression toward reading instruction and reducing their susceptibility for future reading difficulties (Justice, Mashburn, Hamre & Pianta, 2008; Snow, Burn & Griffin, 1998). Justice et al.

(2008) conducted a study on the quality of the language and literacy instruction of teachers in 135 public funded schools serving children from low income families. Justice et al. (2008) found that although teachers were using the curriculum to a high degree of procedural fidelity, they were not providing high quality language and literacy instructions to children. Results revealed that teachers averaged a low rating of 2.59 on Language Modeling out of a possible 7 on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool. Justice et al. (2008) further noted that teachers attending language and literacy workshops were positive predictors of high quality language instruction. (Justice et al., 2008). The authors mentioned the need for teacher professional development (PD) to improve high quality language instructions in classrooms.

The use of language modeling will benefit all children as it is a link to helping them understand what they read. Unfortunately, children of lower Socioeconomic Status (SES) do not have access to many books or toys (Crosnoe et al., 2010). SES is seen as a driver of access to many of the needed services, resources and experiences for children (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). This access is defined as not only material goods but parental actions and communal or social connections for children of poverty (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002) and as such places them at risk (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). "At risk" is defined as "the likelihood of undesirable life outcomes" which can present a problem for student's success in school and into adulthood (Kominski, Jamieson, Martinez, 2001 p. 1). Although poor children possess cultural wealth, according to Sacks

(2007), poor children lack the cultural, social, economic “Capital” their more affluent peers are afforded (p. 12). Middle and upper-class families equip their children with “Cultural Capital” that include skills (understanding how to navigate systems), resources and social power to help them succeed (Sacks, 2007). On the other hand, Sacks (2007) reported:

In working -class and low-income families, where both parents work fulltime jobs with inflexible hours, that extra bit of parental support and advocacy is rarely available- not because the families don't want to help but because they don't know how to help or don't have the extra time to help. (p. 21)

This presents a greater systemic issue and barriers as families navigate through school systems. It further shows that low-income parents care and want their children to succeed, however there are challenges and barriers in the process. When school and home promote the use of extended conversations, create stories, play games, use back and forth conversations and linked school to home activities students tend to succeed in school (Brice-Heath, 1983).

It is important to model language to include back and forth conversations, extending on who, what, when, where and why to build vocabulary. Wasik and Hindman (2011) reported the importance of teacher Professional Development (PD) in improving oral language and vocabulary, which is a central link in learning to read with young children. Wasik and Hindman (2011) also stressed the need for programs to examine and understand activities such as book reading, asking open ended questions, playing with words which develop much-

needed vocabulary building skills and promote language development.

Normal classroom activities such as teacher- child interactions and verbal back and forth conversations can develop varied vocabulary, engage children in more complex uses of language that reach past the here and now, and surround them with environments which support language and literacy development. It is suggested that children need a well-prepared preschool teacher who understands not only the components of a good language and literacy curriculum, but also the importance of integrating the curriculum in a consistent well-thought-out way throughout the classroom and planned activities (Wasik & Hindman, 2011). The lack of connectivity and understanding of the language and literacy curriculum may lead to meaningless activities placed on a lesson plan without real intention or purpose.

Intentional teachers plan activities for children with purpose and depth. Understanding children's needs will help teachers intentionally plan activities that support their language and literacy improvements. It is an intentional teacher who drives children's growth in classrooms (Epstein, 2014). Teachers providing well thought-out lessons with intention will support children of poverty achieve academic success.

Early childhood educators and policy makers need to understand the role poverty plays on children's language development and support efforts to improve identified areas such as parent knowledge, oral and vocabulary building, and language modeling to improve children skills. Programs that provide parents as

well as teachers with educational development around the concept of intentionally providing language modeling where children are hearing a great deal of language, will support economically disadvantaged children.

#### The Need for Early Education for Economically-Disadvantaged Children

One of the goals of early education is to prepare children for a successful transition into kindergarten as well as further promote children's goals in and outside of the classroom that will contribute to overall preparedness for life (Crosnoe et al., 2010). Early childhood programs that promote interventions that support the development of language skills in young children have been shown to support success in enhancing cognitive skills at the preschool level (Butler, 2012; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). Programs that receive Federal or State funds, such as Head Start, have the responsibility and task of closing the education gap between children living in poverty and their middle-class and upper-class peers. Children who participate in preschool programs that provide high-quality language and literacy instruction are considered beneficial as it reduces their vulnerability for later reading difficulties (Snow et al., 1998).

Researchers have found an association between children's language and literacy development and later reading achievements (Catts, Fey, Zhang & Toomablin, 2001; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) described reading as "a process of translating visual codes into meaningful language" (p. 849). They noted that children need a

print rich environment to include pictures with labeling, rhymes, written words and sentences to develop needed pre-reading skills. Pre-reading skills include the use of decoding letters into sounds and connecting those sounds to words (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). When children can use language skills to label items and symbols they are in the beginning stages of reading.

In a longitudinal study, Storch and Whitehurst (2002) examined 626 children from preschool through fourth grade on code-related and oral language precursors to reading. Code-related skills included the precept of print, beginning to write letters, understanding of the letters, and sounds of the alphabet. They found a relationship between early oral language and code related skills and later reading achievements (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Particularly, they found that exposure to oral language and code related skills (naming letters, knowing print functions, printing one's name etc.) during the preschool years was a strong predictor of later reading abilities (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Storch and Whitehurst (2002) suggested early intervention to include code related and oral language activities for low income children at risk of reading difficulties.

Likewise, Catts, Fey, Zhang, and Toombli (2001) examined 604 children, 183 with reading difficulties and 421 without reading difficulties. They found after using a logistic regression analysis five variables (letter identification, sentence imitation, phonological awareness, rapid naming, and mother's education) predicted reading outcomes in second grade. Catts et al., (2001) identified a 93.3% probability of reading difficulties in children with reading problems. They

also noted the need for early identification and early literacy instruction as being essential for young children. However, children living in poverty are susceptible to having underdeveloped language skills than their more affluent peers, therefore displaying immediate and future reading difficulties (O'Connor & Jenkins, 1999).

Reading skills are needed to gain more information as we interact in society. It is important that programs provide children with environments that are rich in language in both the home and school settings. Hindman, Skibbe, and Foster (2014) explored the importance of parents providing shared book reading in the home to influence language and literacy skills. They examined a large-scale national Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) dataset which represented a sample of 700 children and their families from different ethnicities and backgrounds to understand their shared book reading practices and its role in early reading development. Hindman et al., (2014) found meaning-related talk while reading a story was more varied among more educated families.

Moreover, children whom experience a wide variety of words to improve oral language skills (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002) as well as exposure to a print rich environment (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) increases their chance of future reading success (Catts et al., 2001). It is important to support children economically, socially and linguistically in terms of educational attainment and to begin this support prior to the age of five.



## Consequences of Poverty on Socioeconomic Status, Social Development, and Educational Attainment

There have been challenges in reaching a consensus regarding the definition of poverty such as defined in economic terms (based on income measures) or social disadvantage (lacking resources). Given these challenges Engle and Black (2008) stated, “the economic definition of poverty is typically based on income measures, with the absolute poverty line calculated as the food expenditure necessary to meet dietary recommendations, supplemented by a small allowance for nonfood goods” (p. 243). Engle and Black (2008) provided a broader definition of poverty, to include “not only the absence of material wealth and health but also capabilities, such as social belonging, cultural identity, respect and dignity, but also information and education” (p. 243).

As children born in poverty must contend with its effects from birth, there are noticeable effects in their social and emotional development as well as their language developmental outcomes. They are at risk in many ways: (1.) economically due to lack of resources (Schweinhart et al., 2005), (2.) social and emotionally because of exposure to violence (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), (3.) being less prepared academically (Ou & Reynolds, 2006) as well as, (4.) poor health and well-being (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Each of which reduces their chances for success in the educational arena as well as life in general (Vaisey, 2010). Building upon this, a lack of education often leads to low paying jobs which results in an economic disadvantage (Isaac, 2012). Education is one way to climb the socioeconomic status ladder and achieve the American dream.

According to the College Board (2013), individuals working fulltime, year-round, and with higher degrees earn more money yearly before taxes, individuals with a Professional Degree earned \$102,200; Doctoral Degree earned \$91,000; Master's Degree \$70,000; Associate Degree \$44,000; some college course work \$40,000; High School Diploma \$35,400; less than a High School Diploma \$25,000 respectfully (p. 11). Overall this leads to socioeconomic disparities that may impact generations to come.

### Poverty and Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic Status (SES) can be measured as a combination of one's income, occupation, and education (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), the higher one's status affords them access to a multitude of services and resources (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan,1997). Low SES has been known to affect young children lives from birth through adulthood (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Low SES limits access to needed resources such as good nutrition, quality health care services, quality preschools, parental actions (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan,1997).

Children living in poverty tend to live in impoverished neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods are often unsafe and in need of resources and improvements. Due to unsafe conditions, children who live in impoverished neighborhoods are at risk of being hurt for simply playing outside (Osofsky, 1999). In addition, these children must also contend with the notion that they may not have enough food at the end of the month and inadvertently have the need for outside resources to get them through. Osofsky (1999) reported, community resources can support

children living in poverty to cope with some of the stresses caused by lack of resources. They also noted that children exposed to violence need one warm, supportive, caring, competent adult in their life as a protective shield.

Maslow (1982) proposed humans have a hierarchical order of need or priorities on their journey to self-actualization or becoming fulfilled in life. Basic needs such as food, water, and safety are at the bottom of the hierarchy of needs and need to be taken care of before individuals can realize the other needs.

Maslow's five hierarchical levels, starting from the foundation are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1982). Basic needs are essential for life as without them one cannot bypass the need that is dominated at that particular time (Maslow, 1982). Maslow stated that self-actualization occurs when "the human being is simultaneously that which he is and that which he yearns to be" (pg.160). These levels are individualized and are based on each person's life experiences and values (Maslow, 1982). Poverty affects one's life experiences and contributes to the way one maneuvers through these levels.

Poverty contributes to children's lack of resources to obtain quality early childhood educational experiences and services (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan,1997). Children living in more affluent SES families may experience opportunities to attend exploratory museums, plays, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) academy programs due to the financial capital afforded to them (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). This exposure encourages children to be creative and

provides opportunities to manipulate the environment with individuals that are knowledgeable about each subject as well as child development (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

Being exposed to many different activities affords one an opportunity to broaden their horizons and make connections within and across events which may or may not be related. The ability to think about things in many ways and in different contexts is needed in thinking critically (Klefstad, 2015). Thinking critically is a tool that young children need as they continue to advance through their educational experiences to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Klefstad, 2015). As noted earlier, there are barriers that children living in poverty face as they seek to attain their education and experience the world around them.

These barriers may cause children to be less prepared for school and creates a school readiness gap between poor children and their more affluent peers (Isaac, 2012). The lack of exposure to vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 2003), language and literacy skills (Catts et al., 2001), social skills, poor health and well-being (Engle & Black, 2008) contribute to children being less prepared for school. School readiness is defined as skills children need to benefit and learn from a formal school setting (Engle & Black, 2008 p. 244). The National Education Goals Plan suggest five essential elements when assessing the dimensions of school readiness for young children, health and physical development, emotional well-being and social competence, approaches to learning, communicative skills, and cognition and general knowledge (Kagan, Moore & Bredekamp, 1995).

Likewise, the Office of Head Start developed, “The Early Head Start Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five” to assess what children know and need to know to succeed in school (Office of Head Start, 2015). The framework consists of 5 Domains- Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development to help programs “to guide their choices in curriculum and learning materials, to plan daily activities, and to inform intentional teaching practices” (Office of Head Start, 2015 p.2). According to Isaacs (2012):

Fewer than half (48 percent) of poor children are school ready at age five, on the other hand children born to parents with moderate or higher incomes are much more likely to enter school ready to learn. Comparatively about 75 percent of these children are ready for school at age 5, which is a 27 percent point gap in school readiness between poor children and those from moderate or higher income families. (p. 3)

Although poor children fall behind in school readiness there are documented cases of children who are resilient and succeed in school despite of their circumstances (Rockwell, 2006). In fact, Rockwell, (2006) documented that it was the support of family, teachers, and the community that can make a difference in changing the trajectory of children’s lives. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), (2012) gave a broader aspect to school readiness to include, “children’s readiness for school, school’s readiness for children, and families and community’s readiness for school” (p. 6). They reported the need for “School

Readiness” but also “Ready Schools” in improving practices for children’s success, and “Ready Families” parenting attitudes and beliefs in supporting children school readiness (United Nations Children Fund, 2012).

Rothman (2000) reported on the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) Field Hearings, which conducted four field hearings in different parts of the country. They examined collectively how several places in the United states successfully prepared students to learn and school success. NEGP found several common themes emerged, including the need to improve teacher quality, support from the community as a resource, supporting children and families by providing resources for health and social issues that would influence children’s learning (Rothman, 2000).

#### Promoting Social Development for Young Children

Human beings interact with each other in social settings. We go into public places for business and/or pleasure. People become socialized through experiences, which is a very subjective process and occurs in and around groups and subgroups (Lortie, 2002). Children learn behaviors through exposure to their environments both in the home and outside the home (Rockwell, 2006). Children observe what is happening in their environment and use those experiences across different situations as needed.

Wright, Diener & Kay (2000) examined 11 inter city schools with 8 principals, 22 teachers and 885 students. Wright et al., (2000), reported on the readiness skills of kindergarteners living in poverty and the teachers and

principal's perception of student's deficiencies and strengths. They reported one principal stated, "the parents love their children" (p. 110). Wright et al., (2000) also noted that, "strong families in neighborhoods" are a great strength for children living in poverty (p. 116). They pointed out that student's strengths included self-esteem, wanting to learn, and social skills. According to Wright et al., (2000), 11% of the teachers reported on diversity positively, stating, "the children have a sense of identity" and a "strong sense of community" which is strength (Wright et al., 2000 p. 110). It is through these social contexts that children learn many skills.

Based on Symbolic Interaction Theory Lortie (2002) hypothesized children learn to "take the role" of the person who is teaching and are observing how the teacher handles different situations. Providing children with experiences that promote love and tolerance along with activities where children are encouraged to use those skills enhances social skills in young children. There have been noted cases that children living in poverty can exhibit social skills that gives them an advantage in school (National Public Radio, 2013). National Public Radio (NPR) (2013) reported on a study conducted by UCLA and UC Berkeley where they found that Latino children make up for their low performance in academic skills with their strong social skills. They reported that parents worked with their children exposing them to warm supportive home environments (NPR, 2013). NPR (2013) noted,

These remarkable kid's emotional maturity and social agility have been the

missing link when devising strategies to help Latino children catch up academically, because when teachers take into account these kids eagerness to learn and get along, it's much easier for them to adapt to the classroom quickly and learn English quickly. (p. 1)

Crosnoe et al., (2010) examined 1,364 American children as they transitioned into elementary school through multiple environment settings. Particularly, they examined the connection between home and school with the added inclusion of child care and the role of family SES in providing a system of consistency in the learning environments (Crosnoe et al., 2010). They found “Children who experienced cognitive stimulation in multiple settings of early childhood had higher rates of learning than their peers early in school, but only when on one the settings were the home” (Crosnoe et a., 2010 p. 984). Low income children benefit greatly when stimulated at home and in a preschool program (Crosnoe et a., 2010). Connecting home and school is a vital part of young children’s success in school.

Programs that promote environments that provide back and forth verbal interactions between children and adults are giving children the verbal stimulation they will need to draw from as they encounter different situations (Hart & Risley, 2003). These environments must provide ample opportunities for children to interact using those verbal skills to maneuver within their environments. These environments need to be low-anxiety social settings that allow for opportunities to use language for problem solving (Abel, Nerren & Wilson, 2015).



Abel et al., (2015) examined a Head Start program in the southwest United States which included four teachers in four classrooms and 74 Head Start students. They examined strategies that promoted language skills which were easily taught to teachers and useful in the classroom through an “Indirect Language Stimulation” (ILS) Approach. They found that teachers who attended a two-day professional development training provided many vocabulary and verbal interactions in classrooms and ultimately helped students do better in expressive language ( $p = .012$ ) than those students whose teacher did not participate in the professional development (Abel et al., 2015). They noted, “the manner in which adults interact verbally with children and the social context in which children’s language interaction are stimulated are key to promoting language development” (Abel et al., 2015 p. 2). Teacher-student interactions provided an opportunity for social development, as well as, language skills improvement, as they interacted in their environment.

According to Vygotsky (1978) the Vygotskian approach builds on the concept of those back and forth exchanges that happen socially between children and a more experienced person as being essential to children’s growth. The Vygotskian approach stresses the importance of social interactions occurring with an adult or more competent person who are within the child’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is described in Vygotsky (1978) as the “distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through

problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

The Zone of Proximal Development is where children engage in rich verbal interactions with more experienced individuals, it is based on these interactions they are able to use those acquired skills to improve language development (Bouchard et al., 2010). This requires teachers to be highly intentional and in tune with each individual child’s skill level. These interactions are social in nature and require positive support to improve language outcomes. According to Chapman (2000), “social-interactionist theories of language acquisition, view language acquisition as a psychobiological process to which- frequent relatively well-tuned affectively positive verbal interactions are critical” (p.43).

Zan and Donegan-Ritter (2014) suggested children could improve in academic (letter naming, math skills etc.) and social (teacher-child interaction and peer-peer interactions) gains when early childhood programs support warm, sensitive and caring relationships between children and adults, as well as, high-quality language modeling, along with adults who promote an enthusiasm for learning. These environments need to encourage high-productivity which includes engagement and the use of teachers managing instructional time to maximize learning, as well as opportunities for children to use higher-order thinking skills such asking questions, probing for answers, extending language to answer how, when, where, and why questions (Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014).

Providing such environments means teachers need to be prepared and

intentional in setting up their classrooms, use a research based curriculum to fidelity and be ready to provide individualized instruction for each student in their classroom. Teachers need to be purposeful in providing activities that will build on children's knowledge and skills to support future educational success.

### Poverty on Educational Attainment

As mentioned earlier poverty affects one's ability to obtain educational success, and at the same time, educational success is one of the primary methods for escaping poverty in the United States. Children living in poverty are often at risk of dropping out of school. In fact, according to National Center for Education Statistics (2014) the high school dropout rate for low-income students between the age of sixteen and twenty-four was 11.6 percent compared to 2.9 percent for students from high income status. There are many factors that contribute to this risk such as one's ideals, expectations, goals, preferences, and aspirations to name a few (Vaisey, 2010). Vaisey (2010) examined the idea that it is one's aspirations and implied expectations that play a part in helping children living in poverty continue their education. Vaisey (2010) stated:

(1.) the educational aspirations and expectations of poor youth are lower than those of non-poor youth; (2.) net of social-structural controls, aspirations and expectations are significant predictors of school enrollment six years later; and (3.) although expectations are more important than aspirations on average, aspirations are substantially more important than expectations for predicting the educational continuation of poor youth. (p.

75)

Being intrinsically motivated, as well as having drive and support can help at-risk children continue moving toward their educational goals. Families, communities, and the educational system play a huge role in children's school readiness and are crucial to their future success.

According to Venezia, Kirst and Antonio (2003), both K- 12 educational systems and postsecondary educational systems are undermining the educational aspiration of students and creating conflict between what students need to know and perform for college success. Venezia et al., (2003) reported that although all students were being motivated by their parents and others, it is the K- 12 and postsecondary educational systems that fail to encourage and promote college entry and success. However, it was low-income and underrepresented students that were not provided sufficient college preparatory courses and high-quality college counseling for college success (Venezia et al., 2003).

Venezia et al., (2003) also found in the "Bridge Project Report" that students in fact aspired to go to college and over 80% of African American and Latino students reported that they were going to pursue postsecondary education in the future (Venezia et al, 2003). There are several longitudinal studies documenting children of poverty success in school as they navigate through post-secondary education and ultimately in life achieving self-sufficiency (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Reynolds,

Temple, Robertson & Mann, 2002; Schweinhart et al., 2005).

The long-term benefits of a high-quality Head Start program continue into adulthood, and have been shown that educational experiences for children and families in the early childhood preschool years of life support well-being in many realms from school entry into adulthood (Schweinhart et al., 2005). Schweinhart et al., (2005) documented these benefits in The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, which examined the lives of 123 children born in poverty and at high risk of failing school from 1962-1967. The HighScope Curriculum supports children as active learners through active participation in the environment with adults whom challenge and support their development (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation).

Schweinhart et al., (2005) found adults at age 40 who had been taught using the HighScope Curriculum had higher earnings (60 percent of participants verses 40 percent of nonparticipants earned \$20,800 a year at age 40), were more likely to hold a job (76 percent of participants verses 62 percent of nonparticipants were employed at age 40), had committed fewer crimes (36 percent of participants verses 55 percent of nonparticipants arrested five or more times at age 40), and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool (77 percent of participants verses 60 percent of nonparticipants finished high school).

Campbell et al., (2002) examined 111 infants in the original “Abecedarian Project” and 104 of the original participants took part in the follow up study as an

adult at age 21. They studied the benefits of an early childhood education intervention program on at-risk infants. Campbell et al., (2002) found participants who were in the preschool treatment group of the “Abecedarian Project” experienced “higher reading and mathematics achievement test scores, fewer grade retentions, more years of education, and greater likelihood to attend a 4-year college, and less likely to become a teen parent, than those who did not participate in the program” (p. 52).

Ou and Reynolds (2006) investigated if attendance in the “Chicago Child-Parent Center” (CPC) program was associated with “higher educational attainment (high school completion, highest grade completed, and college attendance) at age 22” (p. 176). They concluded that CPC preschool participation was associated with more years of education (11.33 vs. 10.93,  $p < .001$ ) and higher rates of completion whether a diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) (66.9% vs. 55.3%  $p < .001$ ) and higher rates of college attendance (23.0% vs. 17.9%,  $p = .055$ ) (Ou & Reynolds, 2006).

Reynolds et al., (2002) found that, “The CPC preschool program provided a return to society of \$7.14 per dollar invested by increasing economic well-being and tax revenues, and by reducing public expenditures for remedial education, criminal justice treatment, and crime victims” (p. 267). These studies revealed it is possible for children living in poverty to go on to attain a higher education and to become productive citizens in society with the support of high quality early education programs.

## High Quality in Early Childhood Programs

There is a growing body of research which has shown that providing not just quality but high-quality preschool programs for children living in poverty has an effect on their language and cognitive skills (Engle & Black, 2008; Duncan, 2007). Those high-quality programs are explained in Duncan (2007) as:

Having well-educated or trained staff on the care and education of young children, and who receive salaries comparable to those of elementary school teachers; a well-implemented curriculum, small class sizes, high adult-to-child ratios, with stimulating materials available in a safe physical setting; a language-rich environment; and caring, responsive interactions between staff and children. (p. A21)

These high-quality programs must also include parents as an integral part of the program in improving children learning outcomes (Duncan, 2007).

Learning outcomes are a set of skills, behaviors and knowledge children need to acquire to be successful in school (ECLKC, 2017). Skills include cognitive- problem solving, self- regulation- impulse control, social and emotional development- relationship with others, language (using language and understanding it) and literacy- function of print, perceptual motor and physical development- small and large motor movements (ECLKC, 2017). Providing teachers with training and professional development to develop these skills will be pivotal to children's learning outcomes.

There is growing research documenting the need for teacher professional

development in the early childhood education ECE field (Buysse, Winton & Rous, 2009; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Wasik & Hindman, 2011; Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker & Lavelle, 2010). Buysse, Winton and Rous (2009) identified the type of PD needed in the ECE field as focused on professional practices and it is content specific, aligned with instructional goals, learning standards, curriculum, intensive learning opportunities that are sustained over time and include guidance and feedback through coaching, consultation, facilitated collaborations. Taking this to heart, Head Start has mandated that teachers attend at least 15 hours of intensive specialized professional development annually. The interest in professional development was in part due to the standards and accountability movement and the recent emphasis on evidence-based practice. Professional development is largely viewed as the most effective approach to adequately prepare teachers and improve their instructional and interventional practices (Buysse et al., 2009).

### Teacher Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

Evidence supports teacher professional development (PD) as a crucial element in supporting children in Head Start (Buysse et al., 2009; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). Today teachers face many challenges with federal and state mandates to improve their skills to promote children's school readiness outcomes. According to the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (2008) PD for Early Childhood teachers is, "facilitated teaching and



learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and disposition as well as the application of this practice” (p. 3). The idea is that PD should be ongoing and not a single act in implementing evidence based practices.

Improving teacher PD will support children living in poverty as they benefit from their teachers having a solid foundation in early childhood development. Newman and Cunningham (2009) examined the impact of PD on teacher knowledge and quality early language and literacy practices on 177 center-based sites and 114 homebased sites. Participants were identified as center-based or home-based and then randomly placed in one of three groups. Group one received a three-credit course in early language and literacy from a Community College, group two received the three-credit course from a Community College plus ongoing coaching, and group three did not receive the three-credit course nor ongoing coaching (control group). They found significant improvement in teacher practices for both center-base teachers and home-based providers that attended course-work plus coaching.

Newman and Cunningham (2009) stated, “Content knowledge of language and literacy, knowledge of children’s development and appropriate practice are essential for teachers to be well prepared...” (p. 538). Providing teachers with ongoing evidence-based PD improves their skills and practices in their classrooms. Understanding which forms of teacher PD have been identified as most effective may help programs improve teacher skills.

Professional development takes place in many forms at conferences, trainings, workshops, in-service, pre-service, classes, institutes, web-based trainings, coaching and consultation, self-directed, and professional learning groups. According to Rebore (2015) the primary purpose of teacher PD programs is to increase the knowledge and skills of employees, and ultimately increase their potential to achieve goals and objectives.

Many programs support teachers by developing their skills with the use of coaching and mentoring models. “Practice Base Coaching” (PBC) is one such PD model that sets the foundation for supporting effective classroom practices and intensive learning along with ongoing support and feedback. PBC model supports teacher’s purposeful interactions with students, as well as to help them understand their strengths and weakness in providing a language rich environment. When teachers are intentional they use their knowledge, skills and judgement to improve student skills and experiences (ECLKC, 2017).

Through PBC teachers are encouraged to examine their practices in the classroom and use a process of goal setting, classroom observations, and reflection and feedback to improve their teaching strategies (Office of Head Start, 2012). PBC supports teacher practices by increasing their understanding of effective interactions, and the use of identified strategies such as language modeling to be practiced in the classroom (Office of Head Start, 2012).

Zaslow et al., (2010) conducted a review of the literature to examine the research on professional development in the early childhood education field and

how to improve early childhood educators' knowledge and skills. In their review, Zaslow et al., targeted literature that addressed strengthening early educator practices related to language and literacy, math, social and emotional learning and strengthening overall quality in classrooms (Zaslow et al., 2010). In the review of the literature Zaslow et al. (2010) found that PD was more effective when:

It had clearly articulated objectives for PD and focused on strengthening early educator knowledge and practices; was a joint effort between administrators and teachers to support each person's skill set; intensity and duration matched content that was being taught; PD was linked with child assessments and ongoing monitoring; and, when organizational context aligned with the standards of practice. (p. xii – xiv)

Providing such a well-rounded approach supports school readiness for young children. School readiness for young children was Nationally recognized with the signing of Public Law 110-134.

On December 12, 2007 President George W. Bush signed into law Public Law 110-134 "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007" reauthorizing Head Start (Congress.gov). Health and Human Services (HHS) released the new Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) on September 1, 2016. Prior to this release date HSPPS had not been updated since the original release in July 1975. HSPPS are to ensure high quality service delivery to children and their families in the Head Start program (ECLKC, 2017).

All Head Start programs must comply with the new HSPPS requirements and regulations to operate a Head Start program (ECLKC, 2017). Connecting program standards and practices, articulated goals and objectives, knowledge and practices, teacher support, child assessments, ongoing monitoring, along with the intensity and duration of PD will help programs take a holistic approach to teacher PD (Zaslow et al., 2010).

Providing teachers with PD should not be viewed as an activity that ends with pre-service, and/or in-service training, finishing a two-day training, or classes that ends in a few weeks. To the contrary, PD should be an ongoing process that gives new teachers a chance to learn from more seasoned teachers through a collaborative process. Wasik and Hindman (2011) explained that intensive, ongoing PD positively impacted the quality of language and pre-literacy experiences that teachers created in Head Start classrooms. Wasik and Hindman (2011) noted the teachers in the intervention and training group modeled language more, increasing children opportunity to hear high-quality language in the classroom. They used the Exceptional Coaching for Language and Literacy “ExCELL” Model of PD to improve teacher’s skills in language and literacy development for students.

Through a multistep process, they assessed teachers using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), videotaping of the teacher’s classrooms, and book reading. Wasik and Hindman (2011) found that teachers who were in

their intervention group created higher quality classroom environments and children who were in an ExCELL classroom made significant gains ( $B = 3.57$ ,  $p = .04$ ) in vocabulary development based on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III (PPVT III), than those children who were not in an ExCELL classroom (Wasik & Hindman, 2011). High-quality classroom environment included modeling language, verbal feedback, scaffolding children language development and providing writing related materials in the classroom (Wasik & Hindman, 2011).

Similarly, Jackson et al. (2006) provided a 15-week PD literacy workshop series with early childhood educators where they evaluated the effect of the HeadsUp! Reading (HUR) on literacy outcomes for children living in poverty. They found significant improvements (HUR-only  $p$ 's  $< 0.05$  compared to the control group) in language and literacy practices for preschoolers when the early childhood educator participated in the HeadsUp! professional development literacy workshop series and mentoring program.

These various studies are important to examine practices that support early childhood educators' professional development to improve low-income children's learning outcomes and language development.

#### Practices Supporting Early Childhood Educators Professional Development

Coaching is seen as one of the competency drivers in implementing evidence based practices. Implementation Science has found Coaching to be one of the important competency components in providing evidence-based

practices (National Implementation Research Network, 2013). NIRN (2013) states that “Coaching needs to be work based, opportunistic, readily available, and reflective” (p.1).

According to Wapole and Meyers (2008), coaching sets practitioners up for success as they worked toward their complex goals. Wapole and Meyers (2008), explained coaching as a necessity, “When people work with the support of a real coach, someone with specialized knowledge and experience who can provide directions, support, and continuous feedback, they are much more likely to succeed” (p. 69). An experienced teacher who is able to provide guidance, knowledge and skill building, ongoing support, individualized strategies, and reflective supervision helps to set new and inexperienced teachers up for success.

### Coaching As a Model of Professional Development Practices

Coaching is well known in the sports arena. However, it has recently made its way into early childhood education. According Showers and Joyce (1996) coaching is about supporting a team effort as they stated, “When two teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the coach and the one observing is the coached” which is more collaborative than evaluative (p.15). Coaching is viewed as one of the primary approaches in providing high quality PD for teachers (Wapole & Meyers, 2008).

Coaching can be delivered to practitioners in many forms such as Web-Based Coaching, Expert Coaching and Peer Coaching. Web-Based Coaching is

coaching remotely via the use of technology. Teachers are encouraged to use online websites to set goals, action plan, structure observations, self-reflect and to get resources. Expert Coaching is where a more experienced teacher/facilitator provides information and support to a less experienced teacher. The coach and teacher arrange time for goal setting, action planning, conducting focused observations, and engaging in reflection and feedback. In effect, it is an application of Vygotsky's ZPD to professional development.

Powell, Diamond, Burchinal & Koehler (2010) investigated, the impact of teacher practices and children's literacy outcomes through a randomized control trial. The participants included an expert coach, 24 Head Start programs with 88 teachers and 759 children. They also examined whether there were different effects based on remote (technology/web-based) verses onsite (live) coaching delivered by the expert coach.

Powell et. al., (2010) found classroom environments were positively affected ( $d = 0.99$ ) by the PD interventions and supports that they provided to teachers on early literacy and language development. They further found children in the intervention classrooms showed significant gains in letter knowledge ( $d = 0.29$ ), concepts about print ( $d = 0.22$ ), writing ( $d = 0.17$ ) and blending ( $d = 0.18$ ). There were no inherent differences between teachers receiving remote and onsite coaching.

Peer Coaching is about peers supporting each other in their practices. Working together to form teams is the basis of peer coaching. This team

approach is essential as teachers go through the process of collaborating, modeling, observing and reflecting on practices and implementing new strategies (Showers & Joyce, 1996). One such model that supports teachers in these efforts is “Practice Base Coaching” (PBC). PBC is a program that supports teacher PD in implementing evidence-based practices within early childhood education.

### Practice Base Coaching as a Model of Professional Development Practices

PBC was developed by the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) to help in the quest for a professional development program in early childhood to improve practices that support young children’s readiness for school and learning. The components of PBC are: planning goals and action steps; engaging in focused observation, and reflecting on and sharing feedback about teaching practices. All components are essential in promoting a strong foundation for teachers to get the most out of their PD (ECLKC, 2017).

PBC is about forming “tight knit” communities through collaborative partnerships. Figure 1 shows the PBC process. These partnerships are working interactions between a coach and teacher, group facilitator and teacher, or peers, in a non-punitive environment. The environment must be a safe place for teachers to have discussions around what is occurring in their classrooms, ask questions, problem solve, get support from others, to get feedback as well as to reflect on practices, and try new ideas. During these meetings teachers are encouraged to not only think about their practices in the classroom but also to make a plan with group support to come up with viable solutions to some of the



challenges they face. After coming up with suggested solutions, teachers are encouraged to return to their classrooms and try out the suggestions while videotaping themselves. These videos will be viewed by the group for support. Figure 1 shows the graph used by NCQTL to depict the model of coaching practices.



Figure 1. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Collaborative Coaching Partnerships Process for Effective Teaching Practices Collaborative Partnership Graphic retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/teaching/docs/psc-what-do-we-know.pdf>

PBC supports the “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007”, which fosters Head Start programs to improve and support school readiness for children through its practices (Office of Head Start, 2012).

A house (See Figure 2) is used by National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) as the framework that is used to support the everyday

practices that aide in school readiness for children. All elements connect to form the bases of supporting children’s learning and school readiness. The house consists of four elements the roof, two pillars and the foundation. The foundation represents the positive interactions teachers and children share in their environment; the pillars represent research based curricula and assessments used; and the roof represents how teachers will meet children’s individualized needs.

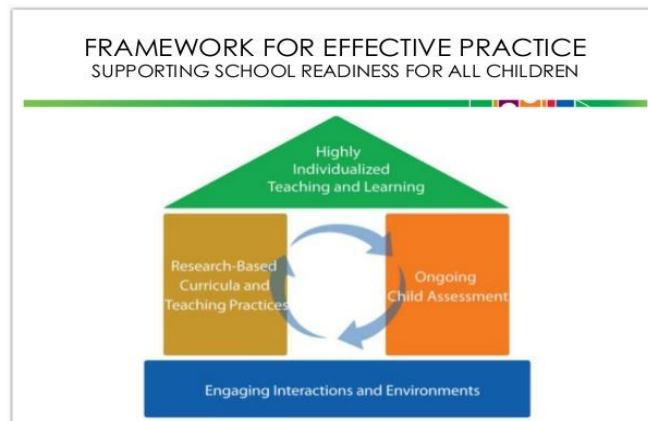


Figure 2. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Framework for Effective Practice  
Framework for Effective Practice (Office of Head Start, 2012) retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice>

PBC is a cyclical process that supports how effective teachers are with children, and promotes safe collaborative partnerships which lead to improvement in school readiness for children. This continuous cycle (See Figure

3) is an ongoing process that is structured through the use of goal setting, classroom observations and reflection and feedback.



Figure 3. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Cyclical Process  
Source: Supporting Effective Teaching Practices (Office of Head Start, 2012)

Teachers gain specific tools and strategies based on their individualized needs through the use of discussions as well as videos of themselves in action. They also gain support from multiple sources such as the facilitator, peers, and the 15-minute suites. The 15-minute suites are examples of exemplar teaching practices that can be viewed by teachers in a short amount of time. It is highly individualized based on the needs of the individual and what they would like to accomplish based on their personal goals (Office of Head Start, 2012).

PBC consists of four formats: Live, Distance, Group and Individual. Within the four formats there are the following three options an Expert, Peer and

Self (See Figure 4 and Table 1). Figure 4 shows how the cube is broken into each format and options as a visual model. Table 1 is the key of features of each format and options which describes how each format functions.

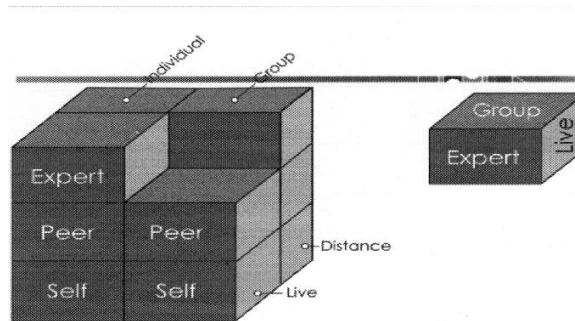


Figure 4. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Visual Model of the Formats (Office of Head Start, 2012)

Table 1. Key Features of Practice Base Coaching

	Individual	Group	Distance	Live
Expert	Coach and teacher arrange a time for goal setting and action planning, focused observation, and reflection and feedback	Provides facilitation on goals and action plans, guide discussion about teaching practices and implementation, share information and resources	Conduct goal setting, action planning, watch videos teachers upload, give written feedback, and share website and conference calls or emails or provide specific prompts for reflections.	Meet with teachers to conduct goal settings, action planning as well as in classroom observations, they debrief meetings along with providing reflections/feedback, and share information and resources.
Peer	Conduct peer coach dyads that observe in each other's classrooms and meet to discuss teaching practices based on individually developed action plans	Conduct peer coaching dyads which meet in teacher workrooms to discuss goals and action plans, share observations, reflects and provides feedback, and share information and resources	Conduct goal setting, action planning, watch videos that they have uploaded, arrange time for reflection and feedback via Skype	Conduct goal setting, action planning, peers conducts reciprocal observations in classrooms, debrief meetings and provide feedback as well as share information and resources
Self	Utilizes teacher journals about experiences using a structured online self-coaching tool	Encourages the use of multiple teachers participating in teacher learning communities or join an online chat to share information and resources	Teacher uses the online self-coaching website to help set goals, action plans, structure observations, self-reflect, self-feedback and get resources	Self-guided materials to set goals and action plans, structures self-observation and videos, uses checklist for reflection and feedback about teaching practices

*Note.* An Office of Head Start National Centers, The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, 2012

Under the “Expert” option for “Group” format of PBC utilizes “Teachers Learning and Collaborating” (TLC) (See figure 5). TLC supports teachers in ensuring that they are effectively meeting the needs of the children who count on them to provide them with the necessary tools needed for future learning.

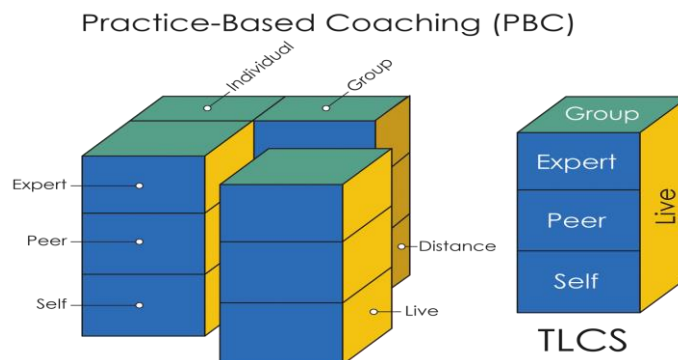


Figure 5. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Framework for Practice Base Coaching and Teachers Learning and Collaborating Models  
Source: Teachers Learning Collaborating (Office of Head Start, 2012)

### Teachers Learning and Collaborating (TLC) as a Group Model

The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) developed TLC group coaching to support teachers in Head Start programs to create collaborative teaching communities to improve classroom practice (ECLKC, 2017). TLC’s primary function is having a trained facilitator paired with a small group of teachers to support them with the use of evidence-based strategies to improve children’s learning as well as outcomes. The facilitator attends several trainings to understand how to use the TLC model and to conduct effective meetings with trainers and teachers. During the meetings, the facilitator and

teachers collaborate on best practices and examine ways to use assessments tools to plan activities together, which are useful for teachers in the classroom to promote high quality teaching and learning.

TLC's improves teacher outcomes through further support by providing a trained facilitator, coworkers, a safe forum for discussion, and constructive problem solving as a basis for each of the meetings. Ideally the team would meet at least once or twice a month through the school year to examine practices and in a safe and supportive way as a team to arrive at viable solutions to teacher's plans and goals.

TLC's promote highly effective practices that include teacher classroom observations, a safe place to share, time to reflect, an opportunity for reflection to observe areas of growth, gain feedback, peer-to-peer learning and examining practices that improve student readiness for school. Teachers benefit from the process as it helps them go through the process of planning and reflecting. Figure 6 shows the Know See, Do process which helps teachers view classroom practices and make intentional changes.

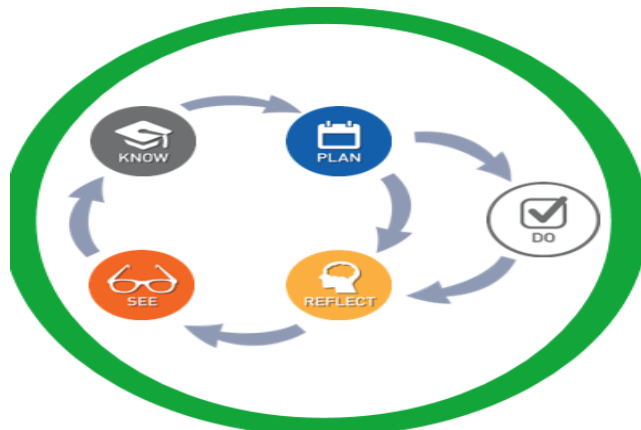


Figure 6. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Framework for the Know, See, Do Process (NCQTL).

Source: Teachers Learning Collaborating (Office of Head Start, 2012)

The “Know” portion of the TLC framework focuses on knowing what is needed in the field of child development to promote children’s learning outcomes. The part of knowing involves the viewing of 15-minute in-service suites which provide teachers with exemplar videos of teacher-child interactions in the classroom. Teachers are able to view videos of other teachers actually engaged in interactions that promote student success in school. These videos are no more than 15 minutes in length which makes it an easy and accessible tool for teachers.

The “See” portion of the TLC framework is based on the teachers having an opportunity to videotape themselves and see their current practices as well as for further support. Through the 15-minute in- service suites teachers can view teaching practices being practiced in actual classrooms. The “Do” portion of the TLC framework gives teachers an opportunity to put into practice what they have



learned and to practice those acquired skills.

The “Reflection” portion of the TLC framework gives teachers a chance to reflect on what is happening in their classroom. Through videotaping themselves they can examine their current practices and make any necessary changes.

The “Plan” portion of the TLC framework helps teachers plan activities that promote effective teaching and to examine the daily interactions they have with children. TLCs are about teachers being intentional in their practices in the classroom. Teachers who are intentional reflect on what works for their classroom and purposefully add or delete content that does/doesn't support child learning outcomes.

Providing a PD program helps teachers think, plan, be purposeful and deliberately reflect on their classroom practices to support students. The point is, when teachers collaborate and share ideas they construct meaning and knowledge together (Lambert, 2003). However, professional development programs are often top down (administrator driven), giving teachers little to no voice in their professional development needs.

### Teacher Voice on Their Professional Development

There is little to no research on teacher voice regarding their professional development in Early Childhood Education. According to Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) teacher voices are rarely heard, as they stated, “...what teachers desire to accomplish is frequently disregarded in educational decision-making” (p. 29). Blommaert, (2009) refers to “Voice” as she spoke regarding Hyme (1996) work,

she stated, “Voice is the capacity to make oneself understood in one’s own terms, to produce meanings under conditions of empowerment” (p. 271). Having ownership of policies can boost morale and teacher confidence in their abilities. It is important to include teacher voice in their professional development as they have classroom knowledge and skills and will subsequently execute policies (Lefstein & Perath, 2014).

Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) further stated, “If reform is to be successful, their voices and views must be included in any attempts to improve and alter their work” (p. xvi). Giving teachers a voice in their PD supports buy in and a feeling of being heard and understood. The exclusion of teacher voices can have adverse effect on student’s success (Gabriel, Day, & Allington, 2011).

According to Gabriel et al., (2011) there are many methods to grow effective teachers however, what is missing are exemplar teacher voices. They conducted a study of 30 exemplary 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers working in high-poverty elementary schools describing factors that contributed to their development. Gabriel et al., (2011) found that exemplar teachers wanted a professional development program that would support them in learning about their students and responding to their student’s needs. Excluding teacher voice in improving education can be “doomed to failure” (Cohn and Kottkamp, 1993). Gabriel et al., (2011) also noted teachers wanted collegial support through a peer of mentor, as well as support from their administrators to support their continued development and skills.

Through the process of building knowledge and skills teachers are able to

make improvements that can be measured with the use of assessment tools that measure teacher and child interactions. One such assessment tool is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which is an observation tool to assess the quality of preschool classrooms through third-grade (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008). CLASS is based on the theory that student-teacher interactions are critical to student learning and development (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008).

#### Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as an Assessment Tool in Early Childhood Education

The interactions between students and their teachers are so vital to children's school success that it has made national attention. The Office of Head Start (OHS) has adopted CLASS as a part of its monitoring process, which focuses on three Domains of interaction to include Emotional Support, involving developing positive interactions between teachers and students, which are essential to school readiness; Classroom Organization examines teacher classroom management; and, Instructional Support focuses on teachers providing students opportunity to use language skills to promote problem solving, scaffolding and verbal feedback.

There are 10 dimensions under the three domains; Emotional Support- Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspective; Classroom Organization- Behavior Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Format; and Instructional Support- Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008).

There are a set of 7 scores ranging from 1 being lowest and 7 being highest except for Negative Climate which ranges from 1 being highest and 7 being lowest (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008). The Head Start Act section 641A(c)(2)(F) requires that OHS monitor Head Start programs using a valid and reliable research based observation tool (ECLKC, 2017). Due to this adoption OHS has mandated every Head Start grantee across the country be reviewed using the CLASS tool. The use of the CLASS tool ensures that grantees are providing high quality interactions within their classrooms.

Teachers providing those back and forth verbal exchanges throughout the day supports children socially and promote their learning and development. It is equally important for teachers to provide students with frequent conversations, elicit questions, scaffold for their language development. The CLASS tool assesses teachers overall instructional interactions with students in the classroom. CLASS is based on the idea that interactions between student and teachers are essential to student's success in school (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008).

CLASS can only be administered by trained certified CLASS Observers. CLASS Observers attend two to five days of training and must demonstrate a clear understanding of what constitutes high/mid/low quality teacher/child interactions by viewing several videos and scoring at least 75% in each area reaching a reliability status. After becoming reliable, CLASS Observers can visit classrooms using the CLASS scoring sheets to document what they observe and

assign a score based on the observed interactions between 1 and 7. A score of 1-2 is considered low, 3-5 is considered mid, and 6-7 is considered high quality (Exception: Negative Climate- 1-2 is considered high quality, 3-5 is considered mid, 6-7 is considered low).

Head Start programs with scores in the bottom 10% of any of the three CLASS domains of quality interactions will no longer be guaranteed federal grant funding and may need to re-compete for their grant in the Designation Renewal process (ECLKC, 2017). As of 2015 the National Grantee mean scores for Language Modeling is 3.35 (ECLKC, 2016). It is through valid and reliable tools such as CLASS that high-quality interactions can be measured.

The CLASS tool is one of the tools the researcher used in this inquiry of activities that promote teachers use of language modeling and children language developmental outcomes in Head Start. The focus was on the dimension Language Modeling in promoting frequent conversations, open-ended questions, repetition and extension, self and parallel talk, and promoting the use of advanced language.

## Summary

Overall, the studies reviewed lacked answers to the research questions posed in this research. Through conducting the literature review, there was a clear need for effective professional development programs in the ECE field (Buysse, Winton & Rous, 2009; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Wasik & Hindman,

2011; Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker & Lavelle, 2010). There was also a clear absence of including teachers' voices into their professional development and how to effectively implement coaching practices to promote teacher knowledge and skills. The primary focus of this study was twofold. First, to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers in a Head Start program that engage in Language Modeling activities and strategies that lead to children's success in school and ultimately in life. Second, the goal was to include teachers voice into their professional development. Gabriel, Day, and Allington (2011) noted that the exclusion of teacher voices can have adverse effect on student's success and therefore must be addressed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. Multiple studies reviewed demonstrated the need for professional development for Head Start teachers to improve language development for low income students (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Hart & Risley, 2003; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). The present study is intended to contribute to the discussion on the need for teacher PD around language modeling and the need to include teacher voices when considering an ongoing professional development model for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field. The study was designed so as to allow Head Start teachers to describe their language modeling practices and then speak about the PD they received to improve and support their ability to provide rich language modeling experiences for their preschool students.

This chapter provides the specific design of the study, along with a description of the following: 1.) the research setting, 2.) the sample population, 3.) data sources, 4.) the data collection procedures, 5.) Validity and Trustworthiness, and 6.) the positionality of the researcher.

## Research Design

This study is an example of a sequential mixed-methods descriptive study that utilized survey data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007) and interviews to describe the experiences of Head Start teachers who were engaged in professional development experiences related to language modeling for Head Start children. I chose the sequential mixed-methods design because it allowed me to examine the quantitative research data first then build on it with the qualitative research in sequence. Sequential mixed methods design is described in Creswell (2014) as, “Is one in which the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research” (p. 15). Originally, I sought to do a Case Study to explain my research. A case study utilizes a case or multiple cases within a real-life, contemporary context or setting and can be quantitative or qualitative (Yin, 2009). However, I felt that it would not give me the in-depth teacher voices that I so desired. I then thought about conducting a qualitative study such as phenomenology to capture the lived experiences of the teachers, however I would be minimizing the heavily quantitative data driven sources that Head Start is known for because of the federally funded accountability on the mandatory Classroom Scoring System (CLASS) reporting. Therefore, a sequential mixed method design was naturally a more suitable approach to get a better in-depth understanding of all of the data. Likewise, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) stated that, “the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in



combination provides a better understanding of the research problems than either approach alone” (p. 9). A survey was developed that contained both multiple choice, Likert scale items and open-ended questions to be able to hear the teachers’ voices and develop a deeper understanding of their PD experiences. Appendix A, provides a list of the survey questions used to illicit this teacher feedback. The survey consisted of a total of 30 items (See Appendix A). There were a total of 2 open-ended items, 13 multiple choice items, and 15 Likert scale responses. The researcher was provided with 253 email addresses of current Head Start teachers. For the purposes of this study, the survey was disseminated via Qualtrics through the California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) domain to the 253 teachers who were identified. The survey was designed to take no more than 30 minutes to complete. I chose to conduct an electronic survey because it provided an opportunity to reach a broader audience quickly and was less intrusive for the mass majority, because it allowed them to respond openly and honestly with anonymity. According to Krathwohl (2009) internet surveys have a “low cost of distribution and rapid response” (p. 587) thus making it the most effective approach to survey the teachers. It also provided a way in which to include teacher voices and thoughts regarding their professional development on language modeling needs in a secure environment.

As a follow up to the survey, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted for an approximately 30-minute interview, if so, they were to

provide their name and phone number at the end of the survey. The participants were also given an opportunity to follow a hyperlink to a Google Docs form to enter a drawing to win a \$25 visa gift card. After analyzing the responses, there were 253 emails disseminated to current teachers, 74 (29%) completed the survey and 20 (27%) agreed to an interview 6 (30%) ultimately agreed upon a time for a face-to-face interview. Interviews were conducted to get a deeper understanding of teacher's thoughts and views on their professional development activities that lead to gains in their language modeling skills. The interviews were held in the center's site supervisor's office behind closed doors. The following questions guided the interview:

1. Please tell me a bit more about your professional development experiences.
2. What are your views on language modeling for children?
3. Please describe the language modeling activities you find to be most effective.

I chose to conduct interviews because I wanted to get a deeper sense of teacher voices. According to Patton (1987) interviews help researchers to "enter the other person's perspective" (p. 109). As reiterated this study sought to include teacher voice on their PD in supporting the use of language modeling with children. Together, the surveys and interviews allowed their voices to be heard.

## Research Setting

All participants were current Head Start teachers for the program year 2016-2017. Teachers were drawn from a Head Start program located in the Southwest region of the United States. This program is housed in one of the largest geographical counties in the United States. According to the U.S Census Bureau (2015), San Bernardino County has 2.1 million people, of which 19.5 percent live in poverty. The program has 43 preschool sites throughout the county typically in high poverty areas. The program employs 313 teachers and services over 7000 low income children in its Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS) and Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) programs. This particular Head Start (HS) program primarily services children 3-4 years old and it is center-based. The Early Head Start (EHS) program serves children birth to 3 years old in a center based or home base program option (ECLKC, 2017). In the EHS program option children and their families have the option of choosing a center-base facility or home-base program where a qualified home visitor will conduct visits in their homes (ECLKC, 2017). The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) program is a grant funded collaboration between Early Head Start and child care centers and family day care providers to provide children birth to 3 years old in their care with comprehensive services (ECLKC, 2017). All three programs are designed to provide high quality services to young children of poverty and their families.

## Research Sample

The Head Start teacher population at the sample Head Start program was identified by the Head Start Human Resource Department and included a total of 253 teachers. Email addresses for the identified population were compiled in coordination with the Head Start Training and Technical Unit of the agency. The teachers were identified based on their current status of employment at the Head Start program to obtain current information. The self-developed survey was disseminated to all 253 current Head Start teachers to gain demographical data as well as insight into their views and perceptions around language modeling and their professional development experiences. Demographically, there were 253 female teachers and 0 male teachers. After the participants volunteered to take the survey they were categorized based on ethnicity, gender, age, teacher position (I, II, or III), length of employment, permit held, CLASS scores, participation in professional development planning and goal setting, and language modeling activities exhibited. I chose to gather demographical data to get a sense of the participants and their characteristics. Additionally, I wanted to examine different categories across demographics.

The following outlines the teacher positions I, II, and III: a teacher I is a home-based teacher servicing in the EHS home base option; a teacher II is a center based teacher operating in a center- base program option; and a teacher III is the programs education specialist providing teachers' I and II with support. Teachers are required to hold a permit through the Commission on Teaching

Credentialing (CTC) through the state of California to be a teacher in this Head Start program. CTC offers 6 levels of Child Development Permits, (1.) Child Development Assistant Permit, (2.) Child Development Associate Teacher Permit, (3.) Child Development Teacher Permit, (4.) Child Development Master Teacher Permit, (5.) Child Development Site Supervisor Permit, and (6.) Child Development Program Director Permit. Face-to-face Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of teacher's thoughts and views on their professional development activities that lead to gains in their language modeling skills.

#### Research Data

The survey instrument used in this study included an informed consent at the beginning of the survey which included consent for both the electronic survey and the face-to-face interviews. The survey included consent for both the survey and face-to-face interviews so as to allow the participant to be fully informed about the study. The researcher developed an original survey for the purposes of this study. The survey was developed with the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System tool, which offered insight in not only the aspects of the survey item constructs but also the exemplar activities that constitute high quality in ECE. According to Foxcroft, Paterson, le Rowx and Herbst (2004), seeking expert input on survey items can help increase the content validity of a survey. Moreover, the self-developed survey was piloted with four Head Start Managers

who are the agencies content area experts on the CLASS tool. Feedback was obtained from the managers with regards to the clarity of the survey, relevance of questions, and overall content usefulness. The pilot revealed that the survey was appropriate and captured its intended purpose. According to Foxcroft, Paterson, le Roux and Herbst (2004), seeking expert input on survey items can help increase the content validity. The survey consisted of a total of 30 items (See Appendix A). There were a total of 2 open-ended items, 13 multiple choice and 15 Likert scale 5 point responses.

All results of the study were based on the self-reported data of the participants and scored with a number one being the highest/best score, and five being the lowest/worst score. On the survey Participants were asked if they may be contacted for interviews, and if they agreed they were only asked to provide their first name and phone number. In addition, participants were asked on the survey to follow a hyperlink to a Google Docs form if they wanted to enter a drawing to win the incentive of a \$25 gift card. The Google Docs form was maintained and secured within the California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) domain. The entry form requested the participant's email address and was kept separate in order to ensure that the participant's survey responses were unidentifiable. Once the interview date and time were agreed upon, the researcher and interviewee meet in the supervisor's office behind closed doors. The interviews were conducted September 1-7, 2017. The interview protocol included:

1. Introduction
2. Explained the purpose of study
3. Provided interviewee with the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns
4. Began recording and proceeded with the interview

The following questions guided the interview:

1. Please tell me a bit more about your professional development experiences.
2. What are your views on language modeling for children?
3. Please describe the language modeling activities you find to be most effective.

### Data Collection

The researcher surveyed the population of Head Start teachers identified. Data was collected via Qualtrics survey (Appendix A) and face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researcher (Appendix B) from the participants who consented to participate. The survey was distributed to the participants through email beginning on August 1, 2017 and concluded on August 31, 2017. Semi-structured Interviews were conducted through the use of open-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' experiences, for thematic purposes, and allowance for follow up questions to be posed and asked in different ways for clarity. Semi-structured interviews go beyond just answering

the predetermined questions, but it takes skillful planning to ask probing questions to gain deeper insight into the participant's responses. Wengraf (2001) states, "Semi-structured interviews are designed to have a number of interviewer questions prepared in advanced but such prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the subsequent questions of the interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorized way" (p. 5). The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed using Dragon software application for a word count. The researcher was given permission by the Head Start program and IRB to examine the existing teacher CLASS scores in Language Modeling for informational purposes only, to set a baseline of where teachers tend to score in the Language Modeling portion of the CLASS tool.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software. Measure of Central tendency summarizes the data in batches using mode, median, mean, variance, standard deviation and frequencies. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data by providing a summary of the sample and measures. According to Krathwohl (2009) the use of descriptive statistics focuses on "where the bulk of the data lie, and how spread out the data are" (p. 377).

Next NVivo software was used to help analyze the qualitative data. Specifically, the qualitative data was coded for themes. The open-ended



questions from the survey and the more in-depth questions from semi structured interviews were manually coded. Initial Coding was used, according to Strauss & Corbin (1998), Initial Coding is “breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them and comparing them for similarities and differences” (p. 102). The open-ended survey questions and interviews were coded separately for data analysis. The open-ended questions from the survey was exported from Qualtrics and imported in NVivo for a word frequency query to show the number of times a particular word appeared in the text during this initial phase of coding and re-coding (Codify).

The semi-structured interviews were manually coded from the digital recorder which housed a folder for each participant labeled “participant and #” then entered into NVivo. Once I received the word frequency I began to code each sentence based on the number of times it appeared so as to began the process of codifying in a systematic manner for categorizing. According to Saldana (2016), “To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize” (p. 9). I was then able to cluster codes for similarities and differences to begin the process of categorizing. During the categorizing process, I searched for patterns of sentences that could be placed together because of their similarities. I created a manual hard copy of the coding to keep track of sentences and codes using a highlighter. Then I began to categorize data to create themes. The Thematic Analysis Approach also called “Themeing The Data” was carried out. Themeing

the Data helped to explain what a sentence or extended phrase was about or means (Saldana, 2016). Likewise, Saldana (2013) says “it is an opportunity for you as a researcher to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of your data and to begin taking ownership of them” (p. 100). During this phase of “Theming the Data”, I was able to look at extended phrases or sentences that had similar meaning to be organized into groups that had repeated ideas.

Additional coding techniques included deductive coding and inductive coding. Saldana (2016) states, deductive coding “harmonize with your study’s conceptual framework, paradigm, or research goals” (p. 75). Deductive and Inductive coding was used to code terms used by the participants to explain recorded data in their language or words specific to their culture as a Head Start teacher. Saldana (2016) further states regarding inductive coding, “emergent, data-driven inductive coding choices are also legitimate” (p. 75). This aided in teachers’ voices being captured in a precise and meaningful way. In addition to coding the data it is important to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research and data.

### Validity and Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System tool which offered insight, not only in the aspects of the survey item constructs, but also the exemplar activities that constitute high quality in ECE. To establish validity the self-developed survey was piloted with

four Head Start Managers who are the agencies content area experts on the CLASS tool. Feedback was obtained from the managers with regards to the clarity of the survey, relevance of questions, and overall content usefulness. The pilot revealed that the survey was appropriate and captured its intended purpose. According to Foxcroft, Paterson, le Rowx and Herbst (2004), seeking expert input on survey items can help increase the content validity of a survey. To ensure validity and trustworthiness during the initial phase of coding I was sure to transcribe the data using a hard copy of a spread sheet that I created to take copious notes and used color codes to keep the data in order during coding, categorizing and themeing which was analyzed and reanalyzed for accuracy.

Member checks were also conducted with four of the participants as I shared the themes with them. I asked the participants, “Did I capture the essence of what you were saying?” All participants said “Yes”. Toward the end of the conversations, I asked if they would like to add anything that I missed or make corrections, and they each said “No”, as they reiterated what had been talked about in September. At that point, I felt that I had captured an accurate representation of their “voices”.

#### Positionality of the Researcher

I was born in a very small town called Cleveland, Mississippi. My mother was a teen parent who struggled financially and was able to enroll me into a Head Start program. There my educational experience began at 4 years old.

Now as a Head Start employee I am very passionate about teacher professional development to improve children's learning outcomes. I believe that teachers need to build on their skills to promote healthy learning environments for children. I further believe that preschool teachers help to set the foundation for the rest of a child's educational journey. So, it is very important that they are given the necessary tools to provide the highest quality of care possible.

However, as a researcher I was keenly aware that my role during the data collection phase was to document the facts. Furthermore, I minimized my biases by consulting experts in the field when developing the survey. Additionally, through the research design I was able to use multiple avenues to collect and analyze the data. I was able to do this by reporting exactly what the data revealed.

## Summary

In this chapter, the research design, research setting, research sample, research data, data collection, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, and positionality of the researcher were all examined. It revealed that a sequential mixed method design was needed to get at the true essence of teacher voices and views in a comprehensive manner. Member checks were also conducted to ensure that the teacher voices were captured in a meaningful way. According to Creswell (2014) member checking helps to strengthen research as he states, "...determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking themes back

to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate” (p. 201). To further reflect the purpose of the study this chapter laid the foundation for data collecting and analysis.

Based on the results of this chapter, chapter four focuses on the results of the study as well as participant demographics and descriptive data analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The purpose of this sequential mixed-methods study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. The Head Start program in this study employs 313 teachers, however I received 253 email addresses for inclusion in the study. The population identified contained 253 current Head Start teachers, a total of 74 (29%) of participants took the online survey, and 20 (27%) of the participants agreed to an in-person interview. Of the 20 participants that agreed to an in-person interview, a total of 6 (30%) responded to the calls and were interviewed. This chapter reviews the data gathered from the survey and interviews and includes the results of the study, sample demographics and descriptive data.

#### Results of the Study

##### Research Question 1

*How do Head Start teachers describe their participation in professional development?*

According to the self-reported data there were 33 (44.6%) of participants participated in an ongoing professional development program such as Practice

Base Coaching (PBC) or Teachers Learning and Collaborating (TLC) and 29 (39.2 %) participated in the required 15 hours per year of professional development (See Table 2). According to the participants, 54 (73%) indicated that they currently have a professional development plan with goals (See Table 3) however only 60.8% feel supported in achieving those goals. In addition to the quantitative oriented data, there was an additional open-ended question on the survey that specifically addressed teacher professional development needs (See Table 4).

Table 2. Participation in Professional Development

Q9 Statement	Frequency	%
I participate in ongoing PD	33	44.6
I participate in Head Start required PD a Year	29	39.2
I don't not participate in PD	5	6.8
Missing	7	9.5

Note: n=74

Table 3. Current Professional Development Plan Status

*Do you currently have a PD Plan with goals?*

Current PD plan with goals (Q10)	Frequency	%
Yes	54	73.0
No	14	18.9
Missing	6	8.1

Note: n=74

When asked what could Head Start do to help teachers be more successful in developing and or achieving their professional development plans and goal, the themes that emerged through a thematic analysis approach were: training and workshops, coaching/mentoring, incentives/pay, encouragement and team work (See Table 4). Participants most frequently responded that they wanted more trainings and workshops. One participant stated that Head Start could “Provide us training/workshops and provide information about the classes at community colleges to achieve our goals and enhance our knowledge in the field of early childhood” (Survey Participant, 2017). The thematic analysis also revealed the need for staff to have a mentor as one participant stated, “Train new employees and pair them with a mentor teacher” (Survey Participant, 2017). This connects back to Chapter two in which Gabriel et al., (2011) noted that teachers wanted collegial support through a peer or mentor to support their continued development and skills.



Table 4. Professional Development Needs

*What could Head Start do to help teachers be successful in developing and or achieving their professional development plans and goals? (Q12)*

Concept	Frequency	Key Statements
Training/Workshops	16	<p>“Better training for staff and follow-up, continuous individualized training for those that require more “one on one assistances”</p> <p>“Provide us training/workshops and provide information about the classes at community colleges to achieve our goals and enhance our knowledge in the field of early childhood”</p>
Coaching/Mentoring	8	<p>“Train new employees and pair them with a mentor teacher”</p> <p>“Hire a professional development mentor who is experienced and educated on achieving educational goals”</p>
Incentives/Pay	7	<p>“Having a higher pay rate would give teachers great motivation to improve on their teaching practice”</p> <p>“Provide pay raises for achieving higher qualifications”</p>
Encouragement	5	<p>“Encouragement”</p> <p>“Give teachers the encouragement and resources to make school affordable, especially when going higher (BA degree or higher)”</p>
Team Work	2	<p>“I feel team work is the key word to coordinate teachers, supervisors and staff to set new goals and provide our children and families the best services”</p> <p>“Work together as a team”</p>

In addition to the survey, further qualitative oriented data was obtained through face-to-face interviews. It was through these interviews that the participants were able to expand upon their survey responses to add more depth to the findings. When asked, "Please tell me a bit more about your professional development experiences", the highest themes emerged after analyzing the data were to "obtain a higher degree or permit" and the need for "strategies". Of the six participants interviewed, all aspired to go back to school to obtain a higher degree or permit. Two participants said it was the need for language modeling and language development strategies that caused them to want to go back to school, as one noted in the following statement:

I experienced a child last year that was 3 years old. She had Down Syndrome and she wasn't potty trained and she couldn't sit very long. Her attention span was very short so I had to learn to come up with strategies on my own (I didn't get support or help). I said ok, how am I gonna get her engaged to be able to get her to sit for five minutes, how am I gonna, you know get her potty trained and to have conversations back and forth to use language. By the end, she transitioned to sitting down in large group with the other kids. But, I find as a teacher if you don't try and use strategies that work it can be very frustrating, but you have to be patient with the kids. (Participant 1, Interview September 4, 2017)

Another stated, "Provide us the tools and strategies on language modeling to help children to do good in school and so that I'm better prepared to do my job"

(Participant 6, Interview September 7, 2017). Through the interview, one participant felt she didn't get the support or strategies to improve language development that she needed and yet another felt she needed strategies to effectively do her job, which further demonstrates the need for teacher professional development to improve upon their language modeling skills to support children in classrooms.

### Research Question 2

*What are Head Start teacher's views on language modeling for children?*

When asked, "Do you think language modeling is important for children?" A total of 69 (93.2%) felt language modeling is important for children (See Table 5). In addition to the quantitative oriented data, the following open-ended question was asked during each of the six interviews: "Why do/don't you think language modeling is important for children?" Table 6 details the participant's responses to question 14 on the survey, where I asked, "Why do/don't you think language modeling is important for children?"

Table 5. Importance of Language Modeling

*Do you think language modeling is important for children?*

Importance of Language Modeling(Q13)	Frequency	%
Yes	69	93.2
No	0	0
Missing	5	6.8

*Note: n=74*

Table 6. Thoughts on Language Modeling

*Why do/don't you think language modeling is important for children? (Q14)*

Concept	Frequent	Key Statements
Build Vocabulary	17	<p>“It expands their vocabulary and introduces new words and meanings”</p> <p>“I think language modeling is important to increase children’s language through meaningful conversations. By extending on questions asked by the teacher or child, this can increase their vocabulary and give opportunities for children to gain a better understanding of a topic or words used in conversations”</p>
Express Self/Need	14	<p>“It helps the children to find the words they need to express themselves”</p> <p>“It is very important to model language for children so they can learn how to express their needs and wants and helps them develop social skills with peers”</p>
School Readiness	13	<p>“It helps to prepare with school readiness goals”</p> <p>“Language modeling is very significant for children’s development, for their social emotional, cognitive and physical development as well as for school readiness”</p>
Communication Skills	7	<p>“Because it is the foundation for their education and it allows them the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings”</p> <p>“Language is an important form of communication. It will help children through their school career and though life”</p>

Critical Thinking	5	<p>“It is a part of critical thinking and we are to initiate, engage and improve critical thinking skills”</p> <p>“Language modeling is important because it helps the children learn to express themselves, builds vocabulary and expands critical thinking skills”</p>
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When asked “Why do/don’t you think language modeling is important?”, the theme that emerged through a thematic analysis approach was to build vocabulary, express self/need, school readiness, communication skills and critical thinking (See Table 6). Participants most frequently responded that “building vocabulary” was the reason they thought language modeling was important for children. One participants stated that they felt language modeling was important as noted in the following statement: “I think language modeling is important to increase children’s language through meaningful conversations. By extending on questions asked by the teacher or child, this can increase their vocabulary and give opportunities for children to gain a better understanding of a topic or words used in conversations” (Survey Participant, 2017). Another participant states language modeling was important because, “It expands their vocabulary and introduces new words and meanings” (Survey Participant, 2017). This was followed by the idea that teachers felt language modeling was important for children to “express themselves and their needs” and for “school readiness”.

When asked “do you know about the research connecting language modeling and children’s school readiness?”, 52 (70.3%) stated “yes” and 16 (21.6%) responded “no”. Table 7 details the self-reported teacher’s knowledge regarding the research connecting language modeling and children’s school readiness.

Table 7. Connecting Language Modeling and School Readiness

*Do you know about the research connecting language modeling and children’s school readiness?*

Language Modeling and School Readiness(Q15)	Frequency	%
Yes	52	70.3
No	16	21.6
Missing	6	8.1

*Note: n=74*

The data analysis shows that 70.3% of participants knew about the research on language modeling and school readiness however, through the thematic analysis in Table 6, school readiness appeared as the third most common theme. They stated, when asked about the importance of language modeling that, “it helps with school readiness goals” and “language modeling is very significant to children’s development for their social and emotional,

cognitive, and physical development as well as school readiness” (See Table 6). Even though a large percentage of participants said that they knew about research on language modeling and school readiness, there is a significant amount that does not know, which can be problematic for children living in poverty throughout their educational journey and quality of life. Providing all teachers training and knowledge will help in the articulation of the benefits of language modeling and school readiness.

In addition to the survey, further qualitative oriented data was obtained through face-to-face interviews. When asked, “What are your views on language modeling”, the most prominent concept that emerged after analyzing the data was “to be able to help children express themselves or to express their needs”. One participant stated, “Language modeling is very-very important. My assistant and I role model for them and then sometimes I give them words like to say -hey, friend when you’re finished with that toy can I play with it. You know I try and give them resolutions to a problem that might be occurring. We also give them the words if they don’t have them, so we assist them in getting their point across” (Participant 4, Interview September 6, 2017). Another participant stated, “Language modeling is also important because if you don’t talk to your child how will you know how they feel. Sometimes if they don’t know how to communicate they will scream or yell. They sometimes don’t know how to communicate their needs so that’s when biting and throwing things come into play” (Participant 2, Interview September 4, 2017). This further corroborates what was found in the



survey which was the second (Express Self/Needs) most frequently reported concepts among the participants (See Table 6).

### Research Question 3

*What are the language modeling activities that Head Start teachers find most effective?*

In order to describe the activities in which teachers provide language modeling with children, results were ascertained through the self-reported survey that inquired about activities that teachers displayed in classrooms or with children. There were 15 Likert scale statements rating teachers' perception on their language modeling activity level, Table 8 describes how teachers provide language modeling with children.

Table 8. Perception of Language Modeling Activities

*Rate the language modeling activities you provide with children (Q16)*

Activity	Frequency	%
<b>Frequent Conversation</b>		
Strongly Agree	65	87.8
Somewhat Agree	4	5.4
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
<b>Back and Forth Exchanges</b>		
Strongly Agree	62	83.8
Somewhat Agree	6	8.1
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
<b>Contingent Responding</b>		
Strongly Agree	56	75.7
Somewhat Agree	12	16.2
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0

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Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
Peer Conversations		
Strongly Agree	61	82.4
Somewhat Agree	7	9.5
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
Open-ended Questions		
Strongly Agree	57	77.0
Somewhat Agree	12	16.20
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
More Than One Word		
Strongly Agree	59	79.7
Somewhat Agree	9	12.2
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

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Missing	6	8.1
Wait for Student Responses		
Strongly Agree	64	86.5
Somewhat Agree	5	6.8
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
Repeat What Children Say		
Strongly Agree	57	77.0
Somewhat Agree	12	16.2
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
Extend and Elaborate		
Strongly Agree	58	78.4
Somewhat Agree	11	14.9
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8

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Self and Parallel Talk		
Strongly Agree	50	67.6
Somewhat Agree	17	23
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	2	2.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
Map My Own Actions		
Strongly Agree	49	66.2
Somewhat Agree	17	23
Uncertain	1	1.4
Somewhat Disagree	2	2.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
Map Student Actions		
Strongly Agree	50	67.6
Somewhat Agree	15	20.3
Uncertain	2	2.7
Somewhat Disagree	1	1.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
Advance Language		

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Strongly Agree	54	73
Somewhat Agree	13	17.6
Uncertain	1	1.4
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
Variety of Words		
Strongly Agree	59	79.7
Somewhat Agree	9	12.2
Uncertain	1	1.4
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	5	6.8
Connect Words		
Strongly Agree	56	75.7
Somewhat Agree	12	16.2
Uncertain	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Missing	6	8.1

Note:  $n=74$

For each of these items, the participants self-reported “Strongly Agree” most frequently. Based on the data from (Table 8) asking participants to rate the language modeling activities they provide with children in their care, of the top five rated activities, 87.8% of participants strongly agree that they provide “Frequent conversations” in the classroom with children, followed by 86.5% of teachers strongly agreeing that they “Wait for student responses” in the classroom. Furthermore, 83.8% reported “Back and forth exchanges” as activities they provide with children, along with 82.4% of participants rating “Peer conversations” as being strategies they support in classrooms. There were two categories rating 79.7%, “More than one word” responses and the use of a “Variety of words”. These results support the Wasik and Hindman (2011) findings discussed in Chapter 2, where they stressed the need for book reading, asking open ended questions, playing with words to develop much-needed vocabulary building skills and promote language development with children.

In addition to the survey data, further qualitative oriented data was obtained through face-to-face interviews. The interview responses were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis Approach also called “Themeing The Data”. The qualitative data was coded for themes. Initial Coding was used in the initial phase of coding and re-coding (Codify). To support and help answer question three, the participant responses were manually coded from the digital recorder which housed a folder for each participant labeled “participant and #”. I began to code each sentence based on the number of times it appeared so as to begin the

process of codifying in a systematic manner for categorizing. According to Saldana (2016), "To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize" (p. 9). I was then able to cluster codes for similarities and differences to begin the process of categorizing. During the categorizing process, I searched for patterns of sentences that could be placed together because of their similarities. I created a manual hard copy of the coding to keep track of sentence and codes using a highlighter. Then I began to categorize data to create themes. Saldana (2013) says "it is an opportunity for you as a researcher to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of your data and to begin taking ownership of them" (p. 100). During this phase of "Themeing the Data", I was able to look at extended phrases or sentences that had similar meaning to be organized into groups that had repeated ideas. I then put those themes in a Word Cloud as a visual representation of the word frequency. The most prominent words that emerged as being most important depicted by the Word Cloud (See Figure 7) were: children- 23, use- 22, important- 14, language- 14, words- 14, help- 12, express- 11, questions- 10, will- 10, and read- 10. The five most frequent words used could tell a story about the teachers' thoughts on language modeling, which put "children" in the center and first and largest as depicted by the Word Cloud (See Figure 7) and followed closely and tied in second with use, important, language, words, and help. One participant stated, "I think as teachers we need to extend on what children are saying to give them more information and don't just use one



word like No all the time. We need to explain why they can't do something, tell them if you move this chair someone might get hurt. So, explaining to them the reasons why not is important" (Participant 5, Interview September 6, 2017).

Another participant stated, "It is important in language modeling to ask open ended questions because when you ask open ended questions you can get a lot of responses from all children but especially the ones who are shy or don't really talk a lot. You can actually get a lot of communication from open ended questions. When I read a book, I ask questions throughout the book; I would ask questions like, what do you think or how did that make you feel?" (Participant 3, Interview September 5, 2017). This supports and strengthens the need for children to be exposed a lot of language, as revealed in Chapter two, by Brice-Heath (1983). The author noted that children were successful in school when they had extensive exposure to language, engaged in a back and forth conversations by asking more open-ended questions to explain or elaborate on different topics or ideas.



Table 9. Participant Self-Reported Demographics

Characteristic	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	0	0
Female	68	91.9
Other	0	0
Missing	6	8.1
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	1	1.4
25-34	15	20.3
35-44	13	17.6
45-54	22	29.7
55-64	16	21.6
65-74	2	2.7
Missing	5	6.8
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	13	17.6
Black or African American	18	24.3
Asian	5	6.8
Latino/a	25	33.8
Other	4	5.4
Missing	9	12.2
<i>Permit</i>		
Teacher Permit	17	23
Master Teacher Permit	1	1.4
Site Supervisor Permit	41	55.4
Program Director Permit	7	9.5
Missing	8	10.8

Note: n=74

Based on the self-reported responses of the participants, the descriptive statistics for the sample indicated that 91.9% of the participants were female and 6 were missing because they declined to respond to this question on the survey. The highest frequency of age reported was 45-55 (29.7%), and the highest frequency of self-reported race/ethnicity were Latino/a 25 (33.8%), Black or African American 18 (24.3 %) and White 13 (17.6 %). In addition, the highest frequency of self-reported permit held was 55.4% held a Site Supervisor Permit.

The highest self-reported position held was 44 (59.5%) Teacher II. Of the participants identifying themselves as Teacher II, 25 (33.7%) held a Site Supervisor permit (See Table 10). Of the 20 participants that agreed to an in-person interview, a total of 6 (30%) responded to the calls and were interviewed. Lastly, all 6 interview participants identified themselves as a Teacher II.

Table 10. Teacher Level and Permit Held

Teacher Level	Teacher Permit	Master Teacher Permit	Site Supervisor Permit	Director Permit
Teacher I	4	0	2	1
Teacher II	13	1	25	2
Teacher III	0	0	14	4

*Note: n=74*

## Descriptive Data

Along with the demographic information, descriptive data was also gained through the survey. According to the self-reported data on the survey teacher's years of services mean score was 10.22 with a SD of 7.65 (See Table 11). Additionally, a series of reports were conducted to determine if there were any differences among the overall participant length of service, teacher level, participation in PD and CLASS scores. The highest frequency among the length of service and CLASS scores found that 4 participants with 1 year of service reported, "I don't know" and 4 participants with 4 years of services reported, "I don't have a CLASS score". Of the participants reporting a CLASS score, the highest frequency was, 2 participants with 3 years of service and a CLASS score of 5, and 2 participants with a service of 20 years and a score of 5. There were no differences among the years of service and CLASS scores among teachers who reported a CLASS score. Table 12 describes the teacher's level and CLASS score. The highest frequency among the teacher's level and CLASS scores was Teacher II, with 17 (22.97%) stating "I don't know" when asked to cite their CLASS score. However, 7 (9.46 %) of Teacher II's reported a score of 5 on the CLASS tool. As noted in Chapter 2 literature review, as of 2015 the National Grantee mean scores for Language Modeling is 3.35 (ECLKC, 2017), which shows that a mean score of 5 would be above National average.

Table 11. Years of Service at Head Start

Characteristic	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
<i>Years of Service</i>	10.22	7.85	61.64

Table 12. Teacher Level and CLASS Score

CLASS Scores	Teacher I		Teacher II		Teacher III	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	1	1.35
4	0	0	2	2.70	2	2.70
5	0	0	7	9.46	2	2.70
6	0	0	2	2.70	1	1.35
7	0	0	1	1.35	0	0
I don't know	1	1.35	17	22.97	4	5.41
I do not have a CLASS Score	6	8.11	13	17.57	7	9.86

*Note: n=74, 8 (10.81% missing)*

Additionally, data was analyzed to examine teacher's participation in professional development and to correlate it to their CLASS scores (See Table 13).

Table 13. Teacher Participation in PD and CLASS Score

CLASS Score	I participate in an ongoing PD program	I participate in Head Start required 15 hours of PD	I do not participate in PD
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	1	0	0
4	2	2	0
5	5	3	1
6	2	1	0
7	1	0	0
I don't know	11	10	1
I do not have a CLASS score	10	13	3

*Note: n=74, 8 (10.80% missing)*

The highest frequency among teacher participation in PD and current CLASS scores, 13 (17.56%) stated that they participated in Head Start required 15 hours of PD and reported, “I do not have a CLASS score”. Ten teachers (13.51%) responded “I don’t know” when asked to state their CLASS Scores.

Among the participants reporting “I participate in an ongoing PD program”, the data showed that 11 (14.86%) marked “I don’t know”, and 10 (13.51%) stated, “I do not have a CLASS score”. However, of the participants reporting a

CLASS score the highest frequency was, 5 (6.75%) participants responding that they have a CLASS score of 5. They also marked that “I participate in an ongoing PD program” (See Table 13). Keeping in mind that CLASS scores of 5 or higher is above the national average.

### Summary

Based on the literature reviewed in chapter two and the results detailed in this chapter, this study provides critical information about teacher professional development on language modeling experiences that lead to improved language modeling skills in preschool-aged children. Based on the analysis of the data, teachers associated professional development with higher education and/or degree driven learning experiences rather than seeing it as an ongoing process of skill building. As one teacher said’ “My plan is to go back to school to get my Master’s Degree, the agency don’t come out and ask you how far have you gotten with your goals, I work on my goals personally for myself because I feel like I want to learn more” (Participant 1 Interview September 4, 2017). Through the literature review, there is a clear absence of teacher voice in their professional development and concrete activities on how to deliver professional development. This further supported by the findings of this study.

Additionally, through the analysis of the self-reported data, there is a relationship among preschool teachers involved in an ongoing professional development program and their higher- CLASS scores. Based on the results in



this chapter, chapter five will discuss recommendations for leaders, next steps for educational reform, recommendations for future research, and address the limitations of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter five will provide an overview of the research findings detailed in chapter four. It will then describe recommendations for educational leaders whose focus is on early childhood education while specifying the possible next steps for educational reform. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research, and address any limitations of the study.

#### Overview

The purpose of this study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling. In addition, this study sought to explore teachers' views on language modeling and the activities they find most effective to support student learning. The study further bridged the gap in the literature related to the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers engaged in language modeling for students. Multiple studies reviewed for this study, demonstrated the need for professional development for Head Start teachers, as well as other Early Childhood Educators, to improve language modeling for low income students. Additionally, Gabriel et al., (2011) also noted teachers wanted collegial support through a peer of mentor, as well as support from their administrators to reinforce their continued development and skills.

Based upon the literature, the present study continued the discussion on the need for teacher PD around language modeling and the use of an ongoing coaching model for the Early Childhood Education field. The primary focus of this study was to describe the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers on language modeling for children. Overall the study found that teachers need more trainings and workshops, coaching and mentoring, more incentives and pay, encouragement from administration and feel the need to work together in order to provide children with rich learning experiences in relationship to language modeling.

#### Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Based on the results, there are four pertinent recommendations that are proposed to leaders in the early childhood field, and in particular those leaders working in Head Start programs. These recommendations are suggested in order to ratify the accomplishments of Head Start teacher's professional development and are supported by the literature reviewed in this study as well as by the data collected when surveying and interviewing the Head Start teachers in this study. These recommendations are as follows:

1. Creation of a Training and Development Unit to address the professional development needs of Head Start teachers. This must be easily accessible to the teachers and should be based upon the recommendations of the teachers in the field. As one teacher stated, "I

want to know what is expected of me so that I can do my job effectively”.

2. Provide training of the staff from the onset of hire as part of an onboarding process to initiate professional development goals.
3. Provide an ongoing professional development plan for each teacher that would include an assessment of their teaching skills along with an action plan containing the who, what, when where, and how the plan would be implemented, supported and re-assessed.
4. Develop a webpage devoted to providing Head Start teachers with professional development resources and opportunities that focus on gaining knowledge and skills related to their jobs and the ECE field as a whole. These would include information on national, state and local standards and licensing requirements, upgrading of permits and credentialing, classes being offered at local colleges, local and distant conferences, alliances, and informal learning on the job.

### Next Steps for Educational Reform

As an employee of Head Start I proposed and had the opportunity to develop a Training and Development Unit for the agency to train new and current teachers/staff that was informed by my research study. The unit includes a Program Manager, Supervisor, and six Education Specialists with knowledge and skills across all program job descriptions. I developed a process of assessing

teachers’/staff needs, providing information and step-by-step instruction, and new teacher shadowing by a more seasoned teacher before officially beginning in the new position. Next, I developed the onboarding process to include all newly hired staff, training them with PowerPoints, a tool kit based on the position (CLASS, ECERS, Coaching manuals etc.), a folder to include snippets explaining the *how-to-do* of the forms to be completed, and a flash drive with essential information and forms that can be copied for use. Through my research, I designed a template of the process of onboarding staff:

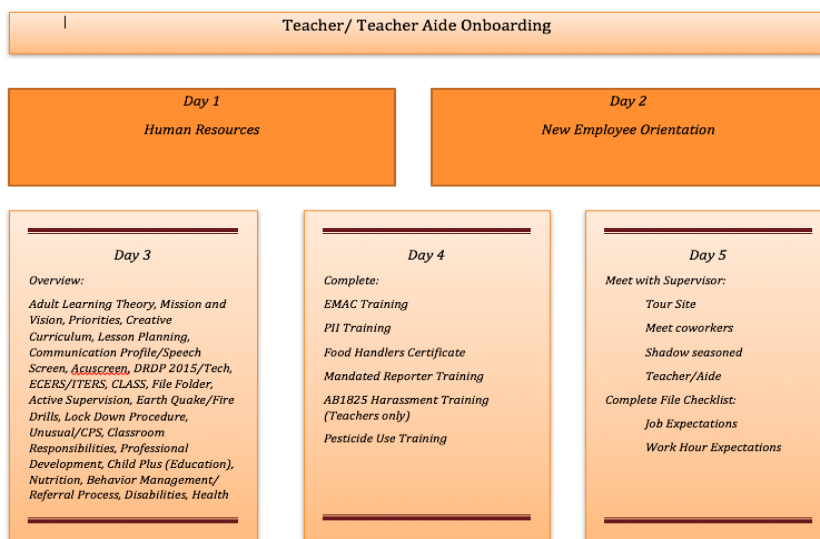


Figure 8. Onboarding

This process ensures that staff, not only understand the essential functions of the job, but also ensures a process by which teachers and staff have

the tools they need to perform their job duties. Through my research, I found that teachers arrive with some skills based on the required college units needed to qualify for the position. Based on that need I was instrumental in developing an assessment tool that would assess their current skills and needs. Teachers are also given an opportunity to develop a professional development plan to include their current degrees and permits along with goals for themselves for the future. This unit was also designed to obtain qualified professionals and content area experts in the field of ECE to train staff. It also included the need to provide trainings in house for staff to save on costs (least expensive). It was also designed to be research-based and keep abreast of current and future trends in the ECE field. Lastly, it was designed to ensure that clear, up-to-date policies and procedures are being used at the school sites.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for future research include addressing the limitations mentioned below which include conducting a qualitative study with a larger sample size. By increasing the sample size the researcher will get a larger sample to pull from and therefore increase the depth of the findings. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include male preschool teachers' voices in the professional development process to ensure that you are capturing everyone's experiences and views on teaching in a preschool classroom.

In addition, future research should look at aggregating data from the Head

Start National Report on the Classroom Scoring System tool to conduct research on multiple Head Start Program's Language Modeling scores. In doing so, it could inform on how these scores impact children's language development outcomes. Furthermore, a mix-method design study conducted at multiple Head Starts program sites to examine the onboarding processes for newly hired teachers through the lens of the new teachers, and finally, a mix method design to explore the link between teachers CLASS scores in Language Modeling and children's assessment (Desired Results Developmental Profile- DRDP 2015) scores.

#### Limitations of Study

One of the limitations of this study was the small sample size of teachers who were asked to participate in the survey. Because Head Start employs thousands of teachers nation-wide, a larger sample size would add power to the findings. It consisted of 253 teachers, all of whom were females and therefore raising the number of participants would be valuable. Also, the fact that there were no male participants served to limit the representation of the male perspective. Lastly, the study was also limited to teachers in the Head Start program in the County of San Bernardino. While this is a large county, the specific demographics may or may not be representative of those found in other Head Start Programs across the country.

## Conclusion

Early education for poor children of poverty has been viewed as an ongoing issue for several decades. Though it was addressed by President Johnson in 1965, it continues to need further examination today. With the increasing demands for high quality and improved child educational outcomes, it is critical to promote professional development success among teachers which in turn helps our children to succeed in school. Additionally, it is important that programs such as Head Start, provide vocabulary rich environments for young children and it is equally important that there is support for the use of intensive, ongoing teacher PD (Wasik & Hindman, 2011) to close the gap in language and pre-literacy skills with young children. By doing so, teachers can become intentional in their teaching of young children. Teachers who are intentional are purposeful in the moment to moment interactions they have with children in their classrooms and are more able to appropriately scaffold for those things with which children need assistance. These intentional teachers act with purpose and understanding (Epstein, 2014). Helping Head Start Programs provide professional development for teachers will increase the likelihood of children hearing rich language, which will increase their language skills and ultimately prepare them for Kindergarten and for life. Neuman and Cunningham (2009), states that:

...If we are to improve children's school readiness skills- especially those who come from high-poverty circumstances- we will need to ensure that teachers in the very earliest years have a solid foundation in early literacy



development and aspects of oral language acquisition as it relates to literacy. (p. 560)

The findings from this research supported the main findings from the literature in many ways. First, this research found that teachers wanted coaching and mentoring, according to Wapole and Meyers (2008), coaching sets teachers up for success as they worked toward their complex goals. Additionally, Wapole and Meyers stated, “When people work with the support of a real coach, someone with specialized knowledge and experience who can provide directions, support, and continuous feedback, they are much more likely to succeed” (p. 69).

Secondly, the research found that there was a need for teacher training/workshops as well as strategies on language development which was consistent with Rebore (2015) where the author discuss the idea that the primary purpose of teacher PD programs is to increase the knowledge and skills of teachers, and ultimately increase their potential to work on and achieve goals and objectives.

Finally, this research found that “Building Vocabulary” was one of the most important activities during language modeling which is in line with Wasik and Hindman (2011) where they stressed the need for book reading, asking open ended questions, playing with words to develop much-needed vocabulary building skills and to promote language development with children. Supporting these efforts in Head Start classrooms and in the home environment will give children the tools they need to feel empowered and confident during their school

journey.

Providing children with a sense of security in their environments is also essential. All children need to feel secure in their environment to grow and to know that they have the capability to do and go as far as they want to in life. They need to build happy, healthy relationships with adults that are nurturing so that they can have the confidence needed to succeed in school (NPR, 2013). Children benefit from well-educated teachers that are intentional in their practices for young children (Office of Head Start, 2012). These practices need to be grounded in research and data as that is what is needed to help children from low-income families succeed.

The effects of poverty on young children may appear to be this huge problem that seems too big to fix, however programs that provide a holistic approach in improving teacher's skills to promote positive child outcomes are chipping away at this huge problem (Buysse, Winton & Rous, 2009). There is hope for the future for all children and recognizing teacher intentionality in ECE will get them closer to achieving the goals that their families have set for them. The research shows that laying a good educational foundation early supports positive child outcomes through adulthood (Schweinhart et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002). Helping all children get the highest quality early education is not only good for children and their families but also for communities, states and ultimately the nation as recognized by President Johnson in 1964 during the "War on Poverty" (Reynolds et al., 2002; Johnson, L.B., 1965).

APPENDIX A:  
HEAD START TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUALTRIC  
SURVEY

## Head Start Teachers Professional Development on Language Modeling and Children's Language Development: A Sequential Mix Methods Design

Default Question Block

Block Options

Q1

Dear Head Start Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted by LaTrenda Terrell a doctoral candidate completing her dissertation, supervised by Dr. Diane Brantley in the College of Education doctoral program at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). You are being asked because you were identified as a current San Bernardino County Preschool Services Department (Head Start) teacher.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the professional development experiences of Head Start teachers. It is also to determine the professional development strategies that lead to exemplar language modeling practices. We expect the project to benefit future Head Start teacher's professional development. The information provided may be used to enhance program services to teachers related to their professional development planning, goal setting, and language modeling skills.

You will be asked to answer questions on a survey regarding your thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a teacher at Head Start. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. There is also an additional opportunity to participate in an interview. Should you choose to participate in the interview, it would take about 30 minutes. Additionally, if you choose to participate in the interview process please provide your first name and phone number at the end of the survey. If selected, I would also ask permission to voice record the interview for the purposes of capturing all of your thoughts and opinions for data collecting purposes. The researcher will use a Sony IC Recorder with USB memory functions capabilities. The voice recordings will be placed in a folder and saved on a password protected computer and will follow the FIU/IRB Data Management/Security suggestions as provided by CSUSB including: computer security (i.e., regular back up of data), password management, and physical security of equipment.

You will receive no monetary compensation for your participation in this survey. You may choose to be entered in a drawing to win a \$25 Visa gift card.

Please understand that participation is completely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect your current or future relationship with San Bernardino County Preschool Services Department (Head Start). You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason, without penalty.

Your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations resulting from this study. All information you provide will remain confidential and will be kept in a secure database at Cal State University San Bernardino.

The risks will be minimal since survey and interview responses will be the primary source of data analyzed and confidentiality will be maintained following the FIU/IRB Data Management/Security suggestions as discussed above. A possible risk is participants may be uncomfortable discussing their workplace in an audio recorded interview.

This research has been approved by the CSUSB Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB at CSUSB is responsible for ensuring and protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects in research.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about this research, please contact Dr. Diane Brantley Professor of Teacher Education and Foundations at (909) 537-5605 or email [dbrantley@csusb.edu](mailto:dbrantley@csusb.edu). San Bernardino County Preschool Services Department (Head Start) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this survey.

By selecting agree you acknowledge that you have been informed of, and that you understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and you freely consent to participate.

- Agree

Condition: Agree Is Selected. Skip To: Ethnicity.

Q2

Ethnicity

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Latino/a
- Other

Q3

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q4

Age

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

Q5

What is your current position at San Bernardino County Preschool Services Department (Head Start)?

- Teacher I
- Teacher II
- Teacher III

Q6

How long have you been a teacher at Head Start?

Q7

Which permit do you currently hold?

- Associate Teacher Permit
- Teacher Permit
- Master Teacher Permit
- Site Supervisor Permit
- Program Director Permit

Q8

What is your Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) score in Language Modeling?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- I don't know
- I do not have a CLASS score

Q9

Select the statement that best describe your participation in professional development.

- I participate in an ongoing professional development program (i.e. Practice Base Coaching or Teachers Learning and Collaborating)

- I participate in Head Start required 15 hours of professional development a year

- I do not participate in professional development

Q10

Do you currently have a professional development plan with goals?

- Yes
- No

Q11

Do you feel supported in developing a professional development plan and achieving your goals on your professional development plan?

- Yes
- No

- I do not have a professional development plan or goals

Q12

What could Head Start do to help teachers be successful in developing and or achieving their professional development plans and goals?

Q13

Do you think language modeling is important for children?

- Yes
- No

Q14

Why do/don't you think language modeling is important for children?

Q15

Do you know about the research connecting language modeling and children's school readiness?

- Yes
- No

Q16

The following Likert scale questions examine your perception on how you provide language modeling in your classroom or with children. It has a 5-point rating. The ratings are as follows: (1) [Strongly agree]; (2) [Somewhat agree]; (3) [Uncertain]; (4) [Somewhat disagree]; and 5 [Strongly disagree]

Rate how you provide Language Modeling with children

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Uncertain	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
--	----------------	----------------	-----------	-------------------	-------------------



	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Uncertain	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I provide frequent conversation with children					
I provide back and forth exchanges with children					
I provide contingent responding with children					
I promote peer conversations					
I ask many open-ended questions					
I ask questions requiring more than a one word response					
I wait for student responses					
I repeat what children say					
I extend and elaborate on children responses					
I encourage self and parallel talk					
I map my own actions with language					
I map student action with language					
I use advanced language with children					
I use a variety of					

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Uncertain	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
words with children					
I connect words to familiar words and or ideas					

Q17

Would you be willing to be contacted for a 30-minute interview on April 5-7, 2017 to further discuss your experiences and perceptions? (Please note that you may or may not be contacted.)

- Yes
- No

Q18

If yes, please enter your FIRST name and phone below:

Developed by LaTrenda Terrell, (2017)

APPENDIX B:  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## Interview Protocol

Interview description: Interviews were semi-structured. The interview process followed the subsequent protocol.

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Share the purpose of the study
- 3) Provide interviewee with the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns, begin recording and proceeded with interview

The following questions guided the interview:

1. Please tell me a bit more about your professional development experiences.
2. What are your views on language modeling for children?
3. Please describe the language modeling activities you find to be most effective.

APPENDIX C:  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER

June 05, 2017

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Expedited Review IRB# FY2017-185

Status: Approved

Ms. Latrenda Terrell and Prof. Diane Brantley College of Education - Doctoral Studies Program California State University, San Bernardino 5500 University Parkway San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Ms. Terrell and Prof. Brantley:

Your application to use human subjects, titled, "Head Start Teachers Professional Development on Language Modeling and Children's Language Development: A Sequential Mixed Methods Design," has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent document you submitted is the official version for your study and cannot be changed without prior IRB approval. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended using the IRB Cayuse system protocol change form. Your application is approved for one year from June 05, 2017 through June 04, 2018. Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is up for renewal and ensure you file it before your protocol study end date.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following 4 requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years. Please notify the IRB Research Compliance Officer for any of the following:

- 1) Submit a protocol change form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your research protocol for review and approval of the IRB before implemented in your research,
- 2) If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research,
- 3) To apply for renewal and continuing review of your protocol one month prior to the protocols end date,
- 4) When your project has ended by emailing the IRB Research Compliance Officer.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at [mgillesp@csusb.edu](mailto:mgillesp@csusb.edu). Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Caroline Vickers, Ph.D., IRB Chair  
CSUSB Institutional Review Board  
CV/MG

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