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SURFACE

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EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY TRAINING FOR LIBRARY ASSISTANTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Early literacy programs in public libraries are well positioned to support a variety of children in developing literacy skills, as libraries are geographically dispersed, free to use, and oriented to families. Indeed, such programs are frequently offered in North American public libraries, and are not always conducted by librarians. Instead, other library employees are tasked with planning and conducting early literacy programs, who have varying conceptions of how literacy learning proceeds. As such, the training they receive at their libraries likely informs their understandings and subsequent programming practices.

This qualitative, exploratory case study describes the content and instructional strategies of the training that public library employees (called library assistants, or LAs) received to plan and conduct early literacy programs at a public library in Western Canada. Library assistants' responses to their training are also described. Using observations of training, interviews with trainers and library assistants, analysis of training documents, and a survey of LAs, this study found that early literacy program training has the potential to communicate not only information about early literacy learning, but also organizational expectations about programs and considerations of the identities and contexts of program participants. At the research site, this training also contributed to establishing and then sustaining different, sometimes conflicting communities of practice: one of librarians and another of library assistants. The separation of these two communities of practice meant that LAs were not able to contribute their varied knowledge and skills to the training process and consequently, that training at times did not empower LAs with the autonomy needed to create or adapt early literacy programming according to their diverse needs. This structure also meant that large amounts of information could be consistently shared among the many library assistants employed at this library.

Understanding training in this way illuminates particular collaborative moves from within these differing communities of practice that supported or inhibited learning.

The findings from this study have implications for public libraries and other sites where community-based literacy learning occurs. In particular, awareness of how training may contribute to a separation between different kinds of staffing groups can lead to training structures that are supportive to the professional contributions of all educators. Additionally, both trainers and programmers should consider how program participants' contexts impact their experiences of inclusion.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY TRAINING FOR LIBRARY ASSISTANTS IN PUBLIC

LIBRARIES: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

by

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Many years ago, I worked at my local library, Longlake Public Library, or LPL (pseudonym used), as a library assistant. My favorite aspect of my job was carrying out early literacy programs - storytime programs for children and families that were meant to introduce them to a variety of texts. I felt like it was a great marriage between my academic background in Linguistics and my ability to engage young children. With confidence, I sailed through the on-site training that my library provided. I looked forward to my early literacy programs every time I went to work.

After I had been there for a few months, at the conclusion of one of these programs, a parent approached me and asked, "How long should I read to my child every day?" While this may seem like an innocuous question, it sent me into a slight panic. My preparations for the program - carefully chosen books, rhymes, and songs - and my knowledge of language acquisition were of no help to me. As I stared at her, the parent went on: "Sometimes my son fusses if we read too much. Is there a number of minutes I should be aiming for when we read?"

I repeated her question out loud to buy myself some time as I thought about it, but I couldn't come up with a specific number of minutes that would result in a literate child. Finally, after some sputtering, I said, "I would read until it isn't fun anymore." This seemed to satisfy her and she thanked me before leaving.

Years on, this moment has stayed with me. It suggested to me that the participants in these programs believed in my early literacy expertise as I was standing in front of them and directing them to read and sing along with me. They seemed to think that I was a professional early literacy programmer, but I did not feel like I was a professional with expertise to share, and I worried that I had given this parent bad advice. I certainly did not know enough about that

parent's contextual factors - what else surrounded home reading practices - to have even provided sound advice had I known what it was. It made me consider how I prepared for my early literacy programs and what I took from my training as a library assistant. Later, when I began this research project, I recalled these ideas and decided to return to my local library to learn more about early literacy training for library assistants. I wanted to understand it as fully as possible in order to identify the training practices that are particularly useful, and describe ways in which early literacy research can be shared with library assistants, who then may be able to share it with parents and children.

At my library, early literacy programs were common, and indeed, in Canada, public libraries have offered literacy programs for young children since at least the 1980s (Graham & Gagnon, 2013). These sites are well suited to deliver literacy education for children who are not yet old enough for formal schooling. This is because libraries are geographically dispersed; provide free educational programming; are welcoming to infants, toddlers, and their parents; and tend to interact with parents and children together, allowing very young children to access literacy programming along with their parents (Britton, 2012; Lankes, 2012). In addition, a recent survey indicated that the number of educational programs per capita offered by Canadian public libraries had increased between 2012 and 2016, while all other types of library service (i.e., circulation of library materials, reference transactions) decreased over that same time period (Reid, 2017). As such, public libraries represent a site not only ripe for supporting the early literacy development of children, but also one where the offerings of such support are growing. Educators in these settings, then, may be expected to share expertise through early literacy programs, just as I had been asked to years ago.

However, library-based educators sometimes lack specialized training in literacy and education, use outdated materials, or rely on resources produced for classroom environments (Lankes, 2012). Moreover, very little research has been conducted to understand and describe the training that library staff experience in order to create and implement literacy programming, and little is known about how training relates to the understandings of library staff. Together, these elements make it difficult to imagine what staff training on early literacy might entail in terms of content and instructional approach, and how research on the literacy development of young children may be translated for non-specialists who must apply their understanding in their work as literacy programmers.

In the context described above, I sought to more fully understand the training for library assistants to conduct public library-based education programming for children under the age of five. More specifically, this exploratory study utilized a descriptive case study design to respond to the lack of empirical research on the case of interest (Yin, 2014): the early literacy training of library assistants. I used observation, document analysis, interviews, and surveys to gather data about and then describe Longlake Public Library, or LPL (pseudonym used), a large, urban public library in Western Canada. At the time of this study, this library employed a group of staff called *library assistants* (LAs) to design and implement original literacy programs for children under the age of five. Unlike certified librarians, these individuals were not required to hold Library and Information Science degrees and as such did not belong to the profession of librarianship. Instead, LAs were required to have either a two-year Library Technology diploma or four-year Bachelor's degree in any subject, which means they ranged widely in terms of their preparation.

Research Questions

This study answers the following research questions:

1. What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?

2. How is early literacy training realized?

In these research questions and throughout this study, "literacy" is defined as the ability to make meaning from and with texts, or ways to communicate ideas, that consist of a variety of modes, such as images, music, and architectural spaces (New London Group, 1996; Serafini & Gee, 2017). This approach to literacy is one that assumes that both people and learning are "embodied, situated, and social" and, because of this, a reader's relationship with a text is informed by their social and cultural contexts (New London Group, 1996, p. 82). In other words, this conception of literacy expands beyond "traditional" written texts to consider how meaning is made through socially and culturally determined literacy practices (Serafini & Gee, 2017). As such, this approach to literacy is congruent with the theoretical lens used to inform this study, that of situated cognition, which will be explained further in the following chapter. Moreover, employing this definition of literacy positions me to capture the complexity of how literacy is understood in the library, a space that brings together library workers, parents, and children come together.

Additionally, while both of these terms have been used across the literature with slightly differing meanings, for the purposes of this study, I define both "early childhood literacy" and "early literacy" as literacy learning that occurs under the age of five. Also, I define "literacy programming" as any planned educational experience for a child, adolescent, parent and/or guardian that is created explicitly to enhance a participant's ability to comprehend and construct written, oral, visual, spatial, and/or gestural texts.

Further, in this study, "training" is used to designate the meetings in which library assistants prepare to create and implement early literacy programs. The word "training" has been chosen because it is the term used at LPL. This term, however, is not without contention. Some believe that it connotes a rigid, top-down transmission of knowledge that does not allow learners to express their own experiences, preferences, or unstandardized responses (O'Neill, 1986; Rowntree, 1981). As such, terminology use in teacher education has shifted away from "training" to terms such as "preparation" which respect the knowledge and skills of teachers. Despite this, "training" remains standard in many business and non-profit settings. Given that "training" is how LA preparation is described at LPL, this study employs the same term in order to reflect the data collected.

Finally, this study takes the "community of practice" as a construct that informs the analysis of data. While the many definitions and facets of this term will be described more in the review of relevant literature, I define communities of practice as groups that come together around a common task or challenge and have a "domain," or basic knowledge and skill set that separates members from non-members. This definition is informed largely by Wenger, McDermott, and Synder's (2002) work. Additionally, in considering the domain of the communities of practice examined here, I define a "skill" as an "ability that allows a goal to be achieved within some domain with increasing likelihood as a result of practice," in contrast with an in-born ability that cannot be ameliorated through practice (Eysenck & Keane, 2010, p. 483).

Significance of the Study

The study has the potential to inform early literacy training designed for educators who work outside of classrooms. Additionally, the answers to the above questions demonstrate how

trainers prepare for and how educators receive and conceive of their training, which can inform future such planning.

These data are particularly useful to Longlake Public Library and other public libraries, since the content and approaches of training that participants see as useful or unhelpful are identified, which can impact how future training is designed. An increased understanding of how future training could be designed would support not only those who design training, but also those who experience it, the library assistants. Additionally, given that libraries are increasingly offering programs and that responses to training can impact LAs' understandings of early literacy, changes to training would ultimately benefit the families who attend early literacy programs, as LAs who are confident and competent would be able to design programs that are supportive of early literacy development.

Additionally, this study's data provide valuable information on how early literacy research can be translated for lay audiences, which can be useful to libraries, schools, and other organizations that interact with parents of young children, such as daycares. For example, the content and approaches of early literacy training described herein may be helpful to preschool teachers of young children, as they identify ways in which early literacy skills can be described for lay audiences and then linked to practices that parents are able to implement with their children. Contributing to this understanding of how to describe early literacy skills and supportive practices are the data collected in this study on LA responses to training, which library staff, school staff, and medical care providers can use to potentially anticipate parent responses to similar information. Anticipating responses from parents then positions these groups to share information on early literacy in comprehensible and actionable ways, increasing parental understanding.

This research also identifies key elements of training that contribute to or inhibit the success of various communities of practice, which may inform future decisions on how library assistants and trainers are chosen at LPL and other libraries. A deeper understanding of the interplay between instructor background and responses to training may also be helpful for organizations that rely on educators to provide early literacy programs, such as non-profit literacy societies, as they select educators. Ultimately, this study has implications for public libraries, preschool teachers and administrators, and, of course, parents.

Outline of the Study

In the following chapter, I describe the literature relevant to this study. In particular, I discuss how public library staff such as librarians and library assistants prepare and implement early literacy programs, followed by a description of previous research on these early literacy programs. Included in this description of the research is an examination of the early literacy skills that children may develop through participating in these programs. Next, I discuss the driving theoretical frame for this study, situated cognition, and provide in-depth definitions and a history of the "community of practice," my major analytical unit. Previous research relating communities of practice to teaching and learning is also discussed, as this research informs this study.

Following the review of relevant literature, chapter three describes the design, setting, data sources, and data analysis approaches used for this study. This chapter concludes with an exploration of my subjectivities and how they influenced my research.

Chapter four then presents the findings from this study, organized by research question. In particular, I answer the questions, "What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?" and "How is early literacy training realized?" by providing descriptions of the three

primary training sessions in turn, focusing first on their content and then on the instructional

approaches they employ. Interspersed throughout these descriptions are data related to how

trainers prepare for and create these aspects of training, as well as LAs' responses to training.

The final chapter of this dissertation summarizes the answers to my research questions

and discusses the implications for these findings for LPL, those who work in similar early

literacy learning spaces, and parents of young children. I also explore the limitations of the study

and consider possible directions for future studies that could address these limitations or extend

my findings.

Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature

The following chapter describes existing literature relevant to this study. Aligning with my first research question concerning the content of early literacy training, this literature review for this study begins with a discussion of what is known about how public libraries can be a venue for literacy learning for young children. In particular, I discuss previous research into early childhood literacy programs in public libraries, focused on the early literacy skills that children may develop through participating in these programs. This section concludes with a review of how public library staff (i.e., librarians and library assistants) prepare to act as designers and implementers of programs. Throughout this discussion of the literature, I generally focus on studies from Western, English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, which have the most applicability to my research site due to similarities in terms of language, culture, and educational system.

Then, in recognition of my second research question concerning how training proceeds, I describe literature relevant to the theoretical frame of this study, situated cognition. In particular, I describe the major analytical unit of both situated cognition and this study, the community of practice. Following a brief history of this term, I provide examples of how communities of practice have been discussed in teaching and learning, linking these to my study. This review of related literature is in anticipation of my findings and discussion, which describe how early literacy training may contribute to the trajectories of multiple communities of practice at LPL.

Libraries and Early Childhood Literacy

As will be discussed below, research has demonstrated that children under the age of five can benefit from receiving support from parents and other adults in literacy learning before formal schooling begins. Library staff, such as library assistants, are able to provide this literacy

instruction to parents and their young children. Libraries are free to users and can offer the print-rich literacy environment needed by children to develop alphabet and print knowledge, if they receive adequate funding (Britton, 2012; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Moreover, library staff in Western, English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand often deliver programs to young children with the explicit aim of encouraging early literacy. Below, an exploration of public library literacy programs, with a particular focus on how public library literacy programs may support early literacy skills, is followed by a discussion of what is known about library staff who pursue this work. Finally, this discussion concludes with an explanation of the training and resources available for library staff on how to develop programs for children under the age of five.

Early literacy programs in libraries.

Recent research has been focused on describing and evaluating current early literacy programs in public libraries across the globe, which are generally aimed at young children who have not yet entered school. These studies tended to focus on how literacy programs are avenues for literacy learning as it is conceived by emergent literacy theorists: learning focused on behaviors that act as precursors to the conventional reading and writing of printed texts (e.g., Lonigan, 2006; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Wasik, 2010). Additionally, these studies usually examined how the staff or volunteer leader of the program proceeded in his or her work (McKenzie & Stooke, 2007). Importantly, there was often little discussion of how training for these program leaders proceeded, with most studies providing only a list of topics covered in training at most. Below, the most common early literacy program that is library-based, the storytime program, is discussed, followed by an examination of how materials-focused outreach

sometimes occurs as a type of early literacy program in public libraries in Canada, the US, Australia, and the UK.

In 2010, the Provincial and Territorial Public Library Council (PTPLC) in Canada commissioned a telephone survey of 400 public libraries across the country, designed to ascertain their early literacy programming practices. This survey found that, at most public libraries in Canada, preschool literacy programs usually took the shape of 30-45 minute storytime programs, where a staff member or volunteer sang songs, read storybooks, and engaged children in a rhyme or fingerplay (McKend, 2010). There may have been special "flavours" of these programs, such as Vancouver Public Library's dad-only storytime or their storytimes developed by speech therapists, which contained the same basic building blocks as regular storytimes tweaked for particular audiences (Campbell-Hicks, 2016). Sometimes, though, preschool literacy programs involved connecting new parents and caregivers with child-appropriate books outside of the library (Hardman & Jones, 1999).

A recent review of public libraries in Alberta found that many libraries included storytimes aimed at parents and caregivers, designed to demonstrate how these adults can read to their children using methods such as dialogic reading (Scott, Parker, Leavitt, & Elenko, 2017). Dialogic reading is a technique in which adults read aloud from storybooks and use questions and feedback to engage young children as active participants in the reading process, and read the same stories multiple times. This approach combines a variety of communicatory modes in order to engage children in multiple ways: Adult readers orally discuss images and illustrations, read out loud to create an auditory text, and use body language to direct children's attention (Lonigan, 2006; Milburn, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2014; Wasik & Bond, 2006; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Wasik, 2010). Studies of dialogic reading have demonstrated

that this practice can support oral vocabulary development in children under the age of five. For example, Wasik (2010) found that children between the ages of three and five in the US whose teachers asked open-ended questions, followed up on children's responses, and focused on key vocabulary words during whole-group story time experienced gains in their vocabularies. Having a large oral vocabulary, in addition to other oral language skills such as high oral language comprehension, or the ability to use words to understand and express meaning in the preschool years, has been clearly linked to later success in reading and understanding written texts (Lonigan, 2006; Muter, Hulme, Snowling, & Stevenson, 2004; Wasik, 2010). For example, Sénéchal, Ouellette, and Rodney (2006) found that vocabulary scores measured in kindergarten were directly related to reading comprehension scores in grades 3 and 4 for Canadian students. Storytime programs in public libraries have typically demonstrated dialogic reading to parents and caregivers, and as such have supported the development of oral language skills in children under the age of five (Scott et al., 2017).

In addition to the demonstrations of dialogic reading discussed above, many of the libraries reviewed in 2017 by Scott and others incorporated parts of the Every Child Ready to Read program, developed by the American Library Association. The Every Child Ready to Read program focused on demonstrating strategies to improve children's literacy skills in ways that aligned with their community's needs. Through adopting and adapting elements of this program, those who provide early literacy programs at libraries have the opportunity to support children's early literacy development in terms of children's understanding of narrative, their phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print concepts. Below, I describe these facets of early literacy development.

Children must develop comprehension of narratives, or an understanding of how narrative works in written texts in order to be successful readers (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Narratives in written texts are particularly important because they are decontextualized, that is, they are descriptions of events that are not present in the immediate context. Research on decontextualized language in general has shown it to be correlated to the literacy skills defined above, indicating that attention to children's knowledge of narrative structure is important to their later reading success (Peterson, Jesso, & McCabe, 1999).

Children's narrative skills can be encouraged with oral activities, such as through having children create and tell stories, talk about the importance of objects (as in "show and tell" activities), and by asking open-ended questions about past events (Peterson et al., 1999). Shared reading programs in the US that include dialogic reading prompts have also led to increases in the evaluative information in young children's narratives (Zevenbergen et al., 2003). Therefore, early literacy programs at public libraries have the potential to support children's developing narrative skills through the use of such oral activities.

In addition to the need for a large oral vocabulary and an understanding of narrative, especially in written texts, there is much evidence that phonological awareness plays a large role in a child's burgeoning ability to read and write in an alphabet (Lonigan, 2006; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001).

Phonological awareness (sometimes called phonological sensitivity) is the ability to distinguish and manipulate the sounds of oral language. Phonological awareness develops increasingly as children age: first, children are able to distinguish between large units, such as words and syllables, to smaller units, such as onsets (the beginning consonants of syllables) and rimes (the vowels and final consonants of syllables), to even smaller, abstract sounds, the

phonemes. Phonological awareness is important in reading alphabetic print such as English because the graphemes of written language correspond (broadly) to phonemes, which means that children must be able to detect phonemes in spoken words in order to understand how they relate to graphemes. In fact, phonological awareness has been the single strongest predictor of later reading ability (Brown, 2014; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Phonological awareness has also been positively correlated with the development of vocabulary in young children, and researchers have hypothesized that the two are interrelated: increased vocabulary leads to the further development of phonological awareness, which in turn allows for better decoding of novel words when reading written texts, making them more accessible to children (Beattie & Manis, 2014).

Children as young as three in the US have been found to benefit from exposure to interventions that enhance oral language, such as nursery rhymes and rhythmic activities, which points to the value of explicitly attending to phonological skills when designing programming meant to encourage literacy in young children (Lawhon & Cobb, 2002).

The most common cause of early difficulties in reading has been a weakness in phonological awareness skills, further demonstrating the need to actively develop these skills in children when possible, with, for example, programs that promote oral language play (Lonigan, Anthony, Phillips, Purpura, Wilson, & McQueen, 2009). Storytime programs in public libraries are ideal for promoting exactly this through the inclusion of songs, rhymes, and dialogic reading focused on rhythmic elements such as identifying a particular sound or syllable.

In addition to oral language skills such as understanding a large number of words, how stories hold together, and how sound works in oral language, young children must also develop an understanding of several aspects of print in order to become capable readers of written texts

(Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kadaravek, & Fan, 2010). For example, children must be familiar with letter shapes, names, and sounds, a skill termed alphabet knowledge (Piasta & Wagner, 2010). Knowledge of the alphabet at school entry has been one of the single best predictors of later reading ability, and research has demonstrated that access to a literacy area with reading and writing materials is a significant predictor of alphabet knowledge for preschool children in the US (Guo, Justice, Kaderavek, & McGinty, 2012; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). However, while research suggested that alphabet knowledge is key for later reading success, there is little empirical research on the effects of instruction in this area, since alphabet knowledge is often neglected in the field of emergent literacy (Piasta & Wagner, 2010).

In addition to alphabet knowledge, the understanding of what printed text looks like, how it works (for example, knowing that, in English, words are written from left to right), and that it carries meaning comprise a set of foundational skills called print concepts (Brown, 2014). The National Early Literacy Panel's (NELP, 2008) review of predictors of reading success demonstrated that a child's level of print concepts is moderately predictive of later reading success, while other studies determined that print knowledge is a strong predictor of skills needed for reading ability, such as word recognition (Justice et al., 2010).

The skills discussed above are interrelated and their connections are still being teased apart amongst early literacy researchers. For example, recent research indicated that preschool educators' more general understandings of language and literacy are related to some but not all gains experienced by four-year-olds in the year before they enter kindergarten: As Cash, Cabell, Hamre, DeCoster, and Pianta (2015) demonstrated in their American study, educators' correct categorization of skills by literacy domain (e.g., phonological awareness) predicted children's gains in print concepts, but not their gains in phonological awareness. In other words, educators'

understandings of these skills were an important element in how they supported early language and literacy development, but not in a one-to-one relationship.

Additionally, the skills listed above are, of course, a subset of the many abilities that are factors in later reading ability, including those that cannot reliably be improved through experimental intervention, and are not standalone, but instead operate in conjunction with one another (Adams, 2001; Heckman et al., 2006; NELP, 2008). For example, performance IQ, a measure of nonverbal intelligence, plays a role in a child's general cognitive abilities, but likely not specifically in a child's ability to decode written text (NELP, 2008).

In recent years, early literacy researchers have increasingly considered the socio-political context of families in early literacy programs, with special attention to the role of parents in children's literacy development (Denessen, 2007). First explicitly named by Gloria Ladson-Billings in the mid 1990s, culturally responsive pedagogy (or culturally relevant pedagogy, as she called it) has three tenets: students must have academic success, they must maintain or develop cultural competence, and they must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge accepted notions in society. Ladson-Billings (1995) described "cultural competence" as the maintenance of students' cultural integrity while they achieve academic success. Rather than assimilating students into what is often seen as the norm - a white, middle-class majority - while in school, teachers can use culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) to ensure that students preserve cultural markers by using their cultures as a bridge and vehicle in the classroom. For example, students may have experience with cooking from their lives outside of school that can be used in the mathematics classroom to help them understand fractions (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Not only does this approach make students' home lives and knowledge worthy

of study, but it also gives students of color the sense that they belong, a notion that is imperative for their later academic and social success.

Since Ladson-Billings first elucidated the key tenets for CRP, educational researchers have refined the theory and have implemented it in various settings. In particular, Geneva Gay expanded upon the notion of cultural competence in her 2002 article, "Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching." She defined culturally responsive teaching as the use of students' cultural practices, understandings, and viewpoints as a bridge in the classroom to ensure deep understanding of content. Her rationale was that content and skills become personally meaningful, interesting, and easier to learn when they are framed within the lives of students.

In early literacy learning, culturally responsive pedagogy requires sensitivity to difference, an appreciation of strengths, and thorough knowledge of children and families. An understanding of children and families' origins, views on discipline, conceptions of time and space, approaches to health, traditions, histories, religions, and languages can all impact how literacy support is planned and proceeds, which can be beneficial for children (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). For example, Spooner, Rivera, Browder, Baker, and Salas (2009) described a cultural contextual story-based literacy lesson protocol that relied on paraprofessionals supporting children with similar cultural backgrounds (e.g., shared home language). An example of this lesson, designed for a Spanish-speaking child with a moderate intellectual disability, involved Spanish-English bilingual stories with culturally relevant themes combined with pre-written dialogic reading questions and a printed list of vocabulary words. After several weeks of reading these specifically chosen bilingual stories, the child's English vocabulary and comprehension skills improved (Spooner et al., 2009). This lesson relied on knowledge of this

child and their family, and viewed knowledge of Spanish as a foundation to build from, rather than a deficit to compensate for.

Parents in particular have a role to play in the development of the early literacy skills discussed above, and research has demonstrated that parents can do so by engaging in shared book reading, consistently providing oral language experiences, and visiting public libraries with their children (Serpell, Sonnenschien, & Baker, 2005). As such, some literacy programs have focused on promoting these skills and behaviors among parents (Denessen, 2007). However, in a more expansive, culturally responsive view of literacy that goes beyond written text to include multiple modes, program developers must acquire and value extensive knowledge of families' cultural contexts in order to build upon home literacy practices (Serpell et al., 2005). In the view of some researchers, these two program aims are at odds with one another - literacy programs that aim to change parents' behaviors cannot be seen as culturally responsive, as they presume a deficit on the part of parents (Denessen, 2007). However, it may be that programmers see these behaviors as supplemental rather than void-filling.

It is apparent from the above review that children's oral vocabulary development, understanding of narrative, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print concepts are important early literacy skills that serve as a foundation for their later literacy skills. Because they often include activities that promote these skills, such as songs, reading storybooks, and engaging in rhymes or fingerplays, early literacy programs at public libraries, when planned and enacted appropriately, can support the development of these early literacy skills (McKend, 2010). However, understandings of culturally responsive pedagogy demonstrate that these skills must be considered alongside children and families' socio-cultural contexts. As such, it is

reasonable to imagine that training would include these early literacy skills and the programming practices, including culturally responsiveness, that support them.

While there is some research describing the different approaches that public libraries take to the literacy education of children under the age of five, the discussion below will demonstrate that training for library staff to create and implement early literacy programs is under-reported in the literature, due in large part to the focus on children's librarians in this arena.

Library staff in the literature.

Overwhelmingly, the focus of research on library staff who provide literacy instruction has been on those who act as children's librarians and hold a library-specific master's degree, such as a Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree, from a post-secondary institution that has been accredited by organizations of library practitioners, such as the American Library Association (in the US or Canada) or the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (in the UK). Often, these certified children's librarians act in several roles when employed by public libraries: they may, for example, design literacy programs for young children, provide readers' advisory services to new parents, check materials out to patrons, manage budgets for staffing and resources, and hire and train other staff members.

While there exists a considerable focus on librarians, other library staff have not received the same amount of inquiry in the research literature. This is despite their ubiquity in public libraries in Canada and the US - non-librarians make up roughly 70% of library staff - and the fact that they are often called upon to conduct literacy programming for young children and their parents (Reid, 2017; Turzansky, personal communication, September 18, 2016). As previously explained, in the particular library under scrutiny in the current study, a group of library staff called *library assistants* design and implement original literacy programs for children under the

age of five with considerable autonomy. Unlike certified librarians, these individuals are not

required to hold Library and Information Science degrees, but instead must only have a two-year

Library Technology diploma or four-year Bachelor's degree in any subject. They also provide

advice to parents on resources and strategies that can be used to enhance young children's

literacy development. Through these roles, library assistants are at the forefront of providing

literacy instruction to children. As such, understanding not only which theories and practices

they learn about in training for early literacy programming but also the relationships between that

training and library assistants' previous experiences and responses to training is key for

enhancing our understanding of how these staff members can be better supported in their work,

and for understanding how research on early literacy is translated and interpreted by non-

specialist audiences.

Despite the importance of this group to frontline programming practices, there is a dearth

of relevant literature concerning non-librarian library staff. As such, the discussion below

focuses on the training and resources available for certified librarians. Understanding the

preparation of librarians is crucial for this study, despite my focus on library assistants, because

of the role that librarians can play as trainers for library assistants. This means that the theories

and approaches that librarians experience in their own training may be adapted, adopted, or

avoided for library assistant training.

Training for librarians.

As explained above, those who work as children's librarians in Western, English-

speaking countries obtain master's degrees in the field of Library and Information Science before

they begin their work. Typically, these degrees take two years to obtain, and students are

expected to have completed a four-year bachelor's degree before starting their library-specific

education. Studies of Canadian library school curricula have demonstrated that required courses for MLIS students touch on topics such as collection development, information resources organization, information retrieval, library organization, standards for library facilities, library marketing, and library budgets (Noh, Choi, & Ahn, 2014). Additionally, discussions of the state of library education demonstrated the need for coursework on collection development, cataloguing, circulation and reference services for all library students, while classes on story-telling and children's literature are deemed specialized (Gorman, 2004).

Understanding the preparation that librarians may have with regard to early literacy programming is essential for this study, as librarians are tasked with training library assistants at LPL and, as such, their understandings of early literacy impact the content of training. Historically, children's librarians in public libraries did not receive adequate preparation to work with children under the age of five in a variety of areas: Based on their training in American library schools, librarians in the 1970s and 1980s reported feeling unprepared to select appropriate materials such as toys for young children and create storytime programs with learning objectives in mind. Moreover, surveys of children's librarians in the mid-1970s revealed that most librarians preferred to work with children who could already read and that new librarians desired in-service training from more experienced children's librarians. These findings were used in arguments for changing both the curriculum of library schools and the resources available to in-service librarians (Smardo, 1980).

Today, librarians receive training in the development of infants', toddlers', and preschoolers' literacy in a number of ways. Firstly, students of Library and Information Science sometimes have the opportunity to pursue optional coursework in child development, reading,

children's literature, and storytelling. Secondly, those who are in-service librarians can consult a number of resources, or books created especially for librarians.

Studies of coursework in library service to young children suggest that discussions of the history and philosophy of youth services occur in MLIS schools in several Western, English-speaking countries (Adkins & Higgins, 2006). Moreover, as seen in Adkins and Higgins' (2006) comparison between library schools in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, courses on youth librarianship in Canada were more likely to focus on children, while elsewhere these courses focused more on young adults. For library schools in all of these areas, literacy programming was discussed but concrete techniques for such programming were seldom covered. Moreover, Canadian library schools discussed storytelling as a programming option less often than did schools in the US, Australia, and New Zealand (Adkins & Higgins, 2006). It may be that these tendencies of Canadian MLIS schools to focus away from storytelling and concrete techniques may result in similar approaches in library assistant training, which may be created and implemented by former attendees of such schools.

For example, the University of Alberta, in Canada, offers a Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree in which students have the ability to choose optional courses in the areas of child development and early literacy. However, these courses are offered by a different department, and MLIS students often lack the needed prerequisites to be eligible for such courses (Laidlaw, personal communication, February 7, 2020). As such, because early literacy courses are optional and sometimes inaccessible for library students, not all librarians come out of their training with such a background in literacy development. Seemingly, then, while there are opportunities for MLIS students to learn about designing and implementing literacy programs for children under the age of five, not all library students have access to these

courses and some choose not to take them even when they are available, leading to a population of librarians with a wide range of preparation for work with young children and for training library assistants in early literacy programming.

Early literacy resources available for librarians and library assistants.

No matter what their previous experiences, both librarians and LAs can access a large number of resources in order to augment their understanding of the development of preschool children's literacy. These resources, including textbooks, online materials such as websites or videos, and in-person training, appear to be written primarily for an audience of librarians, but it is reasonable to imagine that they may also be used by LAs.

Textbooks for librarians on early literacy development tend to include many practical examples of potential applications of ideas for practitioners. In general, these books discussed training for staff who might create and implement programming briefly, if at all, and usually only mentioned topics to be covered, rather than providing detailed information and advice about how one might train library workers.

One example of such a text, published by the American Library Association, is Ghoting and Martin-Díaz's book, *Early Literacy Storytimes @ Your Library* (2006), which discussed key ideas from the world of emergent literacy. Here, emergent literacy was used to denote the skills that provide a foundation for the conventional reading and writing of printed texts. This text emphasized the importance of positive interactions between caregivers and children. The beginning chapters of the book explained the National Reading Panel's (2000) findings on the importance of early literacy skills such as phonemic awareness (which will be explained more fully later in this chapter), along with a discussion of how family economics can impact children's reading ability. In keeping with recommendations made by experts in the field of

emergent literacy, Ghoting and Martin-Díaz included advice on how to incorporate elements such as songs and rhymes into literacy programming for young children, and their book concluded with examples of storytimes that could be used in public libraries. These samples include an opening rhyme, two or three storybooks, an activity (such as dancing, making simple crafts, or using realia), a song, and a closing rhyme, all of which were chosen to correspond to early literacy skills identified by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHHD) as important, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, and letter knowledge (again, these skills will be further explained below). Additionally, each sample contains a script that can be used to explain these skills, their importance, and their implementation to parents and caregivers. This example-focused approach was echoed in newer books, such as *Engaging Babies in the Library* (Knoll, 2016) and *Library Services from Birth to Five* (Rankin & Brock, 2015).

Other books for in-service librarians act as general resources and provide information on all aspects of library work with children, from collections to budgets to facilities to staff recruitment. These works include *Learning Environments for Young Children: Rethinking Library Spaces and Services* by Feinberg, Kuchner, and Feldman (1998), which synthesized elements from research on early literacy. Early in the book, discussions of how young children learn pulled from research on early brain development. This foundation was followed by an overview of the impact of social environments on learning, as the authors provided explanations of how cultural variations in things like communication style can impact how learning proceeds inside of the library. Unlike the above authors, though, Feinberg et al. spent a considerable amount of time discussing how parent participation is central to library learning for young children, as they can be both partners in the educational process and can also benefit from

instruction in how to read to their children and how to access other resources for supporting their children's development. Additionally, they did not give concrete examples of how to create programs for either children or parents.

Feinberg et al. also briefly discussed how library staff who do not possess MLIS degrees can be provided with training in order to provide services to young children. Here, the authors explained that an understanding of early childhood development is an important factor for providing high quality programs. Next, they provided a list of topics that should be covered in training sessions for staff, such as early language learning and development, program planning and development, communication skills with parents, collection development for the early childhood years, and inclusion of children with special needs. However, this discussion did not extend beyond a list of topics, and specific ideas for how and when to train staff were not provided. Other books intended for in-service librarians, such as *Managing Children's Services in Libraries* by Fasick and Holt (2013) and *Principles of Children's Services in Public Libraries* by Benne (1991), followed the same pattern. Throughout all of these volumes, discussions of early literacy programs were rather short, and there was no information on how one might train staff to conduct literacy programs, but instead only mentions of what might be discussed in such training sessions. Given the lack of rich descriptions of training throughout these materials, the present study fulfills a noticeable gap in the literature on early literacy programming in public libraries by providing such a description.

This gap is also apparent in the web-based resources that librarians may use in training and library assistants may use in planning and implementing literacy programs for young children. Library staff may access materials such as those created by the American Library Association (ALA) or the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), both of

whom have webpages for library staff to use in the creation of literacy programs. For the ALA, this resource consisted of providing librarians in particular with research-based rationales for developing early literacy programs. For example, their website listed a series of benefits for children that are associated with access to full-time librarians (2016). From the IFLA, on the other hand, practical guidelines were provided for library staff, such as what to consider when choosing texts, how to advertise literacy programs, and how to schedule programs to ensure high attendance (Vardell, 2015). As was the case for many of the books discussed above, the IFLA guidelines contained very little information about how to train staff. A list of necessary skills, such as "an understanding of literacy," was provided, but more concrete information about what this entails or how this may be addressed in training was missing from this resource.

Early literacy curricula, guidelines, and frameworks in western Canada.

As this study focuses on the training that library assistants receive to conduct early literacy programming, it is important to consider the contextual factors that may contribute to or influence their training. These contextual elements, such as official early literacy curricula, guidelines, and frameworks, may be adopted, adapted, or avoided by LPL trainers, or may be part of the previous experiences that inform an LA's experience of training and/or programming. Below, contemporary early literacy curricula, guidelines, and frameworks are described.

In Canada, educational policy and official curriculum for schools is set at the provincial level. Additionally, some provinces have provincial frameworks on early learning, which are widely available. Though not mandated documents, these frameworks may be used in a variety of early learning settings (e.g., daycares), and as such it is reasonable to imagine that, in contexts where they could access them, library workers would view them as helpful curriculum documents concerning early literacy as well. Recently, an Albertan advisory committee co-

developed an early childhood curriculum framework called *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*, which pulled from a similar framework from New Brunswick (Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette, & Thomas, 2014, and re-released in 2018). Rather than having explicit curricular outcomes, this framework consisted of broad, holistic, play-based goals for children, and positioned early childhood educators as "co-learners," "co-researchers," and "co-imaginers" (p. 33) who work alongside children and their families. In terms of literacy-related goals, the framework articulated three "facets" of literacy that early childhood educators should focus on:

1. Communicative practices, which they defined as "multiple ways of communicating" (p. 105). These practices are important because "children form relationships through communicative practices," and they provide opportunities for children to "learn conventions of their languages" and "extend ideas and take actions" (p. 105).

2. Multimodal literacies, which they defined as the "various sign systems" that children "construct meaning through," including "talk, alphabet and numeric print, dance, gesture, action, music, image, sculpture, graphing, map-making, and construction block-building" (p. 106).

3. Literate identities with and within communities, which they described as the ways in which children "co-construct a range of literate identities, … engage critically in the literacy practices of popular culture, … [and] use the literacy tools of digital technologies" (p. 107).

This framework built upon other policies and publications from the Government of Alberta, including "Let's Talk About the Early Years: Early Childhood Development," a 2011 report from Alberta Health and Wellness that sought to translate knowledge about early

childhood development for non-expert audiences. This report emphasized the need for high-quality environments and experiences for children under the age of five, advocating for all children to be read to and talked with on a daily basis. The report also advised that those who interact with young children should adopt a play-based approach to early learning and provide opportunities for children to play and, in turn, practice increasingly complex syntax and vocabularies.

As an advocacy document, "Let's Talk About the Early Years" (2011) established that "almost all children are born with a strong potential to grow, … but by school age many, approximately one in five, have lost ground" and have fallen behind their peers developmentally (p. 4). Based on this view of widespread developmental loss, the authors of this document argued that "vulnerability cuts across all groups," (p. 4) and therefore flexible, affordable early childhood programs and interventions should be available for all children.

Both the Flight framework (2014) and the Alberta Health and Wellness Report (2011) aligned with the provincial framework for the development of Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum (Alberta Education, 2017), which also contended that young children "need rich and varied opportunities to explore their environments [and] use language" (p. 6). Together, these frameworks advocated for early childhood learning in Alberta that provides multiple, holistic, and robust experiences for children by all those who support them, beginning from birth and continuing throughout their education. While none of these documents were expressly aimed at public libraries, all of these documents were publicly available and all they did mention the importance of community-building and relationships among community partners in the development of young children. As such, it is reasonable to assume that a librarian or LA would conceive of public libraries as sites for these robust experiences.

Despite the existence of these unifying frameworks, the types of instruction that can happen in preschools and kindergartens can vary widely, and there is a broad range of preparation and expertise among staff (Berk, 2006; Graue, 2006). The same is also true of library assistants: LAs may come to their work as early literacy programmers from a variety of other experiences. Below, I describe some of the literacy-specific approaches used in some early educational settings, followed by a discussion of the role of previous education and experiences for preschool and kindergarten educators. These approaches may be taken up by library assistants, and as such it is crucial to acknowledge them in building a complete picture of the training that LAs receive for early literacy programming.

Resources for preschool and kindergarten educators.

Those who work as literacy educators in libraries may rely on resources made for other workers in other settings, such as resources created for preschool and kindergarten teachers. Additionally, library assistants may have previous work experiences as preschool or kindergarten teachers, and may be relying on resources from this previous work to inform their early literacy programming. Therefore, an understanding of the content of these resources is important for anticipating not only the theories and practices that may be used in library assistant training, but also some of the ways in which library assistants may describe how they use their training in their work as literacy programmers at LPL.

Educators who work with young children in preschool and kindergarten settings have access to a variety of both print and online resources that may inform, influence, and enrich their understandings of early literacy. Sometimes, these resources are journal articles written explicitly for preschool educators in formal school settings, which often contain guidelines for applications of research. For example, Lawhon and Cobb (2002) provided strategies for incorporating what

they call "literacy routines," or repeatable techniques designed to enhance the language, reading, and writing skills of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, into classrooms. Many of these recommendations echoed the possible content of storytime programs, such as saying nursery rhymes and reading to children. Similarly, Wasik (2010) encouraged preschool teachers to use dialogic reading in whole-class storytimes, based on evidence that use of this technique corresponds to gains in their students' knowledge of vocabulary.

Sometimes, early literacy resources for preschool educators also incorporated ideas from research on play-based literacy learning. For example, Rosenquest's (2002) article described how preschool teachers can introduce and model ideas for play that promote literacy learning, such as re-enacting stories (which has previously been shown to positively impact comprehension in kindergarten children) or representing key ideas from stories in art projects.

In addition to the above printed resources, educators may also draw from web-based materials. One of the most popular sites of its kind online, with 70,000 subscribers to its weekly newsletter, Prekinders (Cox, 2016) is a typical example of what is available online for preschool teachers. The Prekinders website contained a wide variety of lesson plan ideas, printable charts, and answers to frequently asked questions on how to encourage children's early literacy. This website also hosted an online book club where preschool teachers can discuss literacy-related books and share their opinions and ideas for applications. Prekinders advocated for a teaching style that is grounded in emergent literacy by calling for educators to teach elements such as the alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, and print awareness. Teachers were called upon to teach these skills through the use of play centers, by allowing students to engage in shared writing with their teachers, and incorporating literacy in dramatic play by, for example, asking students to create menus for play ice cream shops.

Taken as a whole, the above exploration of research and resources for preschool educators has important implications for the current study: Early literacy training for library assistants may call upon the same resources as used by preschool teachers when creating literacy programs in public libraries, which may in turn inform LAs' perceptions of their training or influence their practices. Therefore, knowledge of the range of approaches advocated by these resources is important for anticipating the potential approaches of library assistants and thoroughly describing them in a case study.

In addition to books and web-based resources, librarians and library assistants may also have access to in-person training in order to prepare for early literacy programming. Once again, there are few descriptions of this training in the research literature, with more emphasis placed on the content and outcomes of the programs themselves (which will be described more in the following section). One brief description of a training program for librarians in Washington State on the topic of early childhood development and literacy, from Nelson (2001), explained that expert trainers were brought in in order to address knowledge gaps among these librarians. This training took place over five sessions and was attended by approximately 200 librarians and social services staff. As before, the author listed topics for the training sessions, which included brain development, infant learning, partnerships with other child-care providers, and grant writing, but rich descriptions of the content of the training sessions were not available, nor were trainees' experiences of the workshops.

While several avenues exist for preparing librarians to conduct literacy programming for children under the age of five, these materials did not provide adequate explanation for how library staff might be trained to design and implement such programming. The potential content of such training was described, but concrete ideas for how to convey this information was

missing from these resources. Moreover, much of what did describe available training was focused on certified librarians, not on other staff who may be experiencing training and using it to design and implement literacy programs, such as LAs. As such, my study seeks to identify what and how library assistants learn in training, such as theories and practices related to early literacy learning while investigating the relationship between those features of training and library assistants' responses to them. This is especially crucial because almost all public libraries in Canada employ non-MLIS staff to conduct literacy programming, and the number of programs being offered is rising (Reid, 2017; Turzansky, personal communication, September 18, 2016). Currently, it is unknown if training for these staff members mirrors that of librarians, or if other approaches are used. Because these individuals are key in creating and providing literacy programs, a more thorough understanding of these areas is needed not only to better comprehend how literacy programs in public libraries are designed but also to understand how staff perceive the support they receive in their roles. An exploratory case study such as this one, which describes early literacy training in terms of both content and realization, is needed to address many of these gaps surrounding the training for such programs.

Situated Cognition and Communities of Practice

In the following section, I describe the underlying theoretical approach of this study, situated cognition. Next, I explore the various iterations of the main analytical unit of situated cognition, the community of practice, as they are described in the literature, beginning with early definitions of this term. In particular, I explore how communities of practice have been related to one another and to notions of professional identity, in preparation for my upcoming analysis. This section then concludes with a description of how communities of practice have been more recently explored in teaching and learning, as they relate to this study.

This study is founded on a social theoretical approach to learning called situated cognition. Situated cognition views language – and knowledge in general – as inseparably linked to the activity, context, and culture in which it is used (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). In this view, knowledge is considered "similar to a set of tools… [that] can only be understood through use, and using them entails both changing the user's view of the world and adopting the belief system of the culture in which they are used" (Brown et al., 1989, p. 33). This means that, rather than being able to learn in passive, decontextualized settings, deep understanding occurs when learners *use* their tools authentically to echo the ways in which that knowledge is used in multiple situations (Brown et al., 1989). Situated cognition views competence, then, not as an individual achievement but instead as produced by social activity within particular environments (St. Julien, 1997). In other words, learning occurs as a result of interaction in spaces where learners can collaborate to gather and produce knowledge. Because situated cognition sees learning and activity as inextricably linked, this theoretical approach is at odds with mind-body dualism, the notion that intellectual knowledge is separate from and more valuable than embodied, lived experiences (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997).

Integral to situated cognition is the notion of cultural transmission, that is, the idea that knowing and understanding are constructed in socially and culturally specific ways, so that how learning occurs depends upon the community in which it occurs (Lave, 1997). Therefore, understanding the beliefs, norms, and practices of a particular culture (called enculturation) is crucial to learning (Brown et al., 1989). As Lave (1991) argued, learning is "a process of becoming a member of a sustained community of practice" (p. 65), indicating that enculturation is both a necessary process and a desired result of learning in this view.

Situated cognition theorists often point to apprenticeship, where expertise is developed through the active re-creation and practice of skills in genuine circumstances, as an example of authentic, situated learning (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997). In apprenticeships, masters teach "by showing apprentices how to do a task (modeling), and then helping them as they try to do it on their own (coaching and fading)" (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 2004, p. 23). Specifically, apprentices learn through legitimate peripheral participation, wherein a newcomer begins to learn a trade by being immersed in it and observing existing practitioners, then supporting these old-timers by performing legitimate tasks, then increasing the variety, significance, and independence of their tasks until the newcomer is considered a central member of the community (Lave, 1991).

This way of teaching and learning can be adapted into classroom settings, including libraries, through the practice of cognitive apprenticeships, which have a particular pattern of how knowledge is constructed: First, teachers or coaches model their thinking for students while completing some kind of authentic activity. Here, "authentic" is defined as "coherent, meaningful, and purposeful activities… [-] the ordinary practices of the culture" (Brown et al., 1989, p. 34). Then, students are supported as they try their hand at the activity, gaining more and more independence until they are able to complete it entirely on their own. Cognitive apprenticeships are concerned with both physical and cognitive skills, and rely upon collaboration and interaction to build and develop knowledge (Brown et al., 1989).

My use of situated cognition as the theoretical underpinning for this study means that I was interested in identifying the communities and cultures that exist at LPL, and what legitimate peripheral participation and cognitive apprenticeship look like at LPL. In other words, this study takes the "community of practice" as its unit for organizing and discussing groups within the

study site. Here, a discussion of the term "community of practice" and its history will provide context for the upcoming analysis of findings along these lines.

What defines a community of practice?

Given the emphasis on social relations and collective learning in situated cognition, the group becomes "the important unit of analysis" in this theoretical frame (Fuller, 2007, p. 19). This particular kind of learning group, called a community of practice, was first introduced in Lave and Wenger's 1991 book, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Here, communities of practice are defined as a "set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). In other words, communities of practice are the sites (both physical and relational) in which occur the necessary social practices that lead to learning. A typical community of practice involves sets and cycles of learning-related relationships, including among and between those who are newcomers, those who are 'new' masters with apprentices, and masters whose former apprentices are now masters themselves. Additionally, some members may be categorized as "journeyfolk" who are not masters but are still relative old-timers compared to apprentices (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57). These relationships imply that a successful community of practice will ultimately result in the continual replacement of old-timers.

Because this definition is based on relations, the boundaries of communities of practice are sometimes difficult to locate. Individuals may belong to multiple communities of practice which may interact or be completely separate, and may have varying degrees of connection to larger groups (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005). In the examples given to illustrate these nebulous boundaries, Lave and Wenger (1991) depict groups who work closely

while sharing knowledge, activities, and space, while also operating within a larger context of "broader community categories" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004, p. 23). Belonging to a community of practice of tailors, for example, requires knowledge of both the practices specific to a single tailor's workshop and the practices of tailors more generally. This means that, inherent to this initial definition of communities of practice, there is some tension between the need to understand localized practices and the desire to generalize claims based on particular communities of practice (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004).

Later, Wenger's (1998) definition of a community of practice deviated from that of Lave and Wenger (1991) through its discussion of the elements that circumscribe this kind of group. For Wenger (1998), what defines a community of practice is that members experience mutual engagement and joint enterprise through a shared repertoire. Here, mutual engagement is when members of the community of practice communicate with one another to generate a shared understanding of an issue, while joint enterprise occurs when members work collaboratively towards a common goal. Both of these processes are supported by a shared repertoire, or the common terms and resources used by members to define the knowledge and skills needed for their activities.

Critiques of the 1998 definition have pointed out that Wenger relied on the term "community" to describe individuals coming together to mutually engage through a joint enterprise, but since not all communities are developed with an explicit purpose, there is a possibility that this may be misleading (Contu & Willmott, 2003). Ultimately, the definition given in 1998 is difficult to apply as it is open to multiple interpretations (Li, Grimshaw, Nielsen, Judd, Coyte, & Graham, 2009). As such, further innovations on this term, described below, will be used to inform the use of this idea in this study.

In 2002, Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder published a revised definition of communities of practice: "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). Here, communities of practice are made up of a domain, community, and practice. The domain of a community of practice is the basic knowledge and skill set that separates members from non-members, while the community is the social structure through which learning arises from interactions between members. Finally, the practice is the resources shared by members and aligns with the previous definition of the shared repertoire.

Taking the above history and context into account, communities and communities of practice will be defined in this study as groups that come together around a common task or challenge. This common task or challenge makes up the practice that both old-timers and newcomers share. The shared nature of their work is an important aspect of their belonging, as is the opportunity for all members of the community to engage in authentic tasks with increasing independence in order to facilitate learning both the theory and skills needed to enact the tasks associated with the community. Additionally, Wenger et al.'s (2002) definition of "domain," or the knowledge and skill set that bounds the community, will be used in this study to characterize and consider what knowledge is needed and communicated in early literacy training for LAs.

Using this definition, communities of practice represent a useful construct for this study. In public libraries where library assistants plan and enact early literacy programming, belonging to a community of practice requires knowledge of multiple communities of practice: both the particular library of the LAs and public libraries in general. Additionally, the use of communities of practice as the unit of analysis for this study allows me to describe and consider what the domain, community/communities, and practice(s) of library assistants may be. Identifying

communities of practice, then, enables me to fully describe how training proceeds at LPL and illuminates some ways in which LAs increasingly prepare for early literacy programming. A deeper understanding of what library assistants feel is needed to belong to their community of practice may be helpful to those who support similar groups so that they can ensure that the infrastructure needed to access and understand this knowledge are available.

Tensions in communities of practice.

The above definitions of communities of practice also reveal potential areas of tension between and among communities. In particular, old-timer and newcomer relationships and the possibility of belonging to multiple groups are ripe for tension, as will be discussed below.

Both in the initial definition and in later discussions from Wenger (1998), the notion of communities of practice was focused on the newcomer. For example, the 1991 characterization from Lave and Wenger discusses how communities of practice may change through the addition and actions of newcomers who prompt old-timers to reconsider their activities. This means that, as Fuller et al. (2005) point out, Lave and Wenger (1991) "largely ignored the effect on communities when they import 'old-timers' from elsewhere," such as when longtime teachers move to new schools (p. 51). Wenger (1998) then applies this newcomer-focused thinking to all communities of practice, leading to a theory of learning in which the learning of experienced workers is not differentiated from that of complete newcomers as they enter the same communities of practice (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005). However, this means that the knowledge, skills, and attributes that experienced workers bring to their communities is overlooked in this view, which can lead to feelings of frustration from both old-timers and newcomers as they navigate spaces where knowledge is meant to move from the former to the latter (Williams, 2013).

My research enriches these initial conceptions of old-timers and newcomers, whereby communities of practice are conceived of as spaces where old-timers' knowledge and skills are constantly recreated rather than innovated upon and the contributions of newcomers or experienced workers from elsewhere are not considered. My second research question - how is early literacy training realized? - seeks to determine how relationships between how LAs and trainers come about and continue in communities of practice at LPL (e.g., whether LAs are positioned solely as newcomers or, if applicable, are able to share their previous experiences and innovate within the early literacy programming community of practice). I seek first to identify the communities that make up early literacy programming at LPL, and then identify the status of LAs as members within those communities. For example, if they are fully contributing members, knowing what kinds of early literacy practices may come about in library programming when newcomers are viewed as contributing members of a community of practice could be useful for similar organizations who may wish to adopt or adapt a similar view of newcomers. If they are not, then understanding how their status relative to old timers affects their dispositions towards training and their early literacy programming work may also hold important lessons for those planning training for similar organizations.

Additionally, Wenger's (1998) discussion of communities of practice explored the possible tensions that may arise from belonging to multiple groups. These tensions may come from groups who are actively collaborating or competing and, in so doing, make demands on members' time or adoption of a particular shared repertoire. Additionally, tensions may arise from belonging to multiple groups who have no association with each other as members of these groups negotiate their belonging.

The overlapping nature of some communities and the tensions that can arise from these overlaps may reveal notions of belonging that impact LAs' training and subsequent early literacy programming work. For example, LAs may belong to a community of practice of all library staff, of all LAs, of all library staff at their branch, and of all LAs at their branch. Each LA may feel differing degrees of belonging to each of these groups, and may view the purpose of each of these groups differently. If communities of practice are meant to be sites where social interaction leads to learning, then an LA's disposition to each of their groups may impact how learning proceeds for them within that group. Understanding, then, how LAs report their responses to training can illuminate particular collaborative moves from within these differing communities of practice that support or inhibit learning. This understanding may be useful to other, similar organizations who may choose to adapt, adopt, or avoid such practices in their own training and support of library assistants.

Communities of practice and professional identity.

Lave and Wenger (1991), as well as subsequent situated cognition theorists, also discussed how participation in a community of practice relates to identity formation. Since, for Lave and Wenger (1991), learning involves the continual definition and re-definition of relationships (e.g., as an apprentice moves towards mastery, their relationship with various old-timers changes), they argued that learning "implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations" (p. 53). In other words, the act of learning through membership in a community of practice results in the formation of a participant's identity, or how they relate to the others in their community and how they view themselves within it. As Fuller (2007) explained, "for Lave and Wenger, the question of *what* is learned by

participants is answered in terms of identity formation (rather than the acquisition of knowledge products)" (p. 19).

Building on these notions of identity, Williams (2013) argued that participation in teacher education programs in particular represents the beginnings of how teachers form their professional identities, first viewing themselves as student teachers (newcomers) and then increasing their participation in the community of practice through activities such as field placements. As such, a brief history and definition of the term "professional" here will provide context for the upcoming findings related to communities of practice in early literacy training at LPL.

Early explorations of what it means to be a professional emphasized how professional work differed from other kinds of work due to the preparation required for this work. In particular, for Dewey (1904), the need for demonstrated scholastic success outside of the work practice was an initial professional marker. Additionally, it was essential that this education be grounded with professional work practice. In other words, some kind of schooling, with an emphasis on theoretical ideas that form the foundation of the profession, was mandatory for subsequent practice. This educational prerequisite meant that the day-to-day practice of professional work was deferred in order to achieve a particular intellectual standard (Dewey, 1904).

More recently, definitions of professional practice have become more specific. Shulman (1998) expanded upon Dewey's initial identification of scholastic attainment to identify six markers of profession: a sense of a "calling," or a need to serve others, a deep understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the profession, a defined practice, the use of one's judgement in new or uncertain situations, the requirement to learn from experience, and the existence of a self-

monitoring and self-teaching professional community. For Shulman, these elements came together to define a profession as "the organized practice of complex knowledge and skills in the service of others" (1998, p. 516).

In this publication, Shulman (1998) went on to discuss how professions require an understanding of theories and related research because this is what informs the practice of these professions. In other words, professionals were expected not only to enact the ideas that ground their work, but they were also expected to keep abreast of new ideas and change their practice accordingly. For Shulman, this revealed the key tension within professional work, that of theory versus practice. In professional learning, theories acted as a way to simplify and narrow, constraining disciplinary boundaries and making the study of the world digestible. Practice, in contrast, was both highly specific but also wide-ranging, complex, and unstandardized. Shulman argued that this tension is why future practitioners often prefer opportunities for practice within their preparation, such as practicum experiences, over more academic learning - it is these practical opportunities which seem the most immediately applicable and therefore valuable.

These ideas of how professional work can be defined (a sense of a "calling," an understanding of theoretical underpinnings, a defined practice, the use of professional judgement, learning from experience, and a self-monitoring professional community), along with the acknowledgement of tension between theory and practice in professional work, are of interest to this study. This is because these ideas may be useful in illuminating both the various community of practice boundaries existing within early literacy training at LPL, and how those boundaries came to be. For example, if there are elements of self-monitoring among LAs, that can inform the delineation of LAs as a professional community of practice.

Describing early literacy training at LPL with consideration of professional identity in general also acts as a helpful analytical frame. This is because definitions and related examples of professional work can be helpful in determining how communities of practice are forged through early literacy training at LPL. As has been described above, a sense of belonging to a professional group is an important facet of belonging to a community of practice. Determining, then, if LAs face any affordances or constraints in terms of professional identity through their participation in training supports the delineation of the various communities of practice therein.

Communities of practice in education.

While I am unaware of any relevant research concerning communities of practice among library assistants, the concept of communities of practice has been applied to numerous settings and roles, including teacher education both before and during experiences in K-12 schools (Fuller et al., 2005). Both pre- and in-service teachers are members that come together around a common task - learning and teaching - with their domain defined through professional designations (i.e., a teaching certificate). As this area is closely aligned with the case under exploration in this study (early literacy training for library assistants), some consideration of teacherly communities of practice is warranted.

Teacherly communities of practice can be found amongst pre-service teachers. For example, Williams (2013) described communities of pre-service teachers in Australia who were preparing through a variety of undergraduate- and graduate-level post-secondary programs to teach in primary and secondary schools. More specifically, she examined how older students with previous careers in other areas gained membership in these communities of practice and how their membership related to their identities as professionals. Because these students had relevant previous experiences but were grouped with other beginners, Williams (2013) labelled

them as "expert novices" (p. 101). She found these expert novices were often frustrated when their existing skills and previous experiences were not valued by their university instructors, and that some expert novices responded by suppressing their previous experiences in order to construct new professional identities. Additionally, the majority of these expert novices appreciated their practicum experiences above their on-campus experiences, as being in the field allowed them to tap into the skills and experiences that supported their work and set them apart from their peers. In other words, participation in teacherly communities of practice and the tensions among and between different communities was integral to how these expert novices formed their teacher professional identities.

Examples of in-service teacherly communities of practice include Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004), who described a department of secondary history teachers in the United Kingdom. Through their collaborative work, such as the creation of new courses, they formed a community of practice. However, they did not like having formal meetings and their informal meetings were sporadic, which led to pockets of history teachers relying on one another rather than the entire group working together. In their analysis, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) speculate that both the lack of deliberate collaboration of the group and the dispositions of the individual teachers led to a dysfunctional community of practice. For them, a sense of belonging is necessary for a community of practice in which teachers can learn effectively from one another and improve their teaching practice.

Similarly, Wilson and Berne (1999) discuss a community of practice made up of university teacher educators, elementary teachers, and middle school math teachers. This community examined videos of one of their members teaching math to third graders. In watching these videos, some teachers realized that they did not fully understand the math presented to the

students. In order to rectify this lack of understanding, the community of practice began working through math problems. While initially some were concerned about appearing competent and hid their confusion, the time spent in the community of practice led to more upfront disclosures of problems in teaching as time went on. Wilson and Berne (1999) argued that this more ready disclosure was due to increasing feelings of trust and respect as the community of practice worked together. The trust and respect nurtured by the community also made it possible for teachers to disagree with one another in productive ways, leading to innovations in teaching practices.

In response to their findings, Wilson and Berne (1999) argued for several aspects which they believe would make professional education effective for teachers:

1. Professional education for teachers should include collaborative conversations around subject matter. For example, Wilson and Berne (1999) described English and Social Studies teachers who formed a book club around fiction and historical texts and then created a combined English-Social Studies curriculum.

2. Professional education for teachers should include collaborative conversations around students and learning. For example, Wilson and Berne (1999) described a group of Math teachers who discussed students' thinking around addition and subtraction problems.

3. Professional education for teachers should not be delivered but instead should be "activated," so that the focus is not on dissemination but on supporting teachers in understanding their own knowledge and improving their practice (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 194).

4. Professional education should be critical yet collegial, and should involve the flattening of hierarchies when possible. These factors increase trust amongst teachers and allow them to have the direct dialogue needed for changes to practice.

5. Teachers should have a sense of ownership over their professional education, increasing the applicability and subsequent acceptance of teachers.

Similarly, other researchers have argued that professional education for teachers should adhere to the ideas put forth by situated cognition theorists. For example, Bromme (2001) argued that teachers' professional education needed to be domain specific, or oriented towards the particular needs of their practice as early as possible. In addition, he claimed that situation-related, experience-based learning is essential for teachers to further develop their expertise.

For the current study, these elements of effective professional development are well suited to describing the content and delivery of early literacy training at LPL. For example, the training sessions can be analyzed in terms of their balance between delivery and activation, since this is a key aspect of how teachers respond to their professional development. As such, this kind of analysis can inform the further answering of my second research question, How is early literacy training realized?

Considering teacherly communities of practice in general reveals several areas of possible tension and areas of interest for this study. In particular, expert novices may exist at LPL (Williams, 2013). Identifying them and the experiences that they feel are valuable to early literacy programming, and then subsequently examining how training may relate to their membership in communities of practice may be supportive to other organizations who conduct similar work. Additionally, teacherly communities of practice rely on a sense of belonging and

trust in order to be successful (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Examining whether and how training at LPL fosters belonging and trust among LAs could reveal particular training practices to adapt, adopt, or avoid in other settings.

Overall, what began as a learning theory - the community of practice - has now evolved into a tool that can be used to describe organizations and the ways in which learning proceeds within them, including teaching and learning contexts (Li et al., 2009). While previous studies have examined the community of practice within multi-sited organizations that support student learning (e.g., Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004), this study defines communities and communities of practice as groups that come together around a common task or challenge, with each community's domain defined as the knowledge needed for membership. The shared nature of their work is an important aspect of their belonging, as is the opportunity for all members of the community to engage in authentic tasks with increasing independence in order to facilitate learning both the theory and skills needed to enact the tasks associated with the community.

Addressing Research Gaps

In the context of existing literature on the training for early childhood literacy education as library staff in public libraries, my research offers a novel contribution to the field. While much is known about the content of early literacy programming for children in schools, many questions remain unanswered with regard to the training and preparation that library assistants receive in order to create and implement this programming. Descriptions of staff training in the current literature often consist solely of topics covered in workshops, and details about the internal structure of and theories discussed in training are generally missing. Without this information, it is difficult to fully understand or imagine how one might train library assistants to conduct early literacy programs, particularly those who lack previous training on early childhood

literacy development. Additionally, it is difficult to imagine what curriculum materials might look like for this context, and to what extent library assistants might be expected to 'follow' these materials. In this context, then, my study aims to address this gap and make clearer how training proceeds at a public library in western Canada. Growing the collective understanding of training can also provide educators with lessons about how research on early literacy can be translated to non-specialist audiences, which can then inform how research is disseminated to parents, teachers, and caregivers.

In addition to a lack of understanding of the nature of training for library staff, there is also a dearth of literature concerning how this training might benefit or constrain the involved communities of practice. As the above review of literature suggests, notions of belonging in communities can deeply impact one's experiences, engagement, and work. Without deeply understanding how training is conveyed and interpreted, then, those who plan and implement training cannot understand its ultimate impact.

Ultimately, I aim to provide a research base to support the development of training for library staff working to support the literacy development of children under the age of five. Knowing more about how training at LPL proceeds and how training relates to communities of practice not only contributes to our collective knowledge of early childhood literacy education, but also makes it possible for other libraries and early childhood service providers to successfully adapt, adopt, or avoid particular elements of LPL's approach.

Chapter Three: Methods

In this chapter, I describe the design, setting, data sources, and data analysis approaches that I used for this study. I conclude this section by exploring my subjectivities and other possible influences on this study.

Design

As previously explained, this study takes situated cognition as its theoretical frame. In theorizing this case study in this way, I sought to investigate and describe the social activity, communities, and apprenticeships that occur in and inhabit training at LPL. As such, I used a descriptive, exploratory case study design (Yin, 2014). As Merriam (2009, p. 40) explained, a case study is the extensive description and analysis of a case, which is a "bounded system," or a defined entity or unit. The case can be a person, a community, a policy, or an institution (Merriam, 2009). Case studies investigate a phenomenon in a holistic manner, using qualitative data that come from multiple sources in order to identify and describe prevalent themes within the case (Creswell, 2009; Willis, 2008). Importantly, case studies examine events or people in situ; that is, in a real-world context that the researcher does not control (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). Descriptive case studies in particular investigate specific phenomena and provide rich, detailed information about sites or situations. Because descriptive case studies usually focus on particular environments, people, institutions, or policies, and do not depend on the researcher controlling a situation in an experimental sense, they are not intended to produce generalizable results (Yin, 2014). Instead, the product of a case study is a "thick," or wide-ranging and detailed, description of what is being studied (Merriam, 2009).

A descriptive case study design is a logical choice for this research project for a variety of reasons. First, there is a clear case that can be defined, investigated, and described: LPL's early

literacy education training for library assistants. Secondly, case studies are the "preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed," and as such align particularly with my second research question, "How is early literacy training realized?" (Yin, 2002, p. 1). Additionally, case studies are recommended "when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 2002, p. 1). These criteria fit the current project well, since I as a researcher was not able to intervene in the training or work of library assistants at LPL, and I was interested in describing a current set of practices as they occur in real time at a library.

Because descriptive case studies result in a detailed account of a phenomenon, they represented an ideal method for this project, of which the goal is the description and understanding of an understudied area of literacy education. Moreover, an exploratory approach fits well with how little is currently known about early literacy training for LAs, in that it allows for an incipient description that remains rich and thick.

In order to build this rich, thick description, I used an embedded case study design in which data is gathered from a variety of levels (Yin, 2014). Specifically, I used methods designed to gather population-, individual-, and organization-level data as described in table 1:

Table 1

Data levels and types

Data Level	*Data Type*
Population	Survey
Individual	Interviews
Organization	Participant observations of training; document analysis

These data enabled me to identify the features of LPL's training for literacy programming for children under the age of five, and to gather data on the relationships between that training and library assistants' self-reported responses and previous experiences. By combining these elements, I was able to paint a rich, complex picture of training for literacy programs at this site (Creswell, 2003).

Setting

My data were collected in a large city in Western Canada of approximately 900,000 people. This city, like many in Canada, is ethnically and linguistically diverse, with approximately 10% of the city's population having recently moved there from outside of Canada and between 60-80% of city dwellers identifying as having more than one ethnic origin (e.g., Ukrainian or East Indian) (Municipal Census data). The most commonly spoken languages in this city's households include, in alphabetical order, Arabic, Cantonese, English, French, and Tagalog (Municipal Census data). Like many places in Western Canada, this city is characterized by disparities between families with high and low socioeconomic statuses (SES): as the average household income rises in this city, recent immigrants, Indigenous peoples, and visible minorities are increasingly at risk of living in poverty as these groups increasingly earn less compared to high SES groups and as more low SES peoples migrate to the city. Factors such as low or unemployment, the high cost of housing, and drug addiction contribute to rising homelessness in this city (Bulletin from Provincial Health Authority, 2008). Among the many social supports for both low and high SES groups in this city is the public library, described below.

Study Site: Longlake Public Library.

Within this city, I focus on the literacy programming designed and implemented by library assistants at Longlake Public Library (LPL). LPL opened its first branch in the early 1900s and now operates nearly 20 branches throughout the city. According to its Business Plan (2017), one of LPL's main goals as an institution is to be the center for early literacy learning in its city. To that end, LPL offers a variety of programs aimed at increasing children's reading and writing, both in and out of the library. For example, the "Baby Book" (pseudonym used) program, designed in conjunction with the provincial health authority, provides parents and guardians with free board books and lists of reading recommendations and early literacy tips when children receive immunizations at the age of two months. The majority of programs resemble LPL's "Baby Reading Time" (pseudonym used), in which library assistants sing, perform rhymes, and read to infants and their caregivers in an effort to model how parents can support their children's literacy learning. These programs also offer participants an opportunity to connect with other families in the warm space of the library, which is helpful in a city where temperatures are often below freezing for most months of the year. In 2014, approximately 350,000 people attended programs developed and hosted by Longlake Public Library (LPL Annual Report, 2014).

Rationale for site selection.

I chose LPL as the site for this study because of its status as an exemplar in early literacy programming, the potential for educational diversity in its staff, and because of the freedom it gives library assistants in designing literacy programming.

Within the North American public library community, LPL is recognized as a leading public library by other institutions such as the American Library Association, and its early

literacy programs in particular have been identified as high quality in industry publications (Berry III, 2014). Because of its reputation, LPL represents an exemplar in the field of library-based early literacy programming. As such, it is an ideal site for the proposed study. In terms of applicability of research findings outside of this library, LPL may make use of training methods that other libraries may wish to use. Additionally, because of the emphasis on early literacy at this library, it is reasonable to assume that LPL's approach to training will be thoughtful and thorough, once again making it an ideal site to capture a rich description of what training for library assistants can entail.

LPL is also a useful location for this study because of the possibility of considerable educational diversity within the pool of library assistants. As described above, all LPL instructors must have some kind of post-secondary education, but LPL instructors can have an undergraduate degree in any field and still be eligible to plan and implement literacy programming. Instructors also range in age and previous work experience. This potential variety in educational and work background makes LPL an excellent site to study the relationships between program training and library assistants' understandings and previous experiences, because there is ample opportunity to find and describe patterns of particular backgrounds and their relationships to particular understandings, if such patterns exist.

Most importantly, I chose LPL as a site because of its approach to creating early literacy programming. LPL hires library assistants, rather than librarians, for early literacy programming. Depending on the branch, some LAs collaboratively create a script that everyone must follow, while others design their own implementation plan for a given program. In these sessions, instructors also advise parents and guardians about how to develop literacy skills in their children. This autonomy in programming makes LPL an ideal site for research concerning the

relationship between early literacy program training and library assistants' experiences of training, since they create their own programs and, as such, have the opportunity to exercise their ideas about early literacy by creating programs for young children. Once again, LPL's particular approach makes the findings concerning this site especially useful for other libraries, since both libraries that employ children's librarians and those that task volunteers with the implementation of literacy programming may benefit from a more thorough understanding of how training can interact with the understandings of those working with young children.

Early literacy program training at LPL.

At LPL, there are three formal in-house training sessions to prepare LAs for early literacy programming: Early Childhood and Family (ECF) 1, 2, and 3 (pseudonym used). One of these sessions is scheduled once per month, on a rotating basis in branches throughout the system, by members of LPL's Learning and Development team of three. The findings of this study, detailed in the next chapter, provide a complete description of the Learning and Development team as it is based on data such as interviews and observations.

Each training session lasts 2.5 hours and usually takes place in the afternoon. In order to attend training sessions, LAs must receive permission from their branch managers. Sometimes, LAs seek out training and ask to attend particular sessions. Usually, however, managers schedule LAs into sessions. The timing of attendance varies from LA to LA depending on their schedules - those who work full-time hours are more likely to attend training early in their onboarding, while those who are part-timer workers may wait months before a training session aligns with their schedules. Once an LA has attended a particular session, they do not have to attend it again.

In terms of structure, LPL's training sessions consist largely of one-way lectures from trainers to LAs, with trainers reading from a shared set of PowerPoint slides, interspersed with

some opportunities for LAs to collaborate with each other, such as when small groups discuss implementing an idea from training before sharing with the whole group. Additionally, these courses include an online component consisting of articles, summaries, and videos related to the course content, called "pre-reading," which LAs are expected to review prior to attending the in-person session.

The first of the courses, ECF 1, is called Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Programs. The content of this course focuses on the library's commitment to providing inclusive programs for all families, with explicit attention to the inclusion of people with disabilities and those who are new to Canada. The second ECF course, Setting Yourself Up for Success, gives LAs a structure for preparing for early literacy programs through means such as shadowing other programmers. ECF 3, Beyond the Basics, aims to teach LAs about activities and content they can use in programs in addition to reading storybooks to children, such as rhymes, songs, and puppet stories.

In addition to these rotating formal sessions, the provincial health authority provides training for LAs to deliver a single highly structured early literacy program whose implementation is monitored by the health authority. This program, called "Rhyme, Move, Dance, and Learn," (pseudonym used) incorporates American Sign Language into songs, rhymes, and oral reading from a storybook. As these training sessions are not created by LPL, they fall outside the scope of this dissertation in terms of the observations I conducted, but still form part of the landscape of early literacy programming at the research site.

LPL also schedules ad hoc training sessions based around guest speakers and experts. For example, in the autumn of 2018, the Learning and Development team hired a professor who is an expert on play in the early years to lead a workshop for LPL staff. Each branch sent one staff

member (either an LA or librarian) to attend the workshop, with the hope that these staff members would share their learnings with their branches.

Participants.

This study focused on a particular group of library workers called library assistants (LAs). During this study, there were currently approximately 275 library assistants employed by LPL. Unlike librarians, LAs were not required to hold Library and Information Science degrees, but instead must either have had a two-year Library Technology diploma or four-year Bachelor's degree in any subject. In other words, beyond the need for some kind of post-secondary education, there was no stipulation in terms of subject matter.

From this pool of LPL staff, I conducted 13 observations of the three in-house training sessions described above with approximately 130 library assistants in attendance and six trainers. I then analyzed documents associated with these sessions. I also surveyed 29 library assistants and interviewed seven. I also interviewed four of the approximately 10 trainers at LPL, and two members of the Learning and Development team. Below, I describe these sources of data in more detail, following table 2 which summarizes my participants:

Table 2

Participant types and related data sources

Data Source	Participant Type	Number of Participants
Observations	Library Assistants	Approx 130
	Trainers	6
Surveys	Library Assistants	29
Interviews	Library Assistants	7
	Trainers	4
	Learning & Development Team	2

Data sources

As explained above, the data for this study was drawn from observations, documents, a survey, and interviews with LAs and trainers. In the following section, I describe these data sources and explain their contributions to this study.

Observations.

I began this study by observing a series of training sessions for instructors at LPL who are planning on implementing literacy programs for children under the age of five. Participant observation is a research method in which the researcher spends time in the environment under scrutiny, collecting data as unobtrusively as possible while acting as both a participant and an observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Participant observation is a useful method of not only ascertaining the activities, people, and physical aspects of what is being studied, but also discerning the small details about relationships, space, and processes that may be blocked out or forgotten by insiders (Spradley, 1980). As such, participant observations are an important

element in discovering both what library assistants learn about in training and how those ideas are communicated, and may uncover information that would not be accessible by the other methods discussed below. Additionally, observations allowed me to gain direct and personal experience with participants, which fostered positive relationships that I then leveraged into participation in interviews (Creswell, 2003).

Between October 2016 and October 2018, I observed 13 training sessions or approximately 40 hours of training at Longlake Public Library. My observations focused on which theories and practices are discussed in training, how they are discussed (for example, whether they are described in a positive or a negative light), and whether the theoretical aspects are explicitly linked to particular practices, in order to provide a rich description of both the content and environment of training. Additionally, because situated cognition emphasizes how competence comes about through social activity, my observations also focused on the kinds of social activity that occur in training. For example, I was interested in noting if training is unidirectional, with trainers providing information to passive library assistants, or if training is more collaborative. Moreover, the importance of communities in situated cognition means that my use of this theoretical lens directed my observations to concentrate on which communities exist at LPL training sessions and how these communities interact with each other. For instance, I was interested in whether library assistants at LPL behave as if they are part of an LPL-wide community in training.

The observational data were captured in fieldnotes that were composed during the observations, with additional notes recorded immediately afterwards (Creswell, 2003). Fieldnotes are written accounts of what has been observed and describe not only the actions performed by those being observed but also the setting, such as the room in which the

phenomenon occurs and the spatial rules that the participants follow (for example, who sits with whom?) (Warren & Karner, 2010).

Document analysis.

My observations of training were supplemented by analysis of related official documents, such as slideshows and handouts, which illuminate what trainers and trainees consider valuable. Document analysis represents an unobtrusive way of gaining information about official perspectives on different approaches to early literacy (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Creswell, 2003).

In particular, I was provided with the PowerPoint slides for each of the training sessions after my observations were complete. Since each trainer followed the slide deck and speakers notes as they led the training session, these slides also act as a lesson plan or script for the training sessions. Across the sessions, I was provided with 77 slides. I was also able to access nine handouts provided for the ECF 3 training session, which were lists and examples of rhymes, songs, and books that could be used in programs. Together, these documents enabled me to triangulate findings from my observations and my other data sources.

Surveys.

In addition to my observations and document analyses, I conducted a survey of LPL's library assistants in order to collect background information on their education and other demographic information that may impact their work as literacy programmers. I made this survey available online, via Qualtrics, an online survey hosting website, and solicited participation via email, using a method called saturation sampling in which all valid email addresses for a particular employment level at an organization receive the same invitation to participate in an online survey (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

The instrument used for this survey is an amalgamation of standard demographic questions from a variety of sources, such as the Canadian 2016 Census, specialized questions designed to solicit data about the number and topics of early literacy training at LPL, and long-answer, open-ended questions about the participants' previous educational and career experiences and current training and work. The survey was also reviewed and changed by LPL staff before it was shared with library assistants. For example, questions related to the ethnicity of library staff were changed to be less specific, and were made optional.

The close-ended questions taken from the Canadian 2016 Census produced statistics, which are quantitative descriptions of some features of the group of people under study (Fowler, 2014). In particular, surveys that include close-ended questions allow for comparisons between individuals and groups and can generate additional data that can triangulate data collected through other means (Gray & Guppy, 2003). In total, 29 library assistants responded to the survey. A complete draft of the survey is available in Appendix A.

Interviews.

In general, interviews are a way for researchers to understand the perspectives of others, and carefully crafted interview protocols allow researchers to access participants' feelings, opinions, and behaviors (Patton, 2001). Additionally, interviews can also provide access to participants who cannot be observed (Creswell, 2003). Semi-structured interviews in particular are designed to have some pre-constructed questions to ensure that all interviewees are asked about the same areas and that research questions are addressed, but are also somewhat adaptable to each participant, so that topics and ideas that are of importance to interviewees can be discussed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). As such, semi-structured interviews with library assistants not only provided rich qualitative data about their perceptions of training and its relationships

with their understandings and former experiences, but also ensured that potential variation in these relationships among different library assistants was also discernible. Furthermore, interviews with trainers provided information about what trainers find valuable and how training is planned, while again capturing potential differences among them.

In much the same way as my observations, the interviews I conducted were directed by my use of situated cognition as a theoretical lens. In particular, I was interested in noting which kinds of social activity lead to competence in early literacy programming for library assistants. To get at this information, I prepared an interview protocol that focused on library assistants' experiences of training for and creating early literacy programs and aimed to discover how competence comes about in this context. Finally, I was able to expand my understanding of the community of library assistants at LPL through these interviews by collecting more information on how individual library assistants prepare for leading literacy programs. I sought to understand if library assistants feel that their training differs, for example, from branch to branch, based on previous work experience, or based on some other factor.

Initially, I solicited interviewees using the survey by including a separate section at the end of the survey in which I asked participants to indicate whether or not they were interested in participating in an interview. I then contacted those who were interested and conducted interviews with them, which I audio recorded. In keeping with recommendations for literacy research that uses multiple sources of data, I originally intended to interview 8-12 of the approximately 275 library assistants (Calfee & Sperling, 2010). However, only three LAs initially agreed to be interviewed via the survey.

Because I had fewer interviewees than I initially expected, I added a recruitment method partway through my study: I recruited interviewees at some training observations, announcing

my interest in conducting interviews at the beginning of observations, commencing in the spring

of 2018. Because of this change, four additional LAs volunteered to be interviewed, bringing the

total number of interviewed LAs to seven. While the length of each interview varied, they were

all approximately an hour long. For all interviews with LAs, I used a semi-structured interview

format in which the same guiding questions and topics were discussed with all interviewees, but

with some flexibility to ask particular questions to particular participants (Bogdan & Biklen,

2006). An interview protocol for this section of my study is included in Appendix B.

LAs' lack of availability for being interviewed also prompted me to change my research

questions during the course of this study. Initially, I intended to foreground the experiences and

insights of LAs and as such structured my research questions around them: "What do library

assistants report learning about in training they receive for delivering literacy programming to

children under the age of five? How do LAs describe how they use their early literacy training in

their work as literacy programmers? How do LAs describe how their previous work and

educational experiences inform their literacy programming practices at LPL?" However, as my

study went on and it became clearer that interviews would be a smaller facet of my data

gathering than I had initially planned, I changed my research questions to "What is the content of

early literacy training for library assistants?" and "How is early literacy training realized?" as a

way to avoid overemphasizing what was shared in LA interviews. In addition, these new

research questions allowed me to better account for and utilize the numerous data sources that I

pursued in addition to interviews (observations, survey, and document analysis), and were better

suited for the triangulation of findings that came from these data sources. Finally, the broader

view of training that was afforded by these questions was fitting for an exploratory case study

such as this one, in that the answers to these questions describe early literacy training in terms of

both content and realization. This broad view of training is needed to address the gaps in literature discussed in the previous chapter.

In the planning stages for the study, members of LPL's management team expressed concerns about the privacy and possibly identification of interviewees. As such, they requested that I did not record information on interviewee's identity categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity). However, when related information was brought up by interviewees (e.g., an interviewee's experience as a mother), I retained that information and have included it, when relevant, in my analysis.

Additionally, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with four of the approximately 10 trainers at LPL, and two members of the Learning and Development team. The data gathered from these interviews not only provide background information needed in order to fully understand and describe training, but also illuminated the training planning process. Information gleaned from these interviews was also used to add to the interview protocol for library assistants. An interview protocol for this section of my study is included in Appendix C.

During the interviews, I audio recorded both my questions and the participants' responses while also taking handwritten notes on visual cues, such as facial expressions and body language. The audio data were transcribed through a transcription service, and then I merged the transcription with my notes using conventions explained by Bogdan and Biklen (2006).

Table 3, below, summarizes the data sources described above:

Table 3

Data sources

Data Source	*Number*
Observations of ECF 1	4
Observations of ECF 2	5
Observations of ECF 3	4
Slide Deck from ECF 1 (shared among all sessions)	1 (34 slides)
Slide Deck ECF 2 (shared among all sessions)	1 (25 slides)
Slide Deck from ECF 3 (shared among all sessions)	1 (18 slides)
Handouts from ECF 3	9
Surveys of Library Assistants	29
Interviews with the Learning and Development Team	2
Interviews with Trainers	4
Interviews with Library Assistants	7

Together, the above methods for collecting data – observations, document analysis, a survey, and interviews – provided me with a rich set of data that created a detailed case study of literacy education training and implementation at Longlake Public Library. In particular, my observations of training allowed me to build a rich description of the content and processes of training. I was able to triangulate and augment this description through my other data sources. Triangulation was especially important for this study as there were multiple kinds of data at various levels (population, individual, and organization) that at times were corroboratory and at other times contradictory. Triangulation allowed me to point out these moments and build a description of the phenomenon that is early literacy training at LPL. For example, interviews with LAs gave me insights into their experiences during training and the ways in which they

responded to it. I was then able to compare and contrast those data with what trainers shared with me in their interviews, a perspective that deepened my understanding and description of early literacy training at LPL.

Data Analysis

This study produced both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data came from the demographic and training-attendance questions in the survey, while qualitative data came from the rest of the survey and the observations, interviews, and document analyses. Utilizing this variety of data allowed me to build a rich, thick description of this real-life case, in keeping with guidelines around exploratory case studies (Yin, 2002; Yin 2014).

Quantitative survey data.

The quantitative data from the demographic and training-attendance survey questions were analysed in order to describe frequency therein. This involved assigning categorical data to a nominal scale (Sprinthall, 2012). For example, the number of participants who disclosed that they have a Bachelor's degree were counted in one category. Data on participants' educational backgrounds were then sorted based on the categories provided by the local University where the majority of LPL staff studied (e.g., Humanities), and then analyzed for frequency by calculating the percentage of responses in each category.

Qualitative data.

Every two weeks during data-gathering, I reread all of my existing qualitative data and composed memos, short summaries of important ideas and links that I saw emerge across the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). These memos were the first step towards interpreting the data because they connected different pieces of data together in cohesive ways, and they also provided me with an opportunity to name and explore assumptions in a meta-cognitive way

(Warren & Karner, 2010). Additionally, the frequent revisiting of data and reflection therein led to an "intense relationship" with the data that fostered a "heightened sensitivity" and greater connection with what was being researched (Birks et al., 2008, p. 69). Memos also allowed me to maintain a written record of the evolution of my study and interactions with my data (Birks et al., 2008). My memos focused on the aspects discussed above, including the structure of early literacy training sessions and the existing communities at LPL, along with new ideas and links that came about from my interactions with the participants and the data. These memos were also a way for me to monitor my subjectivities, which I explain later in this chapter. Immediately below, I discuss my data analysis processes.

My qualitative data, including survey responses, observational fieldnotes, interview notes, and documents from training, were analysed through a coding process where I identified and defined the concepts contained in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Specifically, my data were coded and analysed through a two-step approach: first, I coded my data using both theory-driven (i.e., in consideration of the theories and research that inform this study) and open (i.e., capturing the categories that emerged directly through analysis) approaches, and then second, I reviewed my data and codes together and looked for linkages, patterns, and broader themes that connected across individual codes. I began this process by becoming as familiar as possible with the data by reading and rereading survey responses, fieldnotes, interview notes, and documents. Additionally, I also reread memos and wrote new memos based on these readings, allowing this recursion to deepen my interpretations.

In my theory-driven coding, my analysis was driven by the theories and ideas discussed in my review of literature. For example, my use of communities of practice as an analytical tool meant that I was interested in identifying the various communities of practice that are available

to LAs, and if any tensions arise between or within the communities involved in training. As such, one of my codes was *Gatekeeping*, which I used to identify examples of the differing roles of LAs and librarians.

I also identified themes or patterns that were not suggested through my literature review as I coded the data. I labelled them in a process called "open coding," because I as a researcher was "open" to what existed in the data (Warner & Karner, 2010, p. 218). For example, a commonly discussed idea in interviews with trainers was that both training and program delivery had changed over a period of several years at LPL. As this pattern emerged, I labelled it as *Changes at LPL*.

I then followed this coding process by reexamining my codes and determining how individual codes were related to one another. At times, this meant combining or subcategorizing codes. For example, the *Changes in training at LPL* category was related to a subcategory called *Work or Education*, which focused on how previous work and educational experiences led to changes in program training at LPL. In this way, I sought both connections between my research questions and further context for the changes at LPL.

When analysing documents in particular, I looked for evidence of both corroboration and contradiction between the documentary evidence and the data gathered from other sources, in keeping with recommendations for case studies. Corroboratory data helped triangulate and strengthen my findings, while contradictory data indicated a need for further investigation (Yin, 2014). For example, I noted instances where documents such as the PowerPoint slides used for training directed library assistants to converse with one another and create program plans as a group diverged from interview data where LAs described being told to use scripted program

plans, which prompted me to examine these contradictions more closely. In this way, I built a fulsome description of the training environment at LPL.

The use of these coding strategies required constant revisiting and refinement of my codes and their definitions. For example, partway through coding, I had two competing codes with considerable overlap: *Content of Training* and *What Happens at Training*. This first code was initially focused on the theory and strategies being shared at training, while the second highlighted the activities in training. However, as data analysis progressed, these codes began to bleed into one another. Through my coding and memoing processes, I noted this overlap, and redefined both codes to clarify their meanings and distinctions: *Content of training* was used to code examples of theory and strategies from observations and documents, while *What happens at training* was used to code descriptions from trainers and LAs about the activities of training. I then re-coded the data with the ameliorated codes. My final codes and their definitions are included in Appendix D, along with examples of coded data.

These two codes - *Content of Training* and *What Happens at Training* - form the foundation for the answers to my research questions, "What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?" and "How is early literacy training realized?" The findings chapter is organized along these research questions and presents descriptions of the three primary early literacy training sessions at LPL. Throughout the findings chapter, different data sources are woven together in order to ensure that the answers to my research questions are as robust as possible and form a coherent narrative. Following this, my discussion chapter takes up the larger themes and patterns found through relating the individual codes.

Influences on the Study

A number of factors, including my actions during data collection and my own subjectivities, influenced this study. Below, I describe some of these factors, beginning with texts that I found helpful and then moving to my role in data collection. This section ends with a discussion of my subjectivities.

Mentor texts.

Over the course of this study, two texts served as important mentor texts for my work. The first of these texts was Williams' (2013) study of preservice teachers, described in my review of relevant literature. In this study, Williams sought to understand how preservice teachers gained membership in teacherly communities of practice, using interviews to uncover tensions related to movement between and among communities. This use of interviews to directly probe issues of community membership was influential to my study, and supported my use of interviews with LAs. Additionally, Williams' discussion of "expert novices," or those with previous professional experiences who were new to certain communities, was helpful to me in analysis. Williams' idea of expert novices was echoed in my data, as will be discussed further in the next chapters, and Williams' previous discussion of this idea helped me to identify and name it.

The second text was Spooner et al.'s (2009) study of paraprofessionals who supported the early literacy skills of children with similar cultural backgrounds, also described in my review of relevant literature in the previous chapter. In this study, paraprofessionals used culturally responsive teaching practices that leveraged the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of children in order to build their language and literacy skills. This study resonated with me as it braided together many strands of research that I am interested in - culturally responsive pedagogy, early

literacy, and paraprofessionals - and acted as a reminder that truly culturally responsive practice requires deep knowledge and appreciation of children and their families. During my analysis and consideration of the implications of my data, I returned to Spooner et al.'s (2009) study to remind myself of what might be possible in the environment of the public library, where concerns around patron privacy and the drop-in nature of programs often mean that LAs are not able to know their program participants. This study positioned me to think through what is lost and what is gained in that model of programming, as will be discussed further in the next chapters.

Role of the researcher in data collection.

During the data collection phase of this study, I interacted with many staff members from LPL in a variety of settings. Because my behavior during these interactions may have influenced how LPL staff behaved during interviews and observations, it is important to reflect on what those influences may have been and how they may have played out.

For interviews, I introduced myself to participants via email using formal, IRB-approved language. Even though subsequent emails to participants were friendlier and more personal, my initial email may have prompted participants to be more formal with me during interviews than they might have otherwise been. This formality may have been furthered because, for the majority of my interviews, I was meeting participants for the first time. Ultimately, these factors may have encouraged participants to provide me with a sanitized version of their thoughts. On the other hand, it may be that my status as a relative stranger who was pursuing an official research project gave participants a sense of anonymity, and led to a sense that they could be open and frank in interviews. Compounding these issues is that, for most of my participants, interviews were held in empty branch offices, which may have once again encouraged a sense of

decorum in participants because they were "at work" during interviews. Alternatively, the privacy afforded by the use of these offices may have helped participants feel free to share their experiences with me. I believe the likeliest outcome is that some participants felt more reticent due to these factors, while others felt more frank.

Similarly, my actions during observations may have also influenced how participants acted during training sessions that I was a part of. At the beginning of each training session, I introduced myself to the group of LAs using IRB-approved language. During sessions, I sat amongst LAs and participated in songs and activities. When asked to complete tasks as part of a small group, I usually volunteered to be a note taker in order to avoid shifting the conversation by participating too much, though I did ask questions and provide ideas to my group members during most activities. While I was hoping to avoid influencing the conversation, my presence and my role as a researcher likely affected the others in the training session. For example, it may be that LAs felt that I was taking notes on their performance, and stayed on-task more during group activities than they would have otherwise. Similarly, it may be that trainers felt that they were being scrutinized, and as such they may have acted in a more artificial way than they might have without an observing researcher.

Researcher subjectivities.

My subjectivities are shaped by my gender, linguistic status, educational background, and work experience. First, I identify as a middle class, cisgender female who is a person of color with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In terms of my linguistic identity, I was the first person in my family to be born in Canada (with my siblings and parents coming to Canada from England), in a primarily English-speaking urban community. English was my first language, but my parents wanted me to have some command of French as well, since it is also an official language

of Canada and they imagined that it would be helpful to know as a Canadian citizen. With this in mind, I attended a French immersion preschool and elementary school before switching to English language instruction in Grade 7. While I do not consider myself bilingual in French, I have always been interested in learning new languages and in learning more about how oral and written communication works.

This interest prompted me to study several subjects in university that examine the different ways in which one can communicate: Anthropology, Linguistics, and Art History. Of these, I was most interested in Linguistics, and pursued a master's degree in this area. Specifically, my graduate work in Linguistics examined the potential influence of bilingualism in those who can read more than one writing system from a cognitive point of view. In other words, factors such as social class were not considered in my graduate work on bilingualism. At the same time, I began working as an art instructor at the Art Gallery of Alberta, which is where I first became interested in teaching.

I then became a literacy instructor who worked with several community organizations, including Longlake Public Library. Because of my training in cognitive linguistics, among other subjects, I felt that my approach to literacy at LPL differed from that of those who had studied other subjects. I tended to be more interested in developing early literacy skills that had a research base, and using research-based approaches to construct early literacy programs, while others focused more on experimenting with new, untested ideas.

My previous experience at LPL may be viewed as both an affordance or a constraint in this study. It may be that I was able to more deeply understand the data I gathered due to a shared understanding of the goals and approaches of LPL employees. Additionally, my previous knowledge of LPL may have provided me a level of comfort with the site of this research that

enabled me to focus on my shared understanding of goals and approaches of LPL staff, rather than focusing on the discomfort I might feel as a newcomer. Conversely, it may be that my *perception* of a shared understanding led me to believe that I fully understood something when I have not. Moreover, participants may also have had the perception of a shared understanding, and may have assumed that I already knew important information when I did not. Finally, my previous experience as a library assistant for LPL may also have led me to make judgements about what library assistants are doing in their training and subsequent work, rather than viewing them more neutrally.

Since leaving LPL as an employee, I have spent much of my doctoral coursework studying more sociocultural and critical approaches to learning and literacy, including culturally responsive pedagogy. This has prompted me to consider the social contexts of learning more fully, which has led to my adoption of a situated cognition theoretical approach for this study. I also had the opportunity to begin my doctoral work in the US, and noticed that my American peers brought up differences amongst ethnic groups more readily than my masters' cohort had in Canada. Now that I am back in Canada, I notice that I often bring up issues of race and ethnicity more often than my peers. For example, I am the only person to comment on how few people of color there are at my place of work and to think out loud that it may be problematic. I have also seen LPL staff react to this during the course of this study. For example, the LPL staff that worked with me to modify my survey told me that they did not feel that I needed to ask about the ethnicity of LPL staff and drastically changed the wording and specificity of that part of the instrument.

Both the content and context of my doctoral coursework, then, may have positioned me to be more critical of LPL than the average library assistant, which may have simultaneously

strengthened and weakened my study. Because of this, I used memos to monitor how my reactions to LA training compare to the reactions of library staff in order to ensure that I was, as much as possible, adequately and fairly representing what the LAs' experience of training is. Specifically, I wrote subjectivity memos in which I examined my critical responses as they arose during data collection. I then shared these memos with my dissertation chair and reviewed them on my own in order to identify moments where I needed to center the voices of library assistants, rather than myself. For example, my own awareness of issues around cultural appropriation meant that my reaction to the training topic of yoga-pose stories in the library was initially negative as I observed training sessions. Through my subjectivity memos, I was able to identify this critical response and separate it from what LAs expressed to me about their responses to this topic. That is not to say that my own ideas about their training should be dismissed, but rather that my work was to ask about and document what LAs told me their experiences are.

During this study, I addressed these subjectivities through the adoption of a situated cognition approach. Because of my tendency towards the cognitive in my previous research, I hoped that my use of situated cognition would constantly remind me to seek data that is both holistic and complex. I also addressed my subjectivities through the aforementioned use of a subjectivity memos: All of the aspects of my identity given above – my gender, multiple ethnic backgrounds, linguistic status, educational background, and work experience – that may impact my work as a researcher were monitored through my memoing process. In some of my memos, I reviewed my research-related work and examined how my subjectivities come into play. In particular, I reflected on my work and attempted to pinpoint where different aspects of my identity may be enabling or hindering my research. Finally, I shared these memos with my dissertation chair and had regular conversations with her about them to help me identify and

challenge biases in my research. While it is not possible, nor desirable, to erase the influences of my subjectivities from this study, I am confident that these actions allowed me to recognize them, name them, and consider how they may be impacting my interpretations.

Overview of the Study

This study was designed to answer two research questions, "What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?" and "How is early literacy training realized?" using observations, document analysis, interviews, and a survey through the lens of situated cognition. The data generated in this study were analyzed through the processes described above. In the following chapter, I describe my findings. Specifically, I first describe the content of three in-house training sessions in turn, interspersing descriptions of how library assistants recollected or responded to that content. This is followed by a discussion of the content that was shared between sessions. Next, describe how each training session proceeded, beginning with an examination of how trainers prepared for and created training and then concluding with a description of the shared strategies and activities of training. Once again, LAs' recollections and reactions are interspersed throughout, along with relevant data from interviews with trainers.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I describe the major findings from my research project, drawing from multiple data sources to answer my research questions: "What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?" and "How is early literacy training realized?"

Below, I begin answering the question "What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?" by describing the content of the three primary training sessions in turn. Then, I provide an overview of training content for library assistants as a whole through a discussion of the aspects that all observed training sessions shared.

I then shift my attention to the library assistants themselves by answering the question "How is early literacy training realized?" I begin with some background information on how training sessions were developed at LPL, then describe each of the three primary training sessions in turn. Finally, I conclude this section by describing what these sessions share in terms of processes and instructional strategies.

Overall, at the time of my observations, there were three primary in-person training sessions for library assistants: Early Childhood and Family (ECF) 1, 2, and 3. These were scheduled once per month on a rotating basis, at different branches throughout the city. For example, in January 2018, ECF 1 occurred in a branch in the northeast quadrant of the city. Then, in February 2018, ECF 2 took place in a central branch, and then in March 2018, ECF 3 was scheduled in the southwest. Each of these sessions were scheduled from 1:30pm to 4pm, and occurred in private rooms within each library branch. Before training sessions, LAs could access online pre-reading related to early literacy training, but as I did not have access to the pre-reading, I am unable to describe it here. Instead, I will focus my descriptions on the in-person aspects of these three training sessions.

In all cases except when directly quoting a participant, singular 'they' is used instead of 'he' or 'she' to protect both the anonymity of participants and to respect the wishes of participants who expressed a preference for gender-neutral pronouns. Additionally, all names provided for participants and organizations are pseudonyms. When pseudonyms are used to represent participants, gender-neutral names common in Canada during the decade that participants were born have been selected.

Throughout this chapter, the following sources inform my description and analysis, with the bulk of my data coming from observations of training sessions:

Table 4

Data sources that inform descriptions of LPL early literacy training

Data Source	Number
Observations ECF 1	4
Observations ECF 2	5
Observations ECF 3	4
Slide deck from ECF 1 (shared among all sessions)	1 (34 slides)
Slide deck ECF 2 (shared among all sessions)	1 (25 slides)
Slide deck from ECF 3 (shared among all sessions)	1 (18 slides)
Handouts from ECF 3	9
Interviews with the Learning and Development team	2
Interviews with Trainers	4
Interviews with Library Assistants	7

What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?

I begin my discussion of early literacy training by describing the content of each training session in turn. The observations I conducted on each session form the basis of these descriptions. These data are supplemented with data from my other sources in order to capture

LA and trainer responses to training content. Following these descriptions of the individual training sessions, I explore the content that training sessions shared, once again weaving document, survey, and interview data through my observations.

ECF 1: Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Programs.

The first training session, Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Programs, took place over two and a half hours every three months. Over the four observations I conducted of this session, an average of 10 LAs participated, with one trainer. Below, I describe the learning outcomes, notions of diversity and inclusion, and community-led service philosophy articulated in this training session.

ECF 1 had three learner outcomes that were shared by trainers through their PowerPoint slides:

1. Understand [LPL]'s programming expectations for providing welcoming and inclusive programs to all families

2. Recognize some of the varying needs and expectations of families attending [LPL]'s early literacy programs

3. Describe how we can provide welcoming and inclusive programs at [LPL]

Through its introductory slides, the session also introduced multiple dimensions in which parents and children could be considered "diverse," a term which was not clearly defined but seemed to be used as a term to convey the dimensions along which people might vary, such as "cultural, sexual orientation, language, ethnic/racial background... disability, health... and gender identity" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Slide from ECF 1 that names some dimensions in which parents and children could be considered "diverse" when planning early literacy programs.

The main argument of the training session was that, because of the stressors discussed and others that LAs may not anticipate, library patrons may be facing several barriers to attending and enjoying early literacy programs, such as competing demands on their time, issues with transportation, or a lack of awareness of programs. In light of these barriers, it is important that LAs "provid[e] a welcoming environment," in the words of one of the observed trainers for this session. As a trainer for this session explained, methods for providing such an environment revolve around meeting parents' expectations of the program, which will be expanded upon below.

This discussion of creating welcoming programs and considering the diversity of program participants aligns with Feinberg et al.'s (1998) list of necessary training topics for early literacy programs, which, among other things, explicitly called upon training to cover the inclusion of children with special needs. Additionally, this discussion is a way in which LPL

training positions LAs as professionals. As previously discussed, professional work is that which is in the service of others, among other criteria (Shulman, 2005). By considering how best to serve members of vulnerable populations, LAs were being asked to think about their work as members of a profession would.

In order to support LAs' understanding of what barriers parents may be facing, trainers across observations used an extended metaphor: LAs were invited to imagine planning a trip to Italy, including preparations such as learning the language, buying the right clothing, and studying maps and guides. Then, they were invited to imagine landing in Sweden instead of Italy and then asked to consider what that might feel like. For example, at one training session, the trainer described this mistake and the feeling of stepping off the plane as, "It's beautiful, but it's not what you were expecting. It can be a hard transition. This is similar to what parents of children with disabilities experience." The metaphor of travelling to an unintended (but still beautiful) location was used to help LAs understand what it could feel like to be a parent with a child who has been newly diagnosed with a disability.

After discussing this introductory metaphor, trainers would then ask LAs to consider the many aspects of child rearing that families must juggle, and then superimposed a list of aspects that parents of children with diagnosed disabilities must additionally consider. In training sessions, the first layer (e.g., self care) was displayed quickly before being obscured by the top layer. (Figure 2):
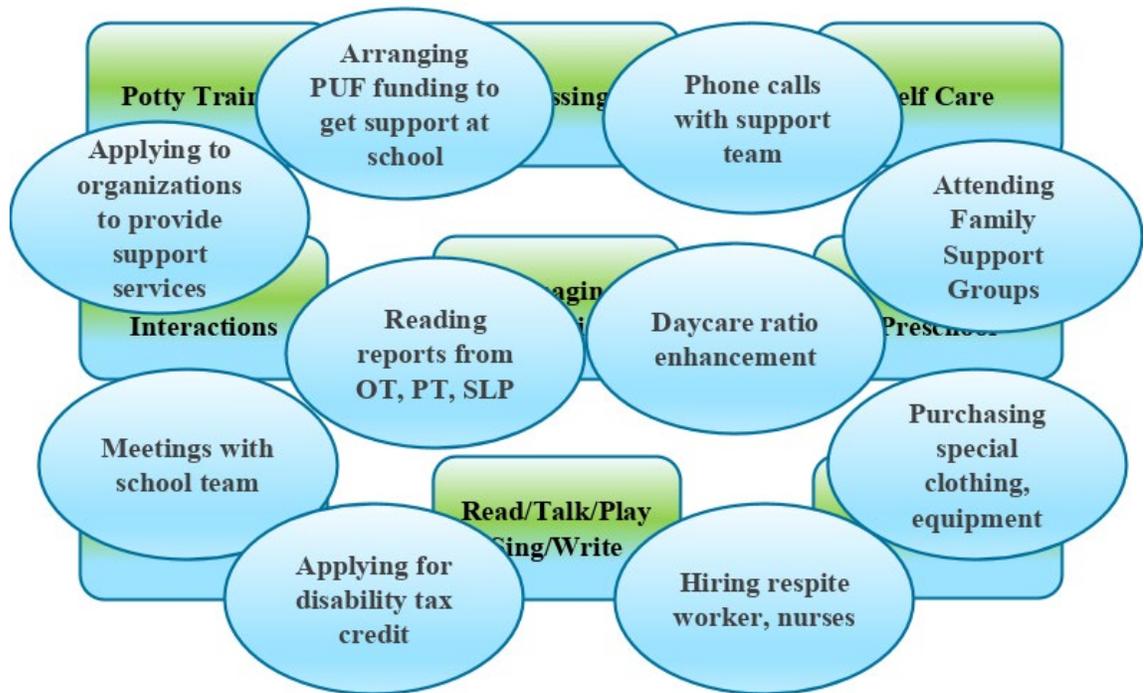
Figure 2: Slide from ECF 1 in which the time demands of parents whose children have diagnosed disabilities are superimposed on top of the time demands that all parents face.

These additional demands, such as seeking funding, meeting with specialists, and making special purchases, were framed as additional barriers that parents of children with diagnosed disabilities might face.

Because of these barriers, this session included slides that define an "inclusive" program as one that:

- Supports all children including children with disabilities, children from varying backgrounds and English learners.

- Provides adaptation and modifications to support the needs of all children.

- Embraces children with and without disabilities to participate in programs together.

- Provides a sense of belonging for all including dads and young parents.

LAs were also introduced to potential expectations that community members such as parents have of early literacy programs at LPL. Trainers provided a list of expectations, including that programs should be "fun," that families had "expectations of consistency throughout the branches," that the "program matches the description," and that the program is "led by trained staff." At one observation of this training session, the trainer explained that "people base their decision about returning on one experience," communicating that meeting these expectations is key for ensuring that participants enjoy the program and feel that returning would be worthwhile.

During this training session, trainers also discussed the philosophy that drives LPL. They described the "Community-Led Service Philosophy" of LPL as one in which the needs and desires of the community direct the programming and collections of the library. This service philosophy aligns with curricular frameworks and advocacy documents such as "Let's Talk About the Early Years" (2011) that center the need for community-building and relationships among community partners in the development of young children. Additionally, this community-driven approach also aligns with culturally responsive pedagogy theorists who advocate for the inclusion of children's home lives and knowledge in learning spaces (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll et al., 1992).

Trainers also linked this philosophy explicitly to the notions of being welcoming and inclusive. Here, slides for this portion explained that the service philosophy supports being welcoming and inclusive because it means that "staff understand the individuals and communities who are using LPL services and their needs." At one observation of this training session, a trainer explained that both the philosophy and the need to be welcoming and inclusive are "... about building relationships and reducing barriers, taking in information from the

community for all levels of staff." For trainers in this session, being welcoming and inclusive meant being aligned with the needs of the program participants, a core value and practice of the library.

Trainers also shared how "open dialogue," or sharing ideas with families, can lead to a successful program. Here, examples of what open dialogue might look like included "Letting people know that we are leading the program," telling families "that they are the expert on the child," "making the circle bigger if new people join the program," and "letting parents know about louder parts of the program so they can leave if they want." These ideas for open dialogue were construed as a way to make expectations clear to program participants, which would support the success of the program.

These remarks on open dialogue were then followed by a discussion of how to increase the "engagement" in programs, though the term "engagement" was not explicitly defined during observations. Here, trainers would remind LAs of how they might impact the engagement of participants, including statements such as, "your gestures make a difference - are you smiling?," "you might be tired but you need to bring the energy for 30-40 minutes," and "positively acknowledging their differences" as ways to increase the engagement of participants in programs.

In terms of unique content, ECF 1 shared LPL's conceptions of diversity and inclusion as they relate to early literacy programming. These ideas were then linked to the larger service philosophy of the library, which centered on the community's needs and wants. Below, I describe the unique content of the next training session.

ECF 2: Setting Yourself Up For Success.

The second training session, Setting Yourself Up For Success, took place over two and a half hours, offered every three months. Over the five observations I conducted of this session, this session had an average of 12 LAs participating, with one trainer.

At the beginning of this session, trainers introduced four "learning outcomes" through their slides:

1. Describe programming mental models from both our customers' and LPL's perspectives

2. Articulate how to set yourself up for a successful program

3. Describe room management techniques

4. Understand how to adapt and respond to the needs of the group

Although the idea of "mental models" was emphasized in the slides for this session, this term was not explicitly defined by trainers. During observations, it seemed that trainers were using this term to mean something akin to "expectations and assumptions." For example, after reading out the learning outcomes, trainers would ask LAs to list their "mental models" around programs and LAs would provide responses such as, "programs are good as long as they are fun," and "LPL programs are … of high quality." LAs were also asked to think about the "mental models" that parents may have around programs, and their responses included that "parents want to have things written down," and that "parents expect lessons" for their children, even though that is not what the library is providing.

This consideration of both LAs' and parents' mental models points to a conceptualization of LAs as professionals. This is because a discussion of LAs' mental models is a way in which they were prompted to reckon with their dispositions towards their work, an element of

professional competence (Kunter et al., 2013). Additionally, this metacognitive work of

considering one's own dispositions towards early literacy programming is an example of the

metacognition that educators require for optimal preparation (Bromme, 2001).

A major focus of this training session was on what LAs could do to prepare before their

first early literacy program. LAs were advised to "Shadow, Assist, and Connect" as a precursor

to creating and implementing their own programs, terms which will be described more below

(Figure 3).

Figure 3: Slide from ECF 2 used by trainers to encourage LAs to "shadow, assist," and "connect"
with their colleagues before engaging in an early literacy program.

In terms of shadowing, LAs were told to observe their co-workers, and, in the

PowerPoint slides, were given a list of questions to guide their observations that included:

How is the room set up? What rhymes and songs work best? What didn't work? How did

the programmer handle unexpected moments? How did the programmer interact with

families?... Are songs being taught slowly enough?... Are there smiles on the children's

faces, the adults' faces?... Have there been enough opportunities to move? How loud is

the programmer's voice? Does she change the volume throughout?

These questions reveal a view of LAs as professionals with the existing knowledge to know, for

instance, what "slowly enough" means for an early literacy song (Bromme, 2001; Kunter et al.,

2013).

Trainers described "assisting" as a more active version of shadowing, with assisting LAs

performing some of the program activities in another LA's program and then receiving feedback

from their peers. At this point, trainers explicitly told LAs to ask their managers to schedule them

into assisting a program.

Trainers emphasized the value of shadowing and assisting during training sessions,

saying things like, "shadowing can show you new things," such as new songs, rhymes, or books.

Similarly, a trainer also stated in an interview that, "there is value in having those opportunities

and learning from each other," indicating that shadowing and assisting were legitimate and

planned training processes.

Shadowing and assisting were also valued by LAs, especially newcomers. For example,

one LA said, "I think shadowing is what helped me a lot… watching them, observing…. Before

doing my first story time, I found it really helpful to shadow many more people." Another LA

described the benefits of watching a colleague enact programming by saying, "I remember I

really liked that because I was a brand new staff member at the time and it was so cool to see

how my colleagues did things and to see. Like, I was learning different things from them, how

they managed the room." Both of these LAs indicated specifically that shadowing was beneficial to them as new LAs.

Even those LAs who did not comment on their newcomer status appreciated shadowing and assisting. For example, one LA stated, "... some of my greatest learning has come from shadowing other staff. Not from sitting in courses, not from discussion round tables or documents that the ECF team puts out. It comes from watching other staff." For this LA, shadowing was considered more beneficial than the large-group training sessions, as they explicitly said, "not from sitting in courses," as a way to position shadowing as the more favorable method to learn about early literacy programming.

Despite being recommended in training sessions, LAs described shadowing and assisting as things that occurred outside of formal training. For example, one LA said that shadowing "might not happen during training," and instead was something that "might just be after" training ended.

Through the lens of situated cognition, the combination of shadowing and assisting can be seen as a way for LAs to use a cognitive apprenticeship approach to gradually increase the amount of responsibility they have in early literacy programming (Brown et al., 1989). At first, they are shadowing, or watching a more knowledgeable colleague model programming practices. Then, as assistants, they are able to try some of these programming practices with the more knowledgeable colleague present to observe and, if needed, step in.

It is apparent from the value placed on shadowing and assisting that these LAs desired embodied, situated training practices that included time to collaborate and consider the practice of early literacy programming. In other words, LAs desired training that included the hands-on,

authentic tasks seen in effective cognitive apprenticeships, and felt that large-group training structures did not provide them with access to those tasks (Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1991).

Trainers described the final step of connecting as the thoughtful questioning of co-workers, with one trainer directing LAs to ask questions such as, "What are your favorite storytime books?" of their peers. Throughout these options (shadow, assist, connect), LAs were explicitly encouraged to interact with and learn from their colleagues, with trainers expressing ideas like, "talk to your co-workers and learn from each other," in order to make clear the interactive learning expectation. Additionally, trainers explained that LAs were expected to seek out and ask for these opportunities, even though their managers and the availability of their co-workers may impact their ability to shadow, assist, or connect.

The positioning of LAs as a group that can support the training of its own members is a way in which LAs were treated as professionals in early literacy training at LPL, akin to other professional groups that work as self-governing bodies to educate future practitioners (Kunter et al., 2013; Shulman, 2005). Additionally, the kind of collaborative, collective participation advocated for in ECF 2 (shadow, assist, connect) has been identified as a feature of effective professional development for teachers (Wilson & Berne, 1999). The notion that social activities such as the shadowing, assisting, and connecting recommended here can lead to the production of and deepening of knowledge is also advocated for by situated cognition theorists (St. Julien, 1997).

From the slides and the trainers, LAs were also advised to plan their programs before implementing them. In order to plan programs, trainers told LAs to "take a look at sample plans" available on the LPL intranet. Additionally, trainers told LAs to "consider" a theme when planning and to make sure they had "all the elements" needed for their programs (e.g., books).

Trainers also told LAs to have "extra rhymes on hand" in case there is extra time that needs to be filled in a program.

The slides and trainers for ECF 2 also advocated for explicit practicing as a way to prepare for early literacy programs. When discussing practicing, all trainers encouraged LAs to practice delivering programs with their friends, families, and co-workers. During one observation of this training session, a trainer explained that they sing their program songs in the shower "to get the tune right" as a way to demonstrate what practicing might look like for some LAs. Additionally, another trainer suggested that LAs ask their managers to add a song or rhyme to each staff meeting as another way to practice for programs.

This session also introduced the idea of "sprinkles" which were, in the words of an LA at a training session, "quick pieces of takeaway knowledge." During one observation, a brief explanation that library cards are available for free was given as an example of a sprinkle. Trainers explained that pre-written sprinkles were available online and could be looked up. LAs were encouraged to include sprinkles throughout their programs as a way to share information with parents.

After discussing sprinkles, trainers would put up a slide with the word "Babies?" on it and an image of a baby dressed in a reindeer costume. Routinely, trainers would use this moment of conversation as a way to help LAs feel more at ease with babies in programs. As one trainer put it, "The message is that babies aren't scary," communicating that LAs do not need to fear babies.

Overall, the unique content of ECF 2 centered on preparing for and conducting one's first early literacy program, and including information designed to ease LAs into their roles as early literacy programmers. Below, I describe the content of the final training session, ECF 3.

ECF 3: Beyond the Basics.

The third training session, Beyond the Basics, took place over two and a half hours every three months. Over the five observations I conducted of this session, this session was the smallest of the three and had an average of seven LAs participating, with one trainer.

According to the trainers and slides for this session, there were three intended "learning outcomes":

1. Learn some alternative storytelling techniques beyond the book

2. Discover some ways to make your storytime more inclusive by adding visuals

3. Discover ways to add sound and movement activities in your storytime

As the learning outcomes indicate, the content of this training session focused on introducing LAs to alternative ways to share stories with program participants, going "beyond" books to consider puppet-based stories, songs, yoga-pose stories, fingerplays, draw-and-tell stories, cut-and-tell stories, fold-and-tell stories, string stories, clothesline stories, felt stories, and echo chants. All of these storytelling methods may involve the adaptation of existing stories and/or songs. Table 5, below, provides brief explanations for these terms, along with examples if they were provided in training.

Table 5

Storytelling methods shared in training and their definitions

Term	*Description*
Puppet-based stories	Stories told through the use of puppets instead of through a written storybook. These rely on the use of a script.
Songs	Stories told through a song, often with a repeating element (e.g., a chorus).
Yoga-pose stories	Stories told through a variety of yoga/body poses that correspond to different characters or landmarks in a story that the LA is narrating at

	the same time. Folktales and journey narratives should be used for these stories as the "repetition" and "linear sequence" of these kinds of narratives contribute to a "good" yoga-pose story.
Fingerplays	Stories in which the LA leads children through hand motions that correspond to different aspects of the story. These are often short and based on nursery rhymes.
Draw-and-tell stories	Stories that are sketched by the LA as they are narrating to children. Often, the elements that are sketched come together to create a single image at the end of the story that functions as a culmination to the story. For example, the story of Little Miss Muffet was presented as a potential draw-and-tell story, with the different elements of the story (e.g., the hill on which Miss Muffet lived) came together to make a spider at the end of the story. In this way, the story functions as a riddle that is solved with the final image.
Cut-and-tell stories	Similar to draw-and-tell stories, cut-and-tell stories are when LAs cut a single piece of paper as they narrate a story. The cut elements correspond to particular parts of the story and then, at the end, the paper is unfolded to reveal a surprise ending. For example, the story of The Chocolate Egg involves cutting a piece of paper to correspond to different parts of a child's journey to discover the creator of a mysterious egg. Each of these elements, such as the child walking around a lake, contributes to the final figure of a rabbit.
Fold-and-tell stories	Fold-and-tell stories are when LAs fold a piece of paper as they tell a story, and, as above, the final folded paper reveals the ending of the story. For example, The Mystery of Dog Mountain involves the LA folding a piece of paper to correspond to different elements of the story, such as into a triangle to represent the mountain. Then, the paper is folded and drawn on throughout the story, until it resembles a dog at the end of the story, revealing the origin of the mountain's name.
String stories	Stories that are told through the LA's manipulation of a loop of string, which become a recognizable figure at the end of the story.
Clothesline stories	Stories in which two-dimensional figures are attached to a clothesline visible to participants, and then moved on, off, or to different areas of the clothesline according to the narrative of the story.
Felt stories	Also called flannel stories, in which two-dimensional figures made from cloth are placed on felt or flannel boards and then moved off or to different areas of the board according to the narrative of the story.
Echo chants	Stories in which the LA leads children through a chanted story,

	pausing at the end of each line so that children can echo the line back as a group.

LAs were also given several documents at the end of this training session, including an LPL-made, 21-page book of resources such as songs, rhymes, possible books to use in programs, and a list of websites, books, apps, and DVDs for more ideas and early literacy research. The contents of the resource booklet for ECF 3 are described in table 6, below. In the table, the "Resource Type" (e.g., "Hello Songs") are as listed in the booklet, while the definitions are derived from the explanations of the resources as given in training. Except in the cases of Yoga Pose Stories and Movement Songs, definitions were not provided within the booklet.

Table 6

An overview of the resources listed in the Resource Booklet provided at ECF 3 training

Resource Type	*Number Provided*	*Definition*	*Features*
Hello Songs	7	Examples of songs to begin an early literacy program and welcome participants.	Lyrics were provided.
Hand Rhymes	7	Examples of short nursery rhymes with hand movements.	Both nursery rhymes and the accompanying hand movements were provided. It is not clear if or how hand rhymes differ from fingerplays.
Action Songs	4	Examples of songs with actions/movement.	Lyrics and actions were provided.
Transition Rhymes	3	Examples of rhymes designed to transition children from standing to sitting.	Rhymes and movements were provided.
Drums	3	Examples of song lyrics that reference percussion and are intended to be sung with drums.	Lyrics were provided.

Sticks	10	Examples of song lyrics with actions that can be played out with sticks.	Lyrics and tapping instructions were provided.
Lap Puppets	6	Examples of stories and songs that can be told with puppets.	For this section, no lyrics or scripts were given. Instead, titles (e.g., Three Little Pigs) were listed alone.
Yoga Pose Stories	None	Stories in which the LA leads children through a variety of yoga/body poses that correspond to different characters or landmarks in a story that the LA is narrating at the same time.	For this section, the values, benefits, and possible "inspirations" for this type of story were given, rather than examples. These will be discussed more below.
Body Pose Dictionary	40	Possible poses that can be used in yoga pose stories.	
Movement Songs	None	Provides rationales for combining music and movement.	May be the same method as "action" songs. This will be discussed more below.
Music Legends	2	Using symbols to represent actions or sounds, a map is drawn. The LA leads participants through the map and they make the appropriate action or sound as they reach each symbol.	
Interfacing Felt Story Construction	1	Instructions for creating a felt/flannel story.	
Books	24	List of storytelling books.	
Websites	4	List of storytelling websites.	
Apps	4	List of storytelling apps.	
DVDs	7	List of storytelling DVDs.	These DVDs were focused either on fingerplays or yoga for children.
Picture Books	21	List of picture books that can be used	This list includes the

for Movement		to direct children to move as the story is being told.	following note: "Read first together, then repeat as a movement story."
Yoga Resource Books	3	List of books that discuss yoga for children.	
Scripts	3	Scripts for a puppet show, echo chant, and story with a repeating singalong section.	

A review of the resource book revealed that the songs, rhymes, and chants were folk songs and nursery rhymes that primarily originated in the British Isles or the United States. Additionally, all materials and resources listed in the booklet were in English, with four of the 25 recommended books focusing on "multicultural" folktales told in English. Once again, there is the beginning of consideration of difference apparent in this training resource, as the inclusion of multicultural folktales signals that these trainers are imagining a potentially diverse audience for early literacy programs who might benefit from these stories. However, there is no indication of how these resources might be selected for programs with sensitivity to the experiences of children and families. Without the infrastructure in place to ensure that resources are a fit for participants, a truly responsive early literacy program is not possible (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008).

In addition to the booklet, LAs were provided with 13 handouts during the training session. Twelve of these were scripts for stories using the alternative methods discussed above, such as the script for the cut-and-tell story The Chocolate Egg, or lyrics and instructions for nursery rhymes. The remaining handout was a list of scenarios that could be used in the creation of fingerplays (e.g., "going skiing," "taking your dog for a walk").

Being scripts, lyrics, and instructions only, these handouts did not include information on the rationales for their inclusion, nor did they include information on which of their aspects made them a good choice for an early literacy program. Additionally, most of these handouts did not provide information on authorship: Only seven of these additional handouts had some kind of authorship associated with them, usually the names of authors of folktale collections. Three handouts were photocopied from books, but without any indication of their title or author(s). By providing only the scripts for these methods without any information on rationale or selection criteria, and without providing an avenue for seeking more information on the authors, an interested LA would not be able to use their discretion to choose what to include in their early literacy programs, nor would they be able to identify which elements of the methods are beneficial and therefore should remain if they were to, for example, make up their own fingerplay as was suggested in the ECF 3 training session. In other words, because there is no further information on these resources, an LA could only use these resources exactly as they are, in contrast to how the alternative storytelling methods were presented in training.

Overall, ECF 3 focused on ways to share narratives through means other than books, such as puppets and movement. Included with this exploration of alternative storytelling methods was a set of resources created by LPL trainers.

The preceding discussion focused on the unique aspects of ECF 1, 2, and 3 in terms of training content. Below, I describe the content that is shared between multiple training sessions.

Shared content

While each training session had a unique focus, each one had material that was shared with other sessions. Below, I describe that shared training content, beginning with a discussion of program plan formats as explained in training. Next, I describe training content related to

room and space considerations, then early literacy. Finally, this section ends with a discussion of the notion of consistency as communicated explicitly and implicitly in training sessions.

Program plan formats.

Having a clear program plan that is shared with participants was emphasized in both ECF 1 and ECF 2. At LPL, program plans were positioned as lesson plans for early literacy programs, incorporating varying amounts of information in different formats.

In ECF 1, having a plan that includes both images and words for each element of the program (such as an image of a child waving and the words "Hello Song" under the image) that is visible to participants at all times was suggested by trainers at each observation (Figure 4).

Figure 4: ECF 1 slide that depicts how an LA can share the program plan with participants using pictures and written words.

Trainers advised LAs to use the shared program plan to include explicit discussions of transitions during their programs. For example, one observed trainer said, "Transition rhymes help kids know that a transition is coming," when explaining the benefits of explicit discussion of transitions.

In ECF 2, trainers discussed different possible approaches to program plan formats. For example, in one observation of this training session, the trainer explained that they use "sheets with rhymes" - essentially, each rhyme used in the program written out on sheets of paper - as a way to "cue" them to the content and sequence of their program. The other possible option offered to LAs was to have "plans written out," with each element of the program explicitly described in sequence. LAs were also told about existing program plans that they could access on LPL's internal website. From observations, it was apparent that it was up to each LA to decide what kind of program plan format would work best for them.

Many LAs had positive responses to these discussions of program plan formats. For example, as one LA described it, "having the structures" for programs, or the discussion of program plan formats from ECF 2 that included what the LA described as, "the general components" was what "helped the most" in designing programming. LAs also incorporated the flexible mindset advocated for in training into their programs, such as how the ECF 2 topic of program plan formats made it clear that LAs could choose the format they wished. As one LA explained, "The training did help, talking about, like, the flexibility, that sometimes we do have to change things out. We want to read the crowd." This discussion of program plan formats that encouraged flexibility was immediately applicable to the design and implementation of literacy programs, and echoed the example-focused approach of the resources for librarians discussed in chapter two (e.g., Knoll, 2016; Rankin & Brock, 2015).

Additionally, LAs described their use of colleagues' program plans as enabling consistency from branch to branch, with early literacy programs following the same approximate format and containing some of the same content. For some LAs, the consistency that came with the use of existing program plans was helpful, with one LA saying,

> I think it just helps you too, to become more comfortable, especially if you've never done programming, or you've never come from a different system, or elsewhere you've had that experience, or previous training. It can be a little overwhelming, because you're having to learn all these new rhymes.

For this LA, using an existing program plan increased their level of comfort and was, overall, helpful. Later in this interview, this LA described their branch's approach to program planning as,

> When they do that program, they get to do whatever they want... generally we make up our own plans, and some staff might repeat something they've created or ask for another person's plan. But they can be as creative as they want.

For this LA, who was positive about using existing program plans, programming practices at their branch meant that this branch's LAs were the most able to create their own plans if they so desired. As will be discussed later, not all LAs had the same ability to create their own plans, based on differences between branches. In other words, this LA had the highest degree of professional freedom in early literacy programming, based on the community of practice of their branch, if they chose to exercise it.

Another LA who was positive about relying on existing plans said in an interview,

If they have something planned, great. Because all of a sudden if I have to plan a

program, it's like, "Do I have anything ready to go? Or do I have to quickly research?" So

those are just the most helpful ... If they have their stuff ready to go.... I step in easily.

For this LA, relying on existing plans was a way to ensure preparedness despite a lack of time. In

instances where they were asked with little warning to substitute for an LA, having an existing

plan was helpful and allowed them to "step in easily" for an early literacy program.

However, not all LAs had positive experiences in using program plans from the internal

website. For example, an LA who took a plan from the LPL intranet said, "… We have a few

program plans and so I just took one of those. And I felt really overwhelmed, immediately,

because it was full of a whole bunch of songs and rhymes that I had never heard of." Similarly,

another LA explained that their use of another person's plan did not go well, saying, "If I try to

follow a script, that was what somebody else wanted to do with this." For both of these LAs,

using these plans without being able to discuss them with a colleague was not as productive or

supportive as the use of plans as described by other LAs.

At LPL training, trainers described different possible approaches to program plan

formats. Individuals LAs were given the ability to choose the program plan format that they

preferred for their programs. In general, LAs found the application-focused nature of program

plans a helpful part of training and appreciated how accessing existing plans reinforced

consistency between programs. Those LAs with the freedom to create their own program in

particular appreciated the availability of existing program plans on LPL's internal website.

However, LAs who lacked a personal connection to the content of someone else's program plan

did not find their use productive.

Room and space considerations.

Both ECF 1 and ECF 2 communicated similar content around room and space considerations. The slides and trainers for both sessions suggested that having music playing before the program starts, having name tags available, takeaway materials such as handouts displayed on a table, program materials such as crayons, coloring pages, and storybooks available for early participants, and the programmer's materials (e.g., a duck toy) accessible on a table at the front of the room should be considered in the set up of a program space (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Slide from ECF 1 that displays a possible early literacy program room arrangement.

Early literacy content.

All three of the training sessions included content specific to early literacy. However, while the three sessions discussed similar early literacy content, ECF 3 also described some divergent approaches to supporting early literacy. Below, I first describe the shared content of training, and then contrast this information with some of that of ECF 3. Then, I describe how LAs responded to these sometimes conflicting notions of early literacy.

In early literacy training sessions at LPL, trainers discussed elements of oral language skills and how to support children in inclusive ways. In particular, trainers discussed how children may develop oral language skills through songs, even if they do not seem as though they are attentive during the program, and that songs must be introduced and sung slowly initially in order to be learnable. Similarly, books must be read aloud slowly during literacy programs. For example, at one observation of ECF 1, the trainer said that a "slower pace is best for reading out loud. It feels like you should speed up, but don't," as a way to suggest the need for slow reading during programs.

This session also emphasized the importance of repetition in oral language and literacy development, with a slide consisting of the phrase, "Repetition is the mother of all learning" repeated seven times. In one of the observed training sessions, a trainer elaborated on this slide by saying that LAs are "scaffolding learning through repetition, which means we're adding layers to the learning." Additionally, this included an invitation for LAs to change the lyrics of songs to other languages potentially spoken by program participants, based on their previous experiences or own language knowledge. At one observation, a trainer said that LAs "can't do the whole program in another language but… can change the lyrics," when describing the limits to using languages other than English in early literacy programs. While changing the language of lyrics

can be seen to respond to Ladson-Billings (1995) and Feinberg et al.'s (1998) arguments for considering how both cultural variations in communication and parental participation can impact learning in the library, once again this is a moment in which LAs are positioned as neutral: With programming existing largely in English (the language of the majority), incursions on the language of the program are being driven by the languages potentially spoken by program participants. While they were given the option, it is not clear from my observations how LAs could reasonably ascertain and plan for the languages spoken by program participants, especially given the drop-in nature of early literacy programs at LPL.

Similarly, in ECF 3, trainers told LAs that stories and songs are forms of narratives that children can learn. Positioning stories and songs in this way aligns with research on narrative skill development in young children, which has shown that exposure to decontextualized language such as narratives in stories is correlated to narrative skill development (Peterson et al., 1999). In observations of this session, trainers always emphasized the importance of repetitive narratives for early literacy, telling LAs to remember the "sequence" of stories and then change out characters while keeping the events of the story the same. For example, one trainer shared the story of Anansi the spider, a spider who stole food from several other animals in the jungle and was then stopped by a deer mouse, and then told LAs that they could change the story by choosing which animals and what kinds of food were involved, as long as the "structure" of the repetitive stealing remained the same. At each session, trainers also discussed how songs and flannels that focus on letters, such as the Bingo song in which the word "Bingo" is spelled out, can support children's developing letter recognition skills. This approach to letter recognition aligns with early literacy research on alphabet knowledge, as discussed in chapter two (Piasta & Wagner, 2010).

These sessions also included ways to encourage early literacy beyond storybook reading by emphasizing the need for visuals and tactile experiences in programs. For example, ECF 1 provided some ideas for ways to introduce narratives to children by using flannel stories, which are stories presented orally with one-dimensional felt characters on a board representing the characters and some of the objects, and having children act out stories. Similarly, in ECF 3, trainers explained that adding visuals made programs more "inclusive," and can increase "understanding" from English Language Learners and children with developmental delays. Trainers gave several options for what visuals could include, such as images, body poses, and flannel shapes. The use of multiple modes to share narratives aligns with early literacy research that demonstrated the value of oral activities in narrative skill building (Peterson et al., 1999).

Trainers also discussed how movement in programs, such as swaying, clapping, or using scarves, can be supportive for children. For example, one ECF 1 trainer explained that "Children learn patterns and motor skills through movement" and that "a good way to include newcomers is to move even if you don't know the words" when explaining that movement relates to children's later physical development and can be a way to inclusively support children.

Training sessions also provided LAs with ideas for resources they could use in early literacy program planning, such as general resources like Pinterest and YouTube, and more library-specific resources, such as Jbrary (a website made by two librarians in Western Canada), Storytime Ukelele (a website that gathers song chords for children's songs), Adventures in storytime (a children's librarian's blog), Felt Board Magic (a felt story blog and store), existing program plans available on LPL's intranet, and the storytime book collection created by LPL staff. During one observation of ECF 2, the trainer paused when discussing possible resources to ask LAs if they had any favorite resources. Here, LAs named Jbrary, the same website

mentioned by the trainer, and My Smart Hands by Laura Berg, an app for learning and practicing American Sign Language, as helpful resources.

Another aspect of training was a discussion around theming a program, or selecting all the elements of the program to match a particular theme, after it had been introduced as a planning consideration. In ECF 2, trainers gave the example of a picnic theme that included books such as *The Beastly Feast* and *National Geographic Kids' Ants*. Trainers followed this example by asking LAs who themes their programs. Typically, LAs would give a range of responses, saying, "Not yet, but I want to," "Sometimes," or "Usually." During one observation of this training session, a trainer responded to LAs who sometimes themed by saying, "You can choose. Personally, I don't like it. It feels restrictive… Not everything has to fall under a theme. Find what's best for you," implying that theming is not mandatory but instead can be at the discretion of the LA. Based on the range of responses given by LAs across training sessions and the singular trainer who discussed the idea of choice when theming, it appears that LAs can decide whether or not they wish to theme their early literacy programs, another example of LAs being given the space to exercise their professional competence as another professional might (Kunter et al., 2013).

In one instance of ECF 2, a trainer included a demonstration of how they read storybooks to young children, with examples of dialogic reading such as labelling illustrations and asking participants open-ended questions. After this demonstration, an LA stated that a previous training session had advised LAs not to "do commentary" (this LA's term for dialogic reading) as part of storybook reading, but that this demonstration had many examples of "commentary," and then asked the trainer "Which is it?" The trainer responded by saying that whether or not to "do commentary" was a big debate in early literacy and that there is "no right or wrong answer." This

question was not raised in other observations of the same training session. However, as indicated in the review of literature in chapter two, there is overwhelming evidence in favor of dialogic reading for children under the age of five. Moreover, there is no indication in the literature that dialogic reading has a negative impact on children's literacy skills.

This question about dialogic reading during programs and the trainer's decision not to explicitly judge the practice as good or bad led to an opening for LAs to make their own decisions about dialogic reading in their early literacy programs. This means that, following this training session, some LAs may have decided to include dialogic reading in their future programs, while others decided to exclude it. Because the decision was left up to individual LAs, LAs were given a level of agency that bolstered the professionalism of their roles - they were able to make programming decisions based on their professional judgement, which may or may not have aligned with current research-based practices. In other words, this question introduced some tensions between LPL's endorsed programming practices and each LA's views of early literacy.

The training sessions also directed LAs to include manipulatives such as "puppets, balls, and books," both before and during programs. LAs were also given ideas for rhymes and songs they could include in their programs, such as The Grand Old Duke of York, in order to support the development of children's oral language skills such as phonological awareness (Lawhon & Cobb, 2002).

As described above, ECF 3 also included content related to "alternative" storytelling methods, or stories told without the use of a storybook. This information was presented through demonstrations and lists, with some mentions of the benefits or rationales for including these

components in an early literacy program. For example, ECF 3 trainers discussed the potential

benefits of fingerplays (Figure 6):

Finger/Hand Plays-Mini Stories

Learning to tell a story without a book develops these skills:

- **Narrative Sequencing**
- **Creativity and Imagination**
- **Fine and Gross Motor**
- **Pattern Recognition**

Figure 6: Slide from ECF 3 that outlines the skills developed through finger/hand plays.

While this slide does articulate some of the demonstrated benefits of fingerplays, such as

how they may contribute to the development narrative skills in young children (Peterson et al.,

1999), these benefits are listed as being made available through "learning to tell a story" in the

absence of a book. That skills such as the understanding of narrative and pattern recognition are

positioned as coming about through the absence of a book not only stands in contrast with both

current research on early literacy (as discussed in chapter two) and the information shared in

ECF 1 and 2, but it also does not provide a satisfactory argument for the inclusion of fingerplays

specifically. If the absence of a book is all that is required for the development of narrative,

creativity and imagination, fine and gross motor, and pattern recognition skills, then LAs have no

reason to choose a fingerplay over any other type of alternative storytelling method.

Additionally, it is not clear from where this list of benefits derived since there were no clear citations on this page or elsewhere in the slide deck, so LAs cannot seek out further information about this technique. The intention, then, of this discussion of fingerplays was not to provide LAs with criteria for choosing storytelling methods when planning early literacy programs, nor was it to support them in building their own criteria. Instead, fingerplays were presented as an alternative storytelling method without individual benefits. In other words, this slide indicates that LAs were not actually positioned to understand the benefits of different alternative storytelling methods through this training session, but instead were asked to consider alternatives simply because they are alternatives.

The handouts provided in ECF 3 also demonstrated a similar approach to explaining the benefits of particular methods. Among all the provided resources, only two had explicit explanations of early literacy benefits: a page which described yoga-pose stories and the page on movement songs. The page on yoga-pose stories included the following text:

VALUE AND BENEFITS:

- Develops sequence and narrative skills...

- The combination of words and movement is a multi-brain activity that develops and connects both sides of the brain increasing learning and retention.

- Movement develops gross motor skills, balance, strength, flexibility and space co-ordination...

- Creates awareness of environment and nature...

- Explores and expand the concept of multiple intelligences and the integration of learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

While some of the listed benefits correspond to current research, such as the link between dramatic play and the development of narrative skills in young children, other given benefits are not supported by the literature (such as the "combination of words and movement" being a "multi-brain activity that develops and connects both sides of the brain"), or are out-of-date beliefs (such as the need to attend to "learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)") (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2009). In addition, it is not clear from where this list of benefits derived; it is possible that the benefits are evidenced in the "Yoga Resource Books" listed elsewhere in this document, but there were no clear citations on this page so it is difficult to say definitively what the evidence base for the yoga-pose stories may be.

Additionally, the handout discussed both "Action Songs" and "Movement Songs" as separate entities. Action Songs were without a definition and songs such as the Hokey Pokey and A Tooty Ta. For these songs, lyrics were provided but no indication of the melody was given in the booklet. Movement Songs, on the other hand, were not illustrated with examples but were instead given the following rationales:

> The combination of music and movement is a multi-brain activity. Creating actions that represent the words provides a visual for the words and increases the memory of the song words.
>
> Connecting movement to music:...
>
> - Music helps "wire" the brain, supporting a higher level of thinking.
> - Music, movement and poses separate and slow down the words. Connecting the movement to movement increases the sequence memory.
> - Uses sounds, rhymes and melodies to develop language.
> - Develops children's ability to recognize patterns and sequences in songs and stories

- Develop their imagination, creativity, language skills and memory skills...

Once again, some of the details listed in this section on Movement Songs are aligned with current, evidence-based early literacy practices. For example, songs and rhymes have been linked to the development of phonological awareness in children, an important oral language skill (Lonigan et al., 2009). Additionally, the notion of a story being told in multiple modes (e.g., through songs and through movements) extends the definition of literacy used by LPL beyond written texts to one that more closely aligns with the New London Group's (1996) approach to literacy, a broader approach that values more kinds of texts. However, there is once again some terminology that is not supported in the current literature: the term "multi-brain," as seen in the Yoga Stories section, is used here again. There is also no supporting evidence for the links presented in this booklet between movement and memory, nor is there evidence for the link between music and its support of a "higher level of thinking." Moreover, there are no citations given on this page, so it is difficult to determine if these benefits and rationales are linked to evidence that is difficult to find.

When asked about their experiences with training, library assistants connected to much of the content described above, including several ideas that aligned with current literature on early literacy development. For example, LAs talked about how they learned about "the point" of reading to a young child, which is, as one LA explained,

> Building, you know, your relationship with the child, and even just associating… books with... warmth, and care, and affection. And how even early literacy isn't just reading books, but it's... singing songs, or like pointing to things, and objects, and narrating what you're doing every day. Just language in general.

Here, the LA connected to several ideas in research on early literacy, including how to support children's phonological awareness and comprehension of narratives through oral language, and the idea that literacy extends beyond print reading to encompass understanding multiple kinds of texts (Lonigan et al., 2009; New London Group, 1996; Peterson et al., 1999; Serafini & Gee, 2017). However, they did not connect to all of these ideas explicitly, such as phonological awareness, but instead named practices that aligned with this research, such as the use of songs in programs. LAs also named demonstrations of songs, rhymes, and storybook reading as content that they took away from training.

Overall, LAs recalled learning about early literacy practices that they could incorporate into programs. It is interesting to note that considerations of diversity and the need for inclusion as discussed in ECF 1 were absent from LAs' recollections of early literacy training training, which may indicate that LAs placed more importance on the early literacy practices discussed in training rather than these more community-focused elements.

LAs' responses to early literacy content were related to their educational and career backgrounds. In general, through both the survey and interviews, the educational backgrounds of interviewed LAs fell into two camps: most people had either a liberal arts background, having studied things like Sociology, or had a professional degree in Education. Among the LAs with the liberal arts backgrounds, there was little consensus on how this type of education was used in early literacy programming. For example, one interviewed LA spoke of their Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, and said, "... it can be kind of broad," so this degree did not "directly" apply to literacy programming work. Similarly, an LA with a background in History said in an interview, "None of my education has anything to do with anything I do at the library…. The only thing my education lets me do is have this job." However, someone else said of their

Psychology degree that knowing about things like, "the different stages of development in babies and toddlers," was helpful for early literacy programming. Similarly, survey respondents indicated potential ties from their educational backgrounds that they felt aligned with their work as LAs:

> I believed my literature degree would play nicely into the demands of readers' advisory as well. I also have a background in music and incorporate my ukulele and singing as well as simple music theory when delivering programs to undergird early literacy skills in young families.

Overall, there was some disagreement about liberal arts degrees and their potential applications to early literacy programming.

The six LAs with some coursework in Education, however, had much more consensus around the use of their degrees in the early literacy programming world and found explicit connections between their backgrounds and the early literacy content shared in training. For example, one LA with a Music Education degree was able to point to the singing and rhythm aspects of their programming as an example of how their educational background came into play. Even those LAs who did not feel that their coursework in Education was useful still felt like their student teaching practicum experiences were helpful. For example, one LA said, "I learned a lot as a student teacher, for sure… [In] my first round of student teaching I had a phenomenal teacher…. I learned a lot from her." Overall, those with post-secondary schooling in Education - a profession - felt that it was applicable to early literacy programming.

While this is a small group, it is worth recognizing the universality of these perceived contributions of preparation in the field of Education: even those who did not complete their Education degrees or appreciate their coursework still found their educational backgrounds

helpful. This universal acknowledgement seems reasonable given the similarities between the work of a teacher and early literacy programming, but it also stands in contrast to the group of LAs with liberal arts backgrounds.

Similarly, in survey responses and in interviews, the three LAs who had work experience as classroom teachers, though few in number, formed a cohesive group who felt that their previous work experiences were connected to the early literacy content shared in training and therefore were immediately applicable to the library environment. As one former kindergarten teacher described in an interview, the information shared in training and their subsequent experiences working as an LA, "wasn't anything really new to me… Like I had done a lot of storytelling and puppet stuff and like interactive kind of story time." Later, the same former teacher described how their previous work as an educator in an English immersion program was not only similar in terms of content - their program was one where, "we did a lot of literacy stuff, so learning letters and singing songs and rhyming and all that kind of stuff we do here in our programming" - but was also where they increased their comfort level with children, since "when [they] started teaching, [they] didn't like little kids…. So [they] just got a lot more comfortable with small kids," through teaching.

Additionally, the other former elementary teacher interviewed said,

Having taught grade two Spanish bilingual I think puts me in a really good early literacy position because the school I was teaching at, 80% of my kids were not from Spanish backgrounds. So when I read them a story in Spanish, I couldn't just sit there and read a story because they wouldn't get it and I would not be teaching them comprehension strategies…. I think that has made me a really good early literacy presenter.

Later in the same interview, this former teacher said, "I think having taught division one [Kindergarten through Grade 3], I was very comfortable with rhymes and fingerplays…. So I had some stuff to draw upon when I was planning my programs." For both of these former teachers, several aspects of previous educational work were supportive of their early literacy programming at LPL. Firstly, the former kindergarten teacher who led students in "learning letters and singing songs and rhyming" explicitly stated that those activities were the same as "that kind of stuff we do here" at LPL. Additionally, these practices align with current research-based approaches to early literacy: teaching young children about letters is a demonstrated method to support the development of alphabet knowledge and print concepts in children, while explicit attention to rhyming has been linked to supporting increased phonological awareness in children (Lonigan et al., 2009). Additionally, for the former elementary teacher, the statement that "I couldn't just sit there and read a story because they wouldn't get it and I would not be teaching them comprehension strategies" indicates an awareness of the differing comprehension levels of students. This awareness led to a particular kind of interaction with students - "I would have to think of ways to help them with their comprehension" - was also helpful in their work at LPL: a consideration of not only the students themselves but also the books that lend themselves well to an early literacy program, those with "something where there's some audience participation." This kind of "audience participation" reading is aligned with current research-based approaches to early literacy. In particular, "audience participation" in early literacy programs aligns with research that demonstrates that dialogic reading techniques that ask children to actively participate when being read to are supportive of their later literacy development (Wasik, 2010). Moreover, with the former elementary teacher, we once again see that knowledge of rhymes is viewed as helpful in early literacy programming. This former teacher also described their

knowledge of fingerplays as helpful, which is an aspect of early literacy programming that aligns with current research on early literacy, as fingerplays and other activities that promote oral language play are supportive of the development of narrative skills in young children (Lonigan et al., 2009).

The three former teachers were very aware of these connections, as they also described how their teaching experience lent them "credibility," when sharing early literacy information with parents, and gave them confidence when preparing early literacy programs. For example, one LA described in an interview their state of mind as they prepared for their first-ever literacy program as, "I remember thinking, … 'Oh, man, after five years of teaching, this is gonna be a cinch.'" Similarly, another LA wrote in a survey response: "I believe I was hired because of my teaching background which helped me demonstrate confidence in all sorts of programming situations from babies to adults." Another LA saw the roles of a teacher and LA as being so similar that they described working in a library as, "the next logical step" for their career after deciding to leave teaching and described how they use their teaching background at LPL:

> Also, I feel like I can speak with a lot of confidence in programming and when helping customers on the floor here because I was a teacher. Immediately people assign some legitimacy to what I'm saying…. Most of the people here know that I was a teacher, but I'll say things like, this is an early literacy skill learning about the direction of text and how to hold a book.... I [also] love helping people find books for their kids. I draw upon a lot of teaching background from that, and people really like that I was a teacher.

For this former elementary teacher, leaning on their professional background as a teacher gave them "confidence" in their early literacy programming work and made them feel as though others saw their work and knowledge as "legitimate." For these LAs who were classroom

teachers, their professional experiences before coming to LPL provided them with both confidence and trustworthiness that they attributed to helping them be successful in early literacy programming. Overall, former teachers felt that their previous teaching experiences had considerable direct overlap with the early literacy content of LPL training, and the above comparison with the research discussed in the literature review demonstrates that these former teachers come to the library with considerable existing knowledge and confidence that is relevant to their roles as early literacy programmers.

In general, LAs with liberal arts educations and/or work histories outside the field of Education had differing opinions about the values of these experiences, while those with coursework related to and/or experience as educators pointed to specific, concrete transferable ideas and experiences that connected to the early literacy content of training and informed their work as library assistants.

Across all three training sessions, early literacy content focused on oral language skills and how they may be developed in library programming through storybook reading, songs, and "alternative" methods such as fingerplays. At times, the description of the benefits of such methods corresponded to current early literacy research, while at other times it did not. LAs' responses to this training content were related to their educational and work backgrounds. In particular, LAs whose backgrounds related to Education found concrete connections between these backgrounds and early literacy content, and they derived legitimacy and confidence from those connections.

Consistency.

As has been indicated through the discussion of training content above, each of the training sessions included information and expectations around consistency between early

literacy programs. However, the expectations communicated in these training sessions differed from one another, and sometimes differed within training sessions, as I discuss below. These differences led to inconsistencies in how LAs responded to these aspects of training.

In ECF 1, both the learner outcomes and the community-led service philosophy made explicit the expectation that LAs should be consistent in their early literacy programming from branch to branch across LPL. Beginning with the very first learner outcome, "Understand LPL's programming expectations," trainers explained that LPL management desired consistency as families who attend early literacy programs expect the same kinds of content from branch to branch. From the point of view of trainers, this consistency could be achieved through adherence to the ideas and resources presented in training (i.e., the domain of the LA community). Similarly, the community-led service philosophy was used to make explicit expectations for consistency in early literacy programs. In observations of this session, discussions of the needs of the customer (in this case, the families attending early literacy programming) often related to an expectation of seeing the same or similar programming no matter which branch was being visited. Similarly, in ECF 2, program plans were described as a way to increase consistency between programs, as having a shared predetermined set of rhymes, storybooks, songs, and other program elements would ensure that program participants would experience the same elements from branch to branch.

Through this emphasis on consistency, trainers communicated that the individual knowledge and skill set of each LA was not as important to LPL and program participants as was their ability to provide a consistent experience. As previously discussed in my literature review, professional work requires the use of and interaction between knowledge and metacognition to drive complex work (Bromme, 2001; Kunter et al., 2013; Shulman, 1998). By lessening the need

for these elements by focusing on having the same or similar programs in place across the library, the individual potential contributions of LAs as professionals were downplayed as the need for consistency was underlined.

However, in some ways observed in ECF 2 and in all observations of ECF 3, consistency was positioned differently than the above. For example, LAs were told in ECF 2 that they were able to decide when they would shadow, assist, and connect as part of their early literacy training. Similarly, one observation of ECF 2 described above included an endorsement from the trainer that LAs could "choose" whether or not to theme their programs, while a trainer in another observation of that session said that there is "no right or wrong answer" to the question of whether LAs should include dialogic reading in their programs. In these ways, LAs were positioned to make their own programming decisions independently, rather than conforming to given expectations about content or approach.

Similarly, in ECF 3, LAs were encouraged to adapt or adopt certain practices (e.g., the use of a fingerplay) to their own experiences or comfort levels (e.g., making up their own fingerplay based on a theme). While they were still expected to adhere to the early literacy approaches shared through the training session, LAs were told explicitly where and how they were allowed to deviate from these approaches, and were able to practice doing so through authentic tasks (e.g., preparing a fingerplay). This stands in contrast to the ways in which consistency was discussed in ECF 1 and some observations of ECF 2, where adults' expectations for similarities between programs was considered paramount to judging the success of a program. In ECF 3, LAs were positioned as professionals who can use their judgement to make programming decisions, extending the agency inadvertently provided to some LAs in some versions of ECF 2 (e.g., through the notion that LAs should decide when to shadow, assist, and

connect as part of their early literacy program training). Ultimately, however, LAs were given little leeway in terms of the expected content of their early literacy programs - choosing the theme of a fingerplay is, after all, not as agentive a practice as choosing whether or not to include a fingerplay at all. The ways in which consistency was discussed in ECF 3 indicates, then, that agency for LAs was not a goal for this training session.

Compounding these complexities, differences in branch-based communities and confusion around the levels of freedom and flexibility accorded to LAs led to a lack of consistency in early literacy programming. Depending on the branch, LAs were expected to share the same program plans with one another in different ways. In some branches, all LAs were expected to use the same program plan for a designated period of period of time (such as six weeks) so that participants experienced the same program content six times. At other branches, LAs were expected share the same format for their plan (e.g., begin with a song, then a rhyme, etc. and have this information captured in the same template), but they had the ability to change elements of it (such as which song is being sung first). Still others could create their own individual program when they wanted, and could access existing plans to supplement their own. Because each branch had a different approach to planning early literacy programs, the content of early literacy programs likely varied considerably from branch to branch based on the parameters set by individual managers around program planning.

Through interviews, library assistants expressed a variety of views around their understandings of consistency, freedom, and professionalism in their early literacy training and programming. In general, LAs had internalized expectations around consistency and felt that it informed much of their work as early literacy programmers. For example, when discussing programming with a small group of participants, one LA said,

> I know that it's easy to say, "Oh. There's just a few people. We'll just water it down a bit,"
>
> kind of thing, but I think our customers like that they get the same thing, the same format
>
> at least, consistently.

For this LA, the expectation of being consistent had been internalized and outweighed changing

the program to potentially better fit the needs of the LA or the participants. Similarly, another LA

reported that they do not often pilot new ideas, saying,

> Not so much [piloting] in the early literacy 'cause we find most parents really want that
>
> [same] program, that's the main - that they're looking for so we do that program. And we
>
> try to match what the branches do pretty closely so it's a uniformed experience.

In the same vein, another LA described the benefits of a high degree of consistency in

programming as,

> The parents are not overwhelmed having to learn a new plan. And if the kids ... if they're
>
> little, it helps them, because … there's a comfort there. They know what's going to be
>
> happening. They've come to the program repeatedly.

Similarly, another LA described what makes a strong program as,

> As long as you adhere to all the tenants in the script and you cover 95% of the script in
>
> the time that you have, then I would say the youth librarians that are the guardians of said
>
> program, that they would be satisfied with your performance.

For this LA, the "script" is the shared program plan, which includes the elements of the early

literacy program (e.g., songs, rhymes), their order, and pre-composed phrases to share with

participants about ideas like the necessity of repetition for building early literacy skills. Along

the same lines, another LA described participants' reactions to consistency by saying, "I think

our customers like that they get the same thing, the same format at least, consistently." For this

LA in particular and in general, LAs understood why trainers advocated for consistency - to improve the ability of parents and children to have a "uniformed experience" in their early literacy program - and strove towards it in their programming. These LAs felt they were meeting the needs of the families who attended programming, and as such were successful programmers.

Conversely, some LAs expressed negativity or caution around consistency in programming and the ways in which consistency could be achieved. For example, one LA described how using program plans developed by others can be detrimental to programs by saying,

> If I'm just being a robot following this, okay, zero engagement…. Because you're constantly referring back to this piece of paper sitting beside you, our script is this fucking big [indicates a thick stack of paper with their thumb and index finger], because it's got everything in it, and you're just flipping one page to the next, right? You're constantly taking your attention away from the person… how engaged am I going to be if I'm constantly doing that?

Here, the term "robot" is used to describe consistency at LPL. For this LA, relying on an existing program plan, or "script" in the words of this LA, leads to a decline in engagement amongst program participants. Unlike the LA quoted above who was positive about using existing program plans, this LA worked at a branch that did not allow LAs to create their own programs. Instead, these LAs were using programs that were created by small groups of LAs from their branch and then shared with all other LAs in that branch, with the same program plan being reused for several weeks or months. Although it is a comparison of only two LAs, it is still interesting to note that the LA with increased professional freedom had a relatively positive view

of a consistency-enhancing device, while the LA with limited professional freedom was relatively negative about the topic.

This LA went on to describe the changes they had experienced over years of working at LPL:

> With the move to [my current branch], it has become very codified, very rigid and you are expected to follow a script whereas in days passed, you had a structure, a basic structure you followed but you had more flexibility to morph…. it's not your program. You can't make it your own program. You are expected to robotically follow the script.

For this LA, consistency was a constraint that made it so programs were no longer theirs. This decreasing ownership over programs outweighed the potential benefits that consistency might bring.

> Another LA discussed the pros and cons of using existing program plans, saying,
> On the one hand, it's good… for people who are just learning. It's good for people who don't have time to plan a program. It's good if somebody gets sick and there's a last-minute emergency.... It's good for those things. However, my fear is that sometimes by doing all these programs ahead of time, it alleviates some work, but it also leaves the more tedious parts of library work for people to do as opposed to giving them that intellectual and creative work to do as well…. In the name of consistency we've taken away some of that creativity and autonomy from people that causes them to enjoy their jobs and remain in their jobs for a long time.

For this LA, the expectation of using an existing program plan was seen as positive for new LAs or those with limited planning time. However, these potential benefits were outweighed by the loss of the "intellectual and creative" work and "autonomy" that is seen as part of being an LA.

In other words, for this LA, using existing program plans signalled a loss of professional freedom for LAs in general.

Similarly, another LA who expressed doubt around the benefits of consistency in programs from branch to branch used their previous work experience as a teacher to locate their hesitations, saying,

> Maybe we need to tell people [that] different people are running different programs. Like [LPL] is not staffed by robots. Right? Even when I left teaching, there's the same tension. I taught on a big team of grade five teachers…. We all had to do the same thing. I remember one time I had to tell a teacher like,.... I feel very passionate about writing instruction, and I said to her, I am not doing that assessment with my kids.... That goes against everything I know and everything I hold dear…. It was like a huge fight. I remember feeling very frustrated that I'm such a different person than her. Why does my classroom have to look the same as hers? Why?

This former teacher has described the relationship between consistency in programming and considering the professional autonomy of LAs with the word "tension," indicating that it is an unresolved and frustrating relationship. The anecdote around writing instruction illustrates how, previously, this LA had to rely on both their disposition towards literacy instruction ("I feel very passionate about writing instruction") and their knowledge of literacy instruction ("I am not doing that assessment with my kids…. That goes against everything I know and everything I hold dear.") in order to push back against what they viewed as a problematic assessment practice. Finally, this former teacher also bookended this story with two statements, "[LPL] is not staffed by robots," and "I remember feeling very frustrated that I'm such a different person than her. Why does my classroom have to look the same as hers?," which reveal that being

viewed as an individual was very important to this LA. For these LAs, the increasing expectation of consistency constrained them from being able to fully "own" their early literacy programming practices, and they valued this ownership over the possible benefits of consistency in programming.

Finally, another LA discussed their previous employment at a different library positively due to a sense of increased freedom: "That's something I liked a little more about [previous library].... You were more free to do your own thing..." This LA followed this by saying, "...which maybe wasn't the best option for… consistent story time depending on... whichever staff person was doing it it would be different," indicating that they recognized that an increase in freedom or professional autonomy meant a decrease in consistency. For this LA and the others with negative views towards consistency, the expectation to enact consistent programs across LPL was viewed as a frustrating constraint that inhibited the agentive decisions that could empower LAs to feel like professional individuals in their workplace.

In addition to these branch-based planning differences and the influence of previous employment, understandings of how much autonomy LAs had also varied amongst them. For example, an LA discussed how they learned in a training session that each LA can "make [the program] your own" when creating programs. However, some of these agentifying moves on the part of the trainers were confusing to LAs. In particular, the idea of "theming," or creating a literacy program in which all the elements related to a particular theme such as a holiday or animal, was discussed in training with the messaging that LAs could decide whether or not they wished to theme their programs. In response, LAs were unclear about the importance of this aspect of program creation upon completing training. For example, one LA said, "I remember they talked about doing a theme, like doing bears, like a bear book, and then a bear rhyme, so I

thought they had to be themed at first, but really they don't have to be." For this LA, whether or not to theme their early literacy program was a source of confusion. Similarly, a different LA said,

> When I first got to [LPL], ...there was a little bit of a push for, as far as I understood it from my training, from the online [ECF] course was that: your programs should have a theme. So, this is a food theme, this is a dinosaur theme, and even when I arrived at [this branch], it was like parts of the body theme. And that was, I think within a couple of months of me arriving at [this branch] that was quickly abandoned because there just wasn't enough material to make things about themes.

For both of these LAs, whether or not to theme their early literacy programs was something that was brought up in training but was ultimately not an essential part of an early literacy program, and could be dropped. While both came to the conclusion that they could do without themes, the first LA said, "I thought they had to be themed at first," indicating some confusion about whether they had the autonomy to do without theming.

> The second LA went on to relate theming to their previous work as an elementary teacher who had a mentor teacher during their first few years in the classroom, saying,

> And ... something I remember from my time [with a mentor teacher] was his comment that at the first school I was at they did… for Spanish Language Arts, a lot of theme based stuff. And he said to me, he's like, 'This is a very old way of teaching.' Having themes or thematic units, he's like, 'This is not how teaching works anymore. These people who created these things and you're gonna have to do them, but I just want you to know that's not how teaching works.'

For this LA, the decision to do without theming was partly informed by their previous membership in a classroom teacher community and their knowledge of teaching. Even though this LA was relying on the authority of a previous mentor teacher, they exercised their ability to choose whether to theme their program, demonstrating a conceptualization of early literacy programming as a space where LAs had the agency to make decisions and, as such, were doing professional work (McClain et al., 2009). However, because of the structure of early literacy training classes, it was not possible for this LA to share this knowledge with other LAs in a formal way, ultimately curtailing the professional actions of this LA in particular and leading to a lack of agency amongst LAs in general.

Overall, the notion of the same or similar programming between branches was an idea discussed in all three training sessions. At times, trainers advocated for increased consistency between programs and, at other times, signaled that LAs had some professional autonomy when planning programs. LAs demonstrated an understanding of the expectations around consistency in their work as early literacy programmers. However, each branch at LPL had a different approach to maintaining consistency, and LAs had a variety of responses to these expectations. These factors led to the potential for inconsistent early literacy programs throughout LPL and a loss of professional freedom that cultivated feelings of frustration in some LAs.

How is early literacy training realized?

While the analysis above illuminates the content of early literacy training at LPL, consideration of how early literacy training is realized is needed in order to fully describe this case. This is because the elements of how training is realized - not simply how trainers impart information, but also how trainers are selected, how training is planned, and the role of LAs in training - contributed to the creation and maintenance of communities of practice at LPL.

Below, I describe how early literacy training is realized at LPL. First, I begin by discussing how training is planned, including how trainers are identified and how they prepare. Next, I describe each of the three main training sessions in turn, explaining the unique aspects of how they proceeded in my observations. This section then ends with descriptions of the aspects of training activities that were common to more than one session. Throughout, I supplement these descriptions with document, survey, and interview data in order to capture LA and trainer responses.

Trainer preparation and planning.

Below, I describe how the realization of early literacy training at LPL began with the selection of trainers by a three-person Learning & Development team, who then supported trainers in creating training content. With content created and reviewed, trainers prepared individually to lead training. Included throughout this description are excerpts from interviews with trainers and members of the L & D team, in order to consider how these facets of trainer preparation and planning may relate to the creation and maintenance of communities of practice at LPL.

The three members of the L & D team were the L & D manager, Jaime, an L & D specialist, Ashley, and a consultant from Human Resources. For this study, both Jaime and Ashley were interviewed, as they had central roles in the training and selection process. The HR consultant was not interviewed as they had a smaller, more logistical role rather than a decision-making role on the Learning and Development team.

For early literacy training development, the L & D team worked with members of a committee of librarians and LAs whose focus was on implementing the early childhood literacy

aspect of LPL's business and strategic plans, called the Early Childhood and Family (ECF) team. In addition, the trainers themselves were often members of the ECF team, chosen by Jaime.

In an interview, Ashley described the criteria for choosing trainers as:

They need to have good presentation skills, like time management and organization. They need to be able to stay on track because there is usually quite a specific amount of content that we need to cover. Yeah,... and having some skills facilitating in the past is obviously helpful as well. Having been delivering a specific program… or having some sort of experience with that.

They also explained that the process for identifying trainers was "informal" and relied on them "being familiar with people." Once a trainer was identified, they became part of a group of trainers who could be called upon to deliver training once per month within the organization. Then, when the L & D team had scheduled training sessions, the dates were given to the ECF team chair, who was "responsible for attaching trainers to it," as explained by Jaime.

In the words of Jaime, the L & D manager, this system for identifying trainers had the disadvantage of privileging well connected individuals: "We might miss out on people who are good trainers that we've just never made connection with in the organization." While the criteria for choosing trainers include experience with the subject of training, which would include many LAs, the informal reliance on well known library staff indicates that long-term, permanent staff were more likely to be selected as trainers than newer and/or temporary staff. From an organizational point of view, this makes sense, as long-term, permanent staff would arguably have more knowledge of early literacy programs and a deeper understanding of the library's structure and norms than newer staff would. However, this aspect of trainer selection does indicate that knowledge of early literacy programming is not adequate for becoming a trainer.

Additionally, selecting trainers in this way begins to create a separation between the long-term, permanent staff that are selected as trainers and the newer, potentially temporary staff that are not. Both of these elements have implications for how training is received and valued by LAs, ideas which will be expanded upon below.

Additionally, it may be selecting trainers who are long-term, permanent staff leads to an over-representation of particular groups. For example, there may be many more white, female trainers than trainers from other ethnic and/or gender groups, given that they are more likely to be long-term, permanent library staff (American Library Association, 2011). Indeed, the majority of trainers and LAs that I observed and interviewed presented as white and female, and all but one survey respondent who responded to questions around ethnicity identified as Caucasian. However, as I was unable to collect detailed data relevant to these issues for trainers, such an interpretation is outside the scope of this dissertation.

While the L & D team selected trainers, some trainers deliberately positioned themselves or advocated to be considered for the role. These decisions to become trainers influenced the features of training and impacted the creation of communities within LPL. In interviews, some trainers described the factors that led them to pursue becoming trainers, which began with a decision to join the ECF team. For example, one trainer explained that their return from a parental leave coincided with a need for additional trainers:

> So they had an opening…. As a community librarian, I like to be part of at least one team because it's good for professional development, you get to work on a lot of projects. So I wasn't on a team yet because I'd just come back from my first maternity leave, and I was looking to join a team. And I have an interest in early literacy. That's one of my

specializations I guess. So I applied and they were looking for a librarian so it worked out.

For this trainer, a mix of factors led to becoming part of the ECF team and, through this, becoming a trainer. Specifically, this trainer expressed a desire to increase their professional competence by saying "I like to be part of at least one team because it's good for professional development." This indicates that, for this trainer, the trainer role is one that relies on and expands one's status as a professional at LPL. Additionally, this trainer was also interested in new or different kinds of project-based work, explaining that "you get to work on a lot of projects" by being on the ECF team. Finally, this trainer also had an interest in early literacy, saying "And I have an interest in early literacy. That's one of my specializations I guess." Importantly, having the timing of these other factors correspond to the L & D team's search for new trainers made it so that this trainer's desire to join "worked out."

None of the trainers discussed a desire to pursue the role of an educator as part of being a member of the trainer community. For these trainers, training was not primarily about teaching LAs but rather was about opportunities for new, professionalizing experiences that aligned with a topic they were interested in.

Over the course of this study, there were approximately ten trainers at LPL, with varying degrees of training experience. They were, for the most part, full-time, permanent librarians, although at least one trainer was a full-time, permanent library assistant. In interviews with trainers, this case of an LA being a trainer was presented as an anomaly, with one trainer saying,

> The LAs don't do it. Actually I shouldn't say that. There was an LA. I think it depends if the librarians aren't available to do it then they'll ask an LA. But I think typically it goes to the librarians.

Indeed, in interviews, the trainer who was an LA rather than a librarian turned out to be a current library student, and was on track to receive an MLIS degree roughly six months post-interview. Therefore, the L & D team's decision of who becomes trainers largely favored librarians, although the L & D team was not explicit about this in interviews. This preference for librarians is one that makes sense in the context of the public library: Librarians came to the library with a particular kind of educational background, the MLIS degree, which means they came with a known and definable knowledge base. Librarians were also more likely to have permanent, full-time positions than library assistants, giving them more opportunities to build their knowledge of early literacy on-site. Additionally, librarians were seen as above library assistants in the organizational hierarchy of the library. Given these factors, it is reasonable that librarians were considered first when choosing early literacy program trainers.

With trainers selected, the L & D team then supported trainers in "the development of content… the adult learning piece… [and] then the logistical piece," in the words of the L & D manager. With this support from the L & D team, trainers created the content for early literacy training at LPL, with their focus and approach changing to meet what they perceived to be the needs of LAs over the last decade. For example, one trainer described their involvement in creating training content in this way:

> And it was shortly afterwards that they decided to revamp all of our training again, so then I was involved in writing it up and that made me a lot more confident about training. It's easier when you are sort of the one developing what it's gonna look like.... That even increased my confidence.

For this trainer, being part of the team who created training content was a source of "confidence" in their training ability. In this way, creating training content provided this trainer with a sense of legitimacy in their role.

While some trainers viewed themselves as the originators of training content, newer trainers were less clear about who created the training content and how it was developed. For example, in an interview, a trainer who had at that point led only one session said,

> So the material is actually already made… the slides and everything were made by the ECF team.... I'm not entirely sure who on the ECF team wrote them, if it was a team effort, or if there was one person in particular that was assigned to write them…. As a member of the ECF team, I have access to our internal folder…. So all of the training is on here.

For this trainer, the slides for the PowerPoint presentation used in training were considered the content of training, as they were the focus of their preparations and constitute the entirety of the "material" that this trainer describes as making up "all of the training." Because these materials were already created, this trainer did not see themselves as the originator of training content. Instead, this trainer could only "access" materials.

These differing views on the development of training content between older and newer trainers points to an apprenticing relationship between them, with older trainers acting as the masters who have a deep understanding of the content and tasks required of them and newer trainers inheriting their tools (here, the training materials) and beginning to use them as a way to learn more about them, from the periphery of the group (Greeno et al., 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In other words, the community of trainers had processes in place that positioned

themselves as knowledge keepers who transmit information through training, rather than being part of the community of early literacy program enactors.

Once the training content was developed, it underwent a regular review process. Ashley, the L & D specialist, described the process for reviewing and updating course content:

Once a year we'll meet with all of the... [trainers and early literacy committee members] and just be like, '...I want your feedback on if there are any changes that you need to make….' Just very basic foundational kind of stuff. Then every two or three years, I can't remember, we'll do a full review. We'll be like,... 'We need you to review the content and update everything'.... Then we work with them to do that... Maybe there's new research that has come out… [We] make sure that the information you're delivering is ... not from, like, 2008. It's current… has anything new developed that we need to address with younger children? Maybe there's a spike in ... I'm just making stuff up right now, but maybe there's a spike in autism and we have a lot more kids who are coming to the library who are on the spectrum. Do our courses cover that? Is there something we need to add to help facilitate, so programmers are able to access a different type of audience?

In this excerpt, Ashley did not describe changes to the process of training. For example, there was no discussion of reviewing and potentially revising training practices. Instead, Ashley spoke to developments in research that should be reflected in training in saying that the review process is focused on the "information" being "deliver[ed]" by trainers.

This process for reviewing, updating, and creating course content is a facet of how the trainer community formed a self-understanding of their role as knowledge keepers who provide information through training. As knowledge keepers, the trainers are separate from the LAs, who do not have the same understanding and access to early literacy programming knowledge. In this

way, the process for reviewing, updating, and creating course content furthers the separation

between trainers and LAs at LPL.

Early literacy trainers described their own training and preparation in interviews. Largely,

they focused on ensuring they had the materials they needed, such as a shared set of PowerPoint

slides with scripted speakers notes, and that they had adequately practiced what they were going

to say. For example, one trainer discussed choosing materials for training as a way to "cover…

different points," and "make sure that there is some lesson attached to every book… chosen."

For this trainer, the selection of materials was dictated by the content of the "points" or script of

the PowerPoint slides. Similarly, another trainer described their preparations as:

> I like to get to the branch early and set up just in case there's any technological
>
> difficulties.... And then I'm a fan of printing out all of my slides so I can read off them. I
>
> try not to read word for word, but it's just easier than turning around and staring at the
>
> PowerPoint on the wall. And then I like to make sure I have all of my stuff for the hands-
>
> on activities. And I do lots of practicing and preparation beforehand.

For this trainer, preparing for training was largely viewed as having adequately understood and

practiced the PowerPoint slides and speaker's notes, as the preparations described revolve

around these slides, anticipating technical difficulties, and having adequate supplies for the

activities described within the PowerPoint slides.

Another trainer explained in their interview that their preparation for leading training was

just that: leading training. Specifically, they said, "Very, very quickly I became involved with

organizing the training and running the training so for me a lot of my training has been putting

the training together." For this trainer, preparing for training did not consist of practicing

PowerPoint slides by themselves. Instead, this trainer reviewed and prepared materials in a way

that could be seen as more authentic than what was experienced by the first trainer. By being

tasked with "putting the training together," the second trainer spent more time with training

content and made decisions about which ideas and resources to include or exclude from training.

On the other hand, using pre-made training materials that were practiced in order to avoid

"staring at the PowerPoint on the wall" required much less depth and time.

A third trainer discussed their preparation for leading training similarly to the second

trainer:

> It was sort of a requirement that you do some of the training as part of [the ECF] team. So
> the first time you... go with someone else and you've talked about it, you've got the
> speaker notes and all of that, and the two of you together start leading it…. And then I
> think it was the next time I took more of a lead… But I feel like my training experience
> was a lot like my programming experience. You shadow, you talk about what the games
> are, and then you support, and then next time you might take more of [a] lead. And that's
> [a] scaffolded method to move into it.

For this third trainer, preparing for training closely follows what situated cognition theorists

would call legitimate peripheral participation - preparation begins by observing existing

practitioners and then increasingly performing the tasks of the activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Comparisons of these three trainers reveal that none of them viewed their previous

experiences as early literacy programmers as preparation for leading training. In other words,

they viewed early literacy training as a distinct activity from early literacy programming. Instead,

one trainer prepared through a review of course materials while another prepared by creating

these materials. Finally, a third trainer prepared by gradually increasing the responsibility and

independence they had as a trainer. According to situated cognition theorists, the preparation for

a particular activity (what LPL views as early literacy training) should involve legitimate peripheral participation in the activity (here, the early literacy programming) by observing existing practitioners and then increasingly performing the tasks of the activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). That these three trainers did not view early literacy programming as preparation for early literacy training indicates that these three trainers considered these two activities to be separate, which has implications for how communities are formed at LPL, an idea which will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Additionally, that some of these trainers were able to train without having followed a specific training protocol or regime indicates something of note about the professionalism of trainers: Having the opportunity to train LAs without having requiring additional training on the part of trainers indicates that trainers are seen as professionals who come into the library with the skills and knowledge needed to conduct training. The view of trainers as professionals who do not require additional training stands in contrast with the view of LAs as non-professionals who require training for their work, as communicated by some aspects of training. Additionally, the view that trainers have of training consisting mainly of reading scripted speaker's notes for existing slides also demonstrates their conception of training being an arena for one-way information sharing, rather than a sphere for more complex, professional learning, once again construing LAs as non-professionals (Wilson & Berne, 1999). These contrasting views of trainers and LAs further reinforces the separation between these groups: trainers and LAs are viewed as fundamentally different groups, with different roles in the organization, rather than as a single community with some long-term experts and some newcomers.

Additionally, the lack of formal training for trainers indicates that they are seen as implicitly knowledgeable and capable by virtue of their shared educational background: the

MLIS degree. The assumption that librarians' graduate training in an MLIS program provides them with the background knowledge needed to lead training further demonstrates how trainers are consistently perceived as professionals at LPL: The L & D team relies on the previous scholarly work of librarians by automatically assuming that their graduate degrees have provided them with the knowledge they need for leading training. This reliance on previous education aligns with historic views of professions as requiring more scholarly work as a prerequisite than non-professional work (Dewey, 1904, cited in Shulman, 1998). That the Learning and Development team sees librarians with graduate degrees as automatically more capable of the professional work of training than LAs with undergraduate degrees or diplomas further illustrates that trainers are afforded a professional status that LAs are not.

Additionally, the emphasis on choosing librarians to act as trainers did not reflect the large numbers of LAs who enacted early literacy programs for parents and children. The preference for librarians as trainers indicates that membership in the community of trainers was implicitly contingent upon librarianship. These elements demonstrate that trainers were not meant to represent or reflect the group of LPL staff who are program deliverers. Instead, the trainers represented their own separate community of professionals, made up mostly of librarians, who have the presentation and facilitation skills that Ashley discussed in their interview.

Early literacy training at LPL began with the selection of trainers, using an informal process which privileged well known librarians. These trainers were then supported by a three-person L & D team to create training content, with longer-term trainers viewing themselves as the originators of content and newcomers expressing uncertainty about how content was developed. With content created and reviewed, trainers then prepared individually to lead

training. The aspects of trainer selection and preparation described above point to a community of trainers that is separate from the community of LAs who participate in training.

With that description of trainer selection and preparation as a backdrop, I now describe the format of early literacy at LPL. Overall, all early literacy program training had the same general format: The trainer would arrive first and set up the room so that the chairs formed a semicircle facing a screen. Projected onto the screen would be a set of PowerPoint slides, discussed in more detail below. LAs would later arrive at the hosting library branch from various branches throughout the LPL system, and then find the private programming room in which training would occur. Next, LAs would sign in by signing or initialing a preprinted paper attendance list, and then would sit in the semicircle so they could see the PowerPoint slides. The trainer would then call everyone to attention and begin, going through each slide and, when warranted, lead activities or examples. Partway through the session, LAs would be given a break, and then the session would end with a reminder to complete the online evaluation form for the session.

Below, I provide an overview of each of the three sessions, and then describe the shared elements of these sessions, based on my observations. Throughout these descriptions, I include excerpts from supplemental data sources such as interviews, documents, and survey responses in order to capture LA responses to training.

ECF 1: Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Programs.

ECF 1 was, for the most part, a one-way lecture based on a set of PowerPoint slides. In addition, trainers used small-group discussion and large-group recitation to supplement the one-way lecture.

At the beginning of each session, the trainer directed LAs to form small groups or pairs and discuss what they had in common with each other. Each group or pair then shared with the larger group. Examples of what LAs found in common with one another included having a certain number of siblings, having visited particular countries, enjoying the same television shows, or having the same level of education. At one observation of these training sessions, the trainer explained that this "class is about our differences, so this activity helps us see what we have in common," as a way to explain why this initial activity was included in the session.

In terms of the small-group discussion, trainers invited small groups of LAs to discuss three questions: "What does it take for families to even participate in a program?," "What do families need or expect?," and "How do we help, how do we hinder?" The small-group discussion typically lasted around ten minutes and then was shared with the larger group. As they shared, LAs offered ideas and the trainer agreed with and sometimes expanded on each idea as it was given. For example, at one session, LAs' answers to the question, "What does it take for families to even participate in a program?" included "transportation," "awareness of programs," and "cooperating weather." Here, the trainer agreed with these ideas and added their own, "feeling comfortable coming into [LPL]," and "getting here early enough to get into a program." At one session, LAs' responses to "What do families need or expect?" included "that the library is clean and free from hazards," "that the library is warm," and that the program gives them an opportunity to "bond… with a child." In response to this statement, the trainer agreed and said, "They might have been told by a speech pathologist that they need to interact, but they don't know how," indicating that the role of the LA in the program may be to demonstrate possible ways to bond with children.

In response to the dual question of "How do we help, how do we hinder?," LAs provided examples of help such as "the timing of programs," "setting program guidelines," and "connecting [families] with resources," and examples of hindrances such as "not allowing late comers" into the program. The sharing of these small-group discussions with the larger group typically lasted around ten minutes as well and represents another example of how LAs were asked to think about their work as professionals do: considering what it means to work in service of others. Also, this discussion demonstrated the kind of pedagogical content knowledge, or the knowledge needed to make content knowledge attainable for program participants, that LAs were expected to know and understand in order to conduct early literacy programs. For example, LAs listed bonding with children as a way to "help" through programs. However, this session did not share knowledge of how to do such things with LAs: there was no discussion, for example, how LAs might bond with children. Instead, this activity was focused on creating lists of family needs and expectations.

This session also had an open-ended question presented in the slides, "How can we provide welcoming and inclusive programs at LPL?," which the trainer used to solicit responses from LAs in a large-group recitation. These large group discussions typically lasted one to two minutes, with one or two LAs speaking directly to the trainer as they responded. For example, LAs would volunteer responses such as "having a variety of programs at different times of day," and "having programs in other languages." At one observation, this discussion was skipped and the trainer simply read the slide, said, "We are learning how to give people a chance to learn from one another," and then moved to the next slide. Asking LAs to contribute to a shared knowledge base signals that trainers valued the content knowledge that LAs brought to their work as professionals (Bromme, 2001). This activity also mirrors those seen in professional

learning communities in which teachers collaborate and share their expertise (Wilson & Berne, 1999). However, the positioning of this as a discussion through the trainer rather than between LAs lessens its professionalizing potential since LAs seemed to be seeking reassurance from the trainer that they provided a "correct" response rather than trying to share information with one another. Additionally, the short time frame for this activity indicates that other elements of this training session were more valuable to trainers. Once again, there seemed to be some inconsistencies around how or whether LAs were viewed as professionals within this training session.

At one observation of this session, the trainer asked what was missed on the list of diversity dimensions discussed above. Here, LAs offered ideas such as "religion," "age," and "ideology," in order to expand on the list of elements of diversity provided by trainers. In asking this question, the trainer demonstrated that the given list was not sufficient and that LAs might have to consider more elements of diversity than they might name initially.

After discussing elements of diversity, trainers at each observation would relate these elements of diversity to early literacy programming by reminding LAs to consider these multiple dimensions in their early literacy programming. For example, one trainer said that LPL staff need to "think about families," when providing early literacy storytimes. Across the observations, trainers would ask about the potential stressors that parents might face, and LAs would respond with ideas such as "money issues," "relationships," and "health problems." Trainers then used these ideas as a way to introduce their own list of potential stressors that included, from several sessions, "psychology," "ailing parents," "immigration issues," feeling "uncertain about parenting," and "not identify[ing] with other parents" - all potential ways in which parents might feel excluded from the larger community.

This training session ended with a group activity in which LAs were given a list of rhymes and songs and were asked to "adapt" them. This activity was skipped at half of the observed sessions because of time constraints, and LAs were asked to think about this activity on their own afterwards. As with previous activities, the adaptation of rhymes and songs could be construed as an example of LAs being asked to apply their knowledge to work that is in the service of others - in other words, to work as professionals (Bromme, 2001; Kunter et al., 2013). Additionally, this learning activity is what situated cognition theorists would label as authentic as it represents a purposeful activity that echoes what LAs may do as early literacy programmers (Brown et al., 1989). However, as with previous activities in this training session, skipping this activity because other elements of training ran over their allotted times indicates that neither the professionalization of LAs enacted in this particular way nor the opportunity for authentic learning are clear goals for LPL.

That trainers and LAs spent considerable time reflecting on the diversity of program participants and sought to provide welcoming and inclusive early literacy experiences aligns with some of the ideas of culturally responsive pedagogy. In particular, the attention to the particular context of each family in an early literacy program may be supportive to their sense of belonging in the library (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

While they engaged in an important first step in considering difference, trainers and LAs did not consider their own subjectivities or place within these dimensions of diversity. Instead, only program participants were positioned as having backgrounds and experiences that could be racialized, gendered, etc. Since the LAs' identities were not taken into account, it seems as though they were being positioned as neutral (e.g., not racialized, able bodied, neurotypical, etc.) as compared to early literacy program participants. That the library staff were seen as neutral

may be due to their tendency to be white, female, and middle-class (American Library

Association, 2011), as these characteristics make up the majority of library staff who both create

and experience training and therefore are less likely to be associated with feelings of being

excluded from the library. Though I was unable to collect detailed data on these aspects of

trainer and LA identity, most of the participants of this study presented as white, female, able

bodied, and neurotypical to me - in other words, members of the majority in this setting.

Additionally, most of those who volunteered such information on the survey also identified as

white and female[1]. Because library staff do not fully represent the backgrounds of their patrons,

they would need to be sensitive to difference and seek knowledge of the families participating in

their programs (Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, despite its focus on participant identities, this

training session did not discuss how LAs might conscientiously learn more about program

participants. Consideration of library patrons' identities is an important first step in culturally

responsive pedagogy, but it is incomplete without the time and ability to learn deeply about those

participating in early literacy programs.

In terms of processes, ECF 1 consisted mainly of a one-way lecture broken up by small-

and large-group activities designed to encourage LAs to consider families' needs and interests in

early literacy programming, and to contemplate how those needs and interests might be

accounted for. Below, I describe the processes used to facilitate ECF 2.

ECF 2: Setting Yourself Up For Success.

Much like ECF 1, ECF 2 consisted mainly of a one-way lecture interspersed with small-

group activities and large-group discussions. Near the beginning of the session, there was a

small-group discussion activity in which LAs were given two to three minutes and asked to

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[1] Specifically, 83% of the 29 survey respondents (n=24) identified themselves as "Caucasian" and "female."

"think of a sprinkle for a moment in a family's daily life," or a tip that parents could use to support their daily routines. Each group then shared with the larger group. Examples of sprinkles from this session included "to get a library card," clapping "so kids know they did a good thing," "kids need repetition to learn," and song suggestions for "different activities like hand washing."

As discussed in the literature review, early literacy programs risk communicating a deficit view of children and families if their goal is to change parents' existing behavior, while culturally responsive programs would view information shared in programming as additive to parents' existing knowledge (Denessen, 2007). Because LAs were able to compose their own sprinkles, this discussion positioned LAs to communicate either deficit or advantageous views of parents in programs, depending on their own conceptions of program participants. Due to the lack of contextual information available in early literacy programs, however, LAs would generally not be equipped with the knowledge of their program participants needed to ensure they are adding to families' existing practices, thereby lessening the community-focused potential of sprinkles (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008).

Later in the training session, trainers would ask if LAs had concerns about babies in their programs. In each of the observed sessions, at least one LA would express discomfort around the idea of a baby attending a storytime program, saying things like, "That's my fear," or "[I'm concerned] when there's only one of them." This discomfort echoes the sentiments of librarians in the mid-1970s who preferred to work with children who could already read (Smardo, 1980). Trainers would agree with the LAs who were uncomfortable with babies in early literacy programs, saying things like, "It can be awkward," but not elaborating further on what might cause the discomfort. One trainer explained that they "think of it as a program for parents" as a way to help themselves through the awkwardness.

The final part of this training session involved a small-group activity on how LAs can respond and adapt to unexpected challenges by planning for common occurrences such as children outside of the defined age group attending programs (Figure 7).

Responding and Adapting

- **Reading the audience**
- **Following the interest of the group**
- **Communicating with adults**
- **Unexpected age-groups in attendance**
- **Excited or disruptive children/families**

Figure 7: Slide from ECF 2 that introduces the ideas of responding and adapting in early literacy programming.

Here, LAs grouped together to "think of a challenge you faced and some alternative solutions." LAs were given around five minutes to discuss before sharing with the large group by listing challenges and solutions for approximately five minutes. During this activity in one of the training sessions, my group discussed a child who had a "meltdown" during a program and how having a second programmer in the room was very helpful because "one can check on the kid and the other can continue the program." When we shared this challenge and solution with the larger group, an LA responded by saying that, at their branch, they "take a radio into the program

because someone got assaulted," and another said that it can be hard to rely on a second programmer "depending on the branch." Across observations, other discussions of challenges faced by LAs in programs included when children become bored with the program (LAs were directed to vary the program and/or ask adults for help in this situation), when children act out and hit library staff and/or other participants (LAs were told that they can ask parents and children to take a break and leave the program when this occurs), or when children who are either too young or too old for a program attend it (LAs were directed to either change the planned activities to incorporate these different ages or to direct older children to "play along" with a doll as a stand-in baby or toddler if they attend with their parent and younger sibling).

As discussed in my literature review, educators in professional roles (i.e., teachers) find value in collaborating with their colleagues as a form of professional development, especially around finding solutions to problems of practice such as unexpected challenges when supporting a group of children (Wilson & Berne, 1999). It follows, then, that the reliance on LAs themselves to support the training and solution-finding of their colleagues demonstrates how LAs were given professional latitude akin to that of teachers (Shulman, 2005; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Moreover, as described previously, this use of collaboration to produce knowledge enables deep understanding of ideas in the view of situated cognition theorists (St. Julien, 1997).

In terms of processes, ECF 2 consisted mainly of a one-way lecture broken up by small- and large-group activities designed to prepare LAs for the potential challenges of early literacy programming, such as participants that might cause discomfort. Below, I describe the processes used to facilitate ECF 3.

ECF 3: Beyond the Basics.

ECF 3 consisted mostly of trainer-led demonstrations and hands-on practice, with some small- and large-group activities interspersed. In this session, trainers routinely modelled songs, yoga-pose stories, fingerplays, draw-and-tell stories, cut-and-tell stories, fold-and-tell stories, and string stories one-by-one and LAs were given supplies so they could sing, move, draw, cut, and fold along with the trainer. For example, at one observation, a trainer modelled how to make a flower out of string as an example of a string story. For this demonstration, each LA was given a precut length of string and was able to follow along as the trainer created their flower. Most LAs struggled during this demonstration and could not successfully manipulate the string as demonstrated by the trainer. At other ECF 3 sessions, other objects were modelled as possible string story products, such as a mosquito, but this technique was always modelled at each session. However, in all ECF 3 training sessions, the other techniques, such as felt stories, were mentioned but were not modelled explicitly. Some of these alternative storytelling techniques, such as songs, align with the early literacy program guidelines and samples found in the resources for librarians discussed in chapter two. For example, Ghoting and Martin-Díaz (2006) included songs, crafts, and the use of tangible objects such as puppets in their examples of effective early literacy programs.

The use of modelling in ECF 3 echoes the cognitive apprenticeship style of learning discussed in the previous chapter. Cognitive apprenticeships begin with masters (here, the trainer) demonstrating a task (here, alternative storytelling methods such as yoga-pose and string stories) to apprentices (here, the LAs) (Greeno et al., 2004). Because this modelling situates trainers as old-timers who can support newcomers in learning the needed tasks within a community, it may seem as though the emphasis on modelling in ECF 3 functions to create a

sustained community of early literacy programmers made up of both trainers and LAs (Lave, 1991). However, as has been described previously and will be further discussed later in this chapter, this community-creating move was undermined by other features of training and as such was not sufficient to develop a cohesive community at LPL.

ECF 3 trainers used two small- and two large-group activities in their instructional approaches. For the first small-group activity, small groups of LAs were directed to make their own fingerplays based on a theme pulled from an envelope prepared by the trainer. After approximately five minutes of planning, each group performed their fingerplay for the other LAs, who followed along as they watched. For example, at one observation of this training session, a group created a fingerplay of a being called "Mr. Wiggle" (an index finger) arriving at a ski hill, going up a lift, skiing down the hill, and then having a hot chocolate. At this session, the trainer summarized the advantages of this activity by saying, "It's easy to do at the drop of a hat. You can change it for seasons or events," indicating that the activity was flexible enough to be adapted to many different programs and was therefore very useful.

This fingerplay flexibility aligns with arguments made by proponents of culturally responsive pedagogy in favor of programming based on the origins and experiences of children (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). For example, a fingerplay based on the winter experiences of children and families is likely to be more meaningful and interesting to them than a fingerplay based on the experiences of an LA (Gay, 2002). However, this connection to a potentially community-driven early literacy experience was not made explicit to LAs, and the ways in which children and families' experiences could be thoughtfully incorporated into programs were not explored here. This means that LAs may have left ECF 3 believing that their experiences should be foregrounded in programming, rather than those of program participants.

Additionally, the use of this small-group activity to grow LAs' early literacy knowledge while also giving them the ability to create their own fingerplay provided them with some agency to act as professionals in their work (Kunter et al., 2013). However, as will be discussed further below, the overall expectations of consistency shared throughout this training session meant that these agentifying moves were somewhat undermined.

The second small-group activity involved LAs making up a story based on symbols chosen from a bag. The symbols were animals, such as a bear, and natural landmarks, such as a waterfall. After about five minutes, each group shared their story with the other LAs. One example from an observed training session involved a pair of LAs choosing the symbols for a chipmunk and a caribou and then telling a story of a journey these two animals took together. After sharing their story, the trainer provided suggestions for additional elements, such as including physical movements to stand for the rocks described in the story.

As before, this small-group activity increased LAs' domain, or knowledge of early literacy, by providing them with a potentially new method to tell stories in a way that could be seen as agentive, with LAs choosing their symbols and creating the narratives that they wanted to share (Kunter et al., 2013).

Additionally, this session included two large-group questions, both close-ended, used to gauge the LAs' familiarity with the cut-and-tell story technique. The first question was if LAs had done such a story before, and if an LA said they had, the trainer would then routinely ask them to explain the technique. When LAs would respond, trainers would agree with their descriptions and then provide their own descriptions of the cut-and-tell story. The function of these questions mainly seemed to be a quick gauge of LAs' existing pedagogical content

knowledge in order for trainers to determine how much explanation was needed for cut-and-tell stories.

Overall, ECF 1, 2, and 3 each employed different large- and small-group activities and discussion topics, each related to the content of these sessions. Below, I describe instructional strategies shared between the training sessions.

Shared strategies

While each of the training sessions proceeded in different ways, there were also elements that they had in common: each session had similarities in how the training space was organized, how LAs were introduced to one another, how one-way lectures were utilized, and how LAs could access training sessions. Below, I describe these shared elements based on my observations and augment these descriptions with other sources of data. Next, I consider how LAs responded to the ways in which early literacy training was realized at LPL, including how they sought to augment the training they experienced.

Physical layout.

Each training session took place in a branch's programming room, a space that was separated from the rest of the library by full, usually windowed, walls. Within each room, chairs and, usually, tables were arranged in a semicircle facing a screen so that LAs could sit and view PowerPoint slides. When choosing seats, LAs would group themselves by their home branches when possible. This branch-based positioning occurred even when LAs were temporarily displaced: When observations began, one of LPL's largest branches had closed for renovations and LAs from that branch had been moved to other branches. When asked to introduce themselves and indicate their home branch, these LAs would introduce themselves as being from their previous, now-closed location, rather than their current branch.

Since LAs grouped themselves by home branch, these groups formed the basis for the small-group discussions and activities described above. At most training sessions, LAs were asked to discuss or create something in pairs or trios of their own selection, and then share this with the large group. For example, in ECF 3, groups of three LAs were asked to create hand actions to accompany a nursery rhyme, and then demonstrate it to the rest of the participants. Having these small-group activities center on existing relationships between LAs at the same branch reinforced the communities at each branch.

Introductions.

At the beginning of most training sessions, trainers would ask LAs to introduce themselves by sharing their first name, their home branch, and some additional information about themselves. For example, one trainer asked LAs to introduce themselves by commenting on how much experience they had had with children under the age of two, and another asked how much experience they had with "littles," defined as children under the age of five. This method of introducing LAs in training allowed LAs to identify themselves by their previous experiences, and demonstrated what LAs considered to be relevant to their work as literacy programmers. In training sessions, LAs listed the following as related previous experiences: experience as an early literacy programmer at LPL or another public library, as a library programmer for older children, as a parent of young children, as a daycare or camp worker, as a Sunday school instructor, Mother Goose training (a facilitated program to teach parents rhymes, songs, and stories to share with their children), and experience as a classroom teacher.

Some LAs responded by introducing themselves as having no related experience, which created two contrasting groups within training sessions: those with related experience and those who were new to literacy programming. When asked questions in the large group, such as during

one of the large-group discussion activities described above, members of the 'related experience' group would answer more readily than those in the 'new' group, and, in so doing, created two groups of LAs: one group of newcomers without related experiences, and another some related experiences (i.e., old-timers) that were able to share their ideas with the entire group, and therefore acted not only as apprenticing early literacy programmers, but also apprenticing trainers within these parts of training. In other words, LAs with some related experience were positioned differently in training than were those with no related experience. However, these moments of introduction and collaboration were brief and LAs were not always able to elaborate on their ideas and experiences in training, cutting short the possible interactions between newcomer and old-timer LAs.

Trainer-focused one-way lectures.

My observations revealed that training sessions at LPL consisted mostly of one-way, PowerPoint-based lectures punctuated with small- and large-group activities. In training sessions, trainers spoke more often and for longer periods than LAs did. The table below provides a breakdown of the average speaking split between trainers and LAs in training sessions:

Table 7

Average amount of trainer and LA talk per training session

Training Session	Average Amount of Trainer Talk (minutes)	Average Amount of LA talk (minutes)	Average Proportion of Trainer to LA talk
ECF 1	64	45	1.4:1
ECF 2	92	35	2.6:1
ECF 3	72	43	1.7:1

Note: These times do not account for breaks or interruptions in training. When both trainers and LAs were talking (such as when both trainers and LAs were simultaneously reading out loud), the total amount of time for these activities was split between each column.

Corroborating these observations, trainers described the general structure of the ECF 1, 2, and 3 training sessions as a lecture broken up by moments of discussion. As one trainer explained,

> For most of our training there's a PowerPoint that has the information that we're relaying. Some of it is purely informational, that they're reading. We do try to incorporate some activities… [For example,] let's get together in some small groups with the person next to you. Take a few minutes, pick one of these nursery rhymes that's up on the screen here. Suggest what you could do to adapt that, to make it more inclusive. Give them a few minutes, talk about it, come back with [it] to the larger group. There's usually some group activities like that.

The use of the word "most" here signals that the majority of the training sessions involved the relaying of information through the PowerPoint slides. However, the trainer also described how small-group activities, such as adapting nursery rhymes, were included in training, although the use of the word "some" in their description of these activities indicates that the main focus of training is the information relaying.

Additionally, in the interview, this trainer described how training included opportunities to experience songs and rhymes: "If we're talking about songs and rhymes, we're going to get up and do the songs and rhymes." For this trainer, the act of performing the small-group activities such as adapting rhymes and experiencing the elements that make up an early literacy program were key aspects of library assistant training, in addition to the lecture portions.

Overall, training sessions at LPL were predominantly one-way, with trainers reading the provided slides and leading the LAs in activities or through examples as indicated by the slides.

Compounding the emphasis on one-way lecture in training was the prevalence of trainer-focused small- and large-group activities. As discussed above, observations at training sessions revealed some opportunities for LAs to collaborate and share information. Often, trainers asked discussion questions that allowed several LAs to share their responses with the rest of the participants. These questions were chosen ahead of time and were part of the slide deck for each training session. For example, one training session included the question, "What does a successful program look like?," a question which prompted LAs to respond with, "A successful program needs to be adaptable and open to users," and, "We worry about being perfect, but we don't need to be." Trainers responded to the LAs in a variety of ways: by rephrasing their responses and then either adding a new idea, asking for new responses, or moving to other content. For example, when an LA responded to the above question with a remark about being adaptable, the trainer said, "Adaptable to the needs of the customers. Anything else?" To the response about being perfect, the trainer said, "Yes, you are worried,... but chaos can be fun, and customers don't know the plan," and then moved to the next slide. In many observed sessions, opportunities for discussion amongst LAs were shortened or skipped due to time constraints. The structure of this whole-group discussion meant that each LA was in dialogue with the trainer, rather than being in dialogue with one another. Because large-group discussions were heavily mediated by trainers and were often cut short, and small-group activities involved groups that LAs chose of the people sitting closest to them, LAs had few if any opportunities to connect with LAs outside of their home branches. Instead, the structure of training sessions served to reinforce the community of LAs within each branch.

At the end of the ECF 3 training sessions (which focused on program content and alternatives to storybook reading), some LAs would comment positively on training amongst

themselves. For example, one LA said to the whole group, "That was great," at the conclusion of

an ECF 3 session. However, at the end of ECF 1 and 2 sessions, LAs did not make similar

remarks. Furthermore, LAs seemed more enthusiastic about ECF 3 activities than in small-group

discussions in ECF 1 and 2, as they spent more time on-task during ECF 3 activities as compared

to ECF 1 and 2. It may be that the more apparent positivity towards ECF 3 was due to its more

hands-on structure, rather than the one-way lecture structure of ECF 1 and 2, as this hands-on

structure was more akin to the gradual release of responsibility approach advocated for by

situated cognition theorists: it involved the modelling of alternative storytelling methods,

followed by opportunities for LAs to practice with their peers, leading to deep understanding of

the material (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This more hands-on structure is viewed as a hallmark of

effective staff development in that it provides opportunities for collaborative participation, offers

a chance to practice needed skills, and, perhaps most importantly, is situated in LAs' practice of

enacting early literacy programs (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Essentially, immediately applicable

techniques and ideas may be of interest to LAs due to the clear connections these techniques and

ideas have to their practice as early literacy programmers.

Access to training.

The ways in which LAs were able to access training were similar across the different

training sessions, in that decisions were made by each LA's branch manager, who chose which

LAs attended particular training sessions. This was evidenced in interviews with trainers. For

example, one trainer described how individual managers may have different priorities and, as

such, training may be skipped. As this trainer explained, "It depends on how invested the

manager is in making sure that this [training] happens." This trainer also described how LAs are

expected to ask for training, saying that access to training also "depends on how vocal the person

is to say, 'I want this, this is something that I'm needing.'" Similarly, in the ECF 2 training

sessions and training documents, LAs were encouraged to seek out additional training

opportunities (such as the ability to attend more training sessions, or observe their peers

performing programs) by asking their managers.

Some library assistants also corroborated the idea that individual managers had the ability

to dictate training schedules. For example, when asked about how training was chosen or

scheduled, one LA explained that "[their] manager was like 'You're scheduled to do all this

stuff.' Okay, great, cool." For this LA, the question of which training sessions to attend was

decided by their manager without discussion. It may be that the manager took into account the

previous experiences (both work and educational) of this LA, but that was not communicated to

the LA. Instead, this LA was slotted into training without the ability to individualize their

experience. This stands in contrast to what Wilson and Berne (1999) suggest is an element of

effective professional development for educators: that educators have the ability to own and

control their professional development, seeking out the information they feel that they need. This

example demonstrates that LAs were seen as a homogenous group within LPL, despite having

potentially applicable past educational and work experiences. Instead, they were placed into

training sessions without discussion of these past experiences.

However, this experience was dissimilar to that of another LA at a different branch. This

second LA's description of how training was scheduled was:

> I think ... it might vary a little bit from branch to branch, but for here I specifically
>
> remember... on one of my first few days, you sit down with a manager and plan your
>
> performance assessment. And part of that performance assessment is the training
>
> component, so discussing which training you have done, which training you haven't done.

For this LA and their branch colleagues, the decision about which training sessions to attend was made collaboratively by LAs along with their managers, with opportunities for discussion and, potentially, consideration of past experiences. This is an example of a professionalizing move, in that the LA had some ability to direct their professional development and align their training with their needs, and stands in contrast with the previously discussed branch manager's approach (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Additionally, this LA's declaration that "it might vary a little bit from branch to branch" signals that they were aware of the differences that exist between branches and their managers, further demonstrating the potentially divisive nature of the branch-based structure of LPL. Overall, the differences in these two LAs' recollections of their training scheduling indicated that individual managers may have different priorities for and views of the professional statuses of LAs, so that experiences varied from branch to branch.

The previous work experiences of LAs also impacted their access to training. For example, one LA described how they had limited access to training because of a previous, non-LA job with LPL: "because I had already had kind of the previous [LPL] job, I think they skipped out on a lot of the training." This LA also faced issues with access to training because of the nature of their contract: initially hired on as a temporary LA, their contract was extended multiple times before becoming permanent. In the view of this LA, the uncertainty around their employment had an impact on training access:

> I think a lot of the reason why I didn't get as much training as I wanted, or needed even, was due to [it] being a temporary position. I think there was a lot of, 'You're temporary, it doesn't matter. We don't really have to train you. We're just going to send you to maybe one training thing instead of all of them.' So you kind of get passed by, and the next thing

you know, you've been doing the job for a year and you still haven't been to all the

training.

Upon becoming permanent, though, this LA found that conversations around training access

changed to, "it was, 'Let's fill in all the blanks and try and send you to everything.' But not right

away. 'Over the course of a year, we will try and fill in all the blanks.'" Conversely, other LAs

described having constant access to training, with one saying, "[LPL's] pretty good at keeping us

training year after year.... Even though I've been with the library for many years, we still get sent

out on these refreshers." However, as was mentioned in trainer interviews, the refresher or

"program boost" courses had not been offered at LPL for "the last few years" at the time of this

study. As such, it is not clear how recently this LA had accessed training.

As discussed above, interviews with trainers, observations, and training documents

revealed that trainers expected LAs to mediate their own access to training and seek out

additional training if they required it. For one LA, however, the idea of explicitly asking for

more training was uncomfortable. This LA described a conversation with their manager about

leading a program without adequate training: "I did mention my hesitancy to do [a program]

before the training and that was kind of swept under the bus, though." Because of their

manager's response, the LA said,

> I don't think I felt like it was a good environment to ask for more training ... there's a fear
>
> of being perceived as really inadequate at your job if you ask for more training. So I've
>
> kind of always just taken what I've been given and maybe subtly asked for more training,
>
> but never stood up for myself as much as I could.

The use of the term "inadequate" here indicates that LAs were viewed as being capable of

programming after having completed the minimum amount of training. This is because LAs who

require training beyond the minimum were "inadequate." While it may seem as though this may

be an example of how LAs are considered professionals at LPL - they are, after all, meant to be

able to offer early literacy programming successfully after having attended training - I would

argue that this is another example of de-professionalizing. This is because this manager's belief

that attending three training sessions alone is adequate for early literacy programming signals

their view that this practice is straightforward and simple. In other words, the idea that additional

training is not warranted may indicate that this manager did not believe that early literacy

programming is complex practice that warrants situation-related knowledge. This specialized

knowledge and its links to practice are among the hallmarks of professional work (Bromme,

2001; Shulman, 1998). Viewing early literacy programming, then, as a routine skill that can be

acquired within a few training sessions means viewing it as something that is not professional

practice.

In addition to concerns about being viewed as "inadequate," this hesitancy seemed to also

be closely related to this LA's home branch, which had few scheduled early literacy programs

due to its older patron group. This LA described how their sole shadowing opportunity was

cancelled because, "… we have very low attendance here and no one showed up that week, so I

didn't ever get to shadow one."

Conversely, another LA discussed having ease in requesting additional support. This LA

described their request upon being scheduled to perform their first early literacy program:

> They scheduled me for, like, by myself to do a [program]. And I got really nervous, and I
>
> was like, 'I think I want to shadow a few more story times first, just to get an idea of like
>
> what's in a story time.' ...I checked with my supervisor…. I said, 'I'm a little

overwhelmed. I think I want to observe a few more before I do my own.' And they said,

'Fine.'

In stark contrast to the LA who hesitated to ask for additional training, this LA belonged to a

home branch with a patron base largely consisting of parents and young children, which had

several regularly scheduled early literacy sessions, often more than once per day. That

differences in managers and home branch mediated access to training for LAs points once again

to sub-communities of LAs defined by their branches, overlapping with or perhaps supplanting

the community of LAs that are part of LPL as a whole. Part of this branch-based community

creation results from differing views of the professional status of LAs amongst branch managers.

Additionally, four LAs described formal training as something that is largely reserved for

new staff, with one LA explicitly declaring that "... there's definitely preference given to new

staff." Similarly, an LA who had previous experience at LPL as a page (a different role than that

of an LA) explained that "... they skipped out on a lot of the training," because of this previous,

unrelated experience. Additionally, this LA described how the assumption that "... when you

enter a library assistant role, that you're kind of all-knowing and a programming genius… makes

it a little bit harder for people like me to get started."

Differences in home branches and managerial choices led to varying levels of access to

training among LAs. Additionally, the emphasis on training for new staff and the lack of training

for long-term staff indicates that training was used primarily to introduce LAs into the work of

early literacy programming at LPL. However, as will be discussed below, some LAs did not feel

as though these training sessions were adequate for their needs, and sought to augment them.

LA augmentations.

While the majority of the description above is based on observations of training sessions, the discussion below of how LAs augmented their training derives mainly from interviews with LAs. In particular, LAs described how they augmented their in-person, large-group training through connecting with their colleagues both formally and informally, as a way to prepare for early literacy programming. LAs also described how they prepared for programming through conducting programs before having attended early literacy training sessions.

In terms of formal approaches to augmenting their training, LAs had scheduled meetings with their branch librarians in order to discuss resources and program plans. For example, an LA recounted the following:

> Something else that was really helpful is ... our community librarian at [Branch C], she went to some kind of conference that was about early literacy and brain development and she came back to a staff meeting and had really good feedback for us about how to improve story[times].

Here, a librarian had been given the opportunity to attend a conference and then share some of their learnings with LAs. This exchange was one-way, with information flowing from the more experienced colleague to the less experienced one. As with formal training sessions, this one-way exchange of information made it possible for librarians to quickly share large amounts of information with a group.

In addition to formal meetings, LAs also described how, through informal conversations over lunch or break times, colleagues would share resources like new songs or books. For example, a former-teacher-turned-LA described a typical lunchtime conversation with a librarian from their early days at LPL as:

> And so sometimes Corrie would want to come pick my brain as a teacher, especially
> because I had just finished teaching at a school in their catchment that she was having
> some trouble reaching… I would talk to her about interesting conferences she'd been to.
> She just learned something really cool, she'd want to come share it.

Unlike formal exchanges, these informal experiences were reciprocal - they were an opportunity not only for librarians to share information from conferences, but also to discuss and problem solve with LAs. Here, librarians and LAs had a more balanced relationship, with each having some knowledge that could be of benefit to the other. In other words, these informal exchanges inadvertently positioned LAs as professionals alongside librarians with their own areas of expertise to contribute. In providing a space for more balanced relationships, informal exchanges align with what situated cognition theorists would call an authentic task that provides LAs with significance and independence: problem solving with LAs is an undertaking that can impact the creation and delivery of many early literacy programs (i.e., a significant undertaking) and relies on the LA participating and sharing their knowledge independently (Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1991).

Three LAs also described how they prepared for early literacy programs by, in the absence of training, actually conducting the programs. For example, one LA explained that their training came after they had begun programming:

> I took the [program] training after I'd already been giving [the program] for about a
> couple months. So I don't know how helpful it was, I felt like I'd kind of already learned
> through experience through a lot of that.

Similarly, another LA described how the schedule for training sessions meant that their training came after their programming work had begun, indicating that their manager did not consider training a necessary prerequisite for early literacy programming:

> They just started sending me to trainings as they came available. Sometimes that was after I had started doing programs, just depended on when the programs were available. For instance, I started doing [a program] long before I'd been trained.

Additionally, for one LA, the time spent programming without having completed training was considerable. This LA said, "I programmed for about a year and a half before I was sent on course for [early literacy programming]." For each of these three LAs, training was made available after they had begun conducting programs. In the case of the third LA in particular, who was "sent on course," the decision of when and which training sessions they could attend was made by their manager, without their input. Depending on the branch, some LAs did this untrained programming alone and others did this in pairs.

Amongst LAs, there were differing views of the helpfulness of conducting programs as a method of preparation. Some LAs discussed how they viewed conducting programs as an aspect of their training, describing their programming as a way to learn about and prepare for future programs. As one of these LAs explained, "That's what helped as well, when I was doing the [program], and got to do it repeatedly, so it helped me build that confidence, and get me more comfortable." For this LA, having the opportunity to conduct early literacy programs repeatedly gave them an opportunity to practice and deepen their confidence. This view was corroborated by another LA, who said, "I think I learn very well by doing, so even though it was hard, I think that really help[ed] a lot." Similarly, another LA described learning by doing a program as beneficial because,

Because it's real life. It's actually what's happening, and things don't go as smoothly as they do when you're just talking about them. You have to adjust to what's happening in the room and actually get to see how kids react and what works and what doesn't with that group of people.

This final LA described learning by doing as a more helpful way to learn as compared to one-way lecture because of the added context of "real life" situations and the instant feedback received by "get[ting] to see how kids react and what works and what doesn't."

LAs who conducted programs in pairs also found it a beneficial way to prepare for early literacy programs. For example, one LA described their experience of conducting programs as,

I think part of the trouble at this branch is that we always run programs on our own, and prior to coming here I was at [a different branch] where we always had two staff members running programs. I remember I really liked that because I was a brand new staff member at the time and it was so cool to see how my colleagues did things and to see. Like I … learned different things from them, how they managed the room. Even though I was still helping them present, it was just a great learning experience, and here we just don't have that.

For this LA, conducting a program with a partner was a more valuable way to prepare for leading early literacy programming than was conducting a program alone. In general, though, whether alone or with a partner, LAs described these experiences as helpful to their overall growth as programmers.

It is interesting to note how LAs perceived that doing programs was a helpful way to prepare for early literacy programs as it is a parallel to how some trainers perceived their carrying out of training as a helpful way to prepare for leading future training sessions. These are

both actions that position the LAs and trainers to see themselves as professionals, respectively: they are seen as already having the professional knowledge and disposition to perform the complex practices of their professions. In this way, LAs are behaving like professionals in fashioning their own access to training.

Additionally, this type of preparation closely follows what situated cognition theorists would call an authentic task, with opportunity for both significance (conducting the programs with real participants is an important task) and independence (these LAs were conducted programs without a trainer present) (Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1991). In other words, according to their interviews, when these LAs had the ability to conduct programming in the absence of training - an authentic act which relied on them functioning as professionals who possess the knowledge to perform their work - they responded positively and saw value in it, even though some LAs found it difficult.

In general, LAs valued the learning opportunities they sought out differently than the ones provided in large-group training in their work as literacy programmers. In interviews, LAs discussed how they appreciated shadowing, learning from colleagues, and other "extra" forms of training. Despite the benefits discussed above, a generalized, one-way approach to early literacy training did not provide LAs with opportunities to attempt authentic tasks with increasing variety, significance, or independence, nor does it prepare LAs for culturally responsive, community-driven programming (Brown et al., 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lave, 1991). As was previously discussed, an essential aspect of belonging to a community is the ability to engage in authentic tasks with increasing independence, with the support of more knowledgeable, longer term members. However, the predominant use of a one-way lecture prevents this kind of belonging. As such, the divide between the community of trainers and the

community of LAs was exacerbated by the structure of training, which impeded LAs'

participation in cognitive apprenticeships.

Overall Findings

Early literacy training at LPL included information on aspects of early literacy

programming such as participant diversity and inclusion, methods to prepare for programming,

and alternative storytelling approaches. Communicated throughout training were expectations

around room set-up and consistency in programs, as well as information on how LAs can support

early literacy. These early literacy training sessions were generally comprised of one-way

lectures that optimized the amount of information shared per session. Interspersed between

lecture segments were opportunities for LAs to discuss ideas, plan activities, or try techniques.

My analysis of the designated curriculum of training also revealed an emphasis on

community-driven, responsive programming. In particular, ECF 1 was designed to prompt LAs

to consider diversity among early literacy program participants. While ideas for responding to

children and families' cultural contexts were provided, such as changing the language of songs to

reflect participants' home languages, early literacy training at LPL did not discuss how LAs

might go about gaining the deep, nuanced knowledge of program participants needed for truly

culturally responsive literacy learning (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008).

Those who conducted training tended to be librarians who had differing views of the

theoretical knowledge that is needed for early literacy programming. The LAs who participated

in training had a wide variety of educational and work backgrounds. Overall, trainers and LAs

made up fundamentally different communities of practice at LPL, with different work contexts

and understandings of previous experiences. Relationships amongst the trainer and LA

communities were mediated by differing notions of the importance of consistency throughout the

library, while relationships within the LA community were defined along branch lines and were informed by the credibility that some LAs had accorded to them based on their classroom teaching experiences.

Understanding the context of early literacy training at LPL through the lens of situated cognition, with its emphasis on the notion of community, provides insights into the perceived relevance of training from the point of view of LAs. As they form different communities, trainers did not enact a cognitive apprenticeship into the world of early literacy programming with LAs. Instead, trainers provided what they viewed as much needed information and ideas for their work without providing opportunities to engage in authentic tasks that rely on, enact, or extend this abstract foundation. This was not sufficient for LAs, who then augmented this foundation with their own informal cognitive apprenticeships, based in the library branches in which they work.

Compounding these differences is a difference in the professional status of trainers and LAs, with trainers always being positioned as professionals and LAs only occasionally being positioned as such. This inconsistent professional status meant that LAs had mixed responses to their training: Many LAs felt their training was supportive to their work while others experienced confusion in some aspects of training. Additionally, not all LAs were able to share the knowledge and skills that they had with their peers. Given the large numbers of LAs at LPL and their varied backgrounds, it is reasonable to imagine that trainers, concerned with imparting information to large groups, would not be able to make space for LAs to share such knowledge and skills.

In the following discussion chapter, the implications of these findings for LAs, trainers, and early literacy educators in other contexts will be explored. Specifically, I will discuss the significance of both the separate communities of LAs and trainers and the differing views of

professionalism within these communities. I will also consider what differing levels of

professionalism might look like for LAs, and whether or not that is desirable in this and other

contexts.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

In this final chapter, I summarize the answers to my research questions and discuss the implications of these findings for both LPL and those who work in similar early literacy learning spaces. In particular, I discuss the significance of the separate communities and differing professional statuses of trainers and LAs at LPL, and consider what the implications might be for different approaches to LA preparation. I also discuss the limitations of this study and consider possible directions for future studies that could extend the findings here.

Research Questions Revisited

The research questions that drove this study are:

1. What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?, and

2. How is early literacy training realized?

Below, I discuss each of these in turn and, drawing upon the findings described in chapter four, answer these questions. After describing the responses to my research questions, I discuss the relationships between training content, training processes, and communities of practice at LPL.

What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants?

Through observations, document analysis, interviews, and a survey, my study found that, at LPL, early literacy training for library assistants communicated ideas about diversity, room set-up, and recommended ways to prepare for early literacy programs. Additionally, the content of early literacy training revealed trainers' ideas around early literacy development. Training content also communicated expectations around consistency between programs. Below, I summarize my findings in relation to this content.

In terms of the information specified by trainers and shared in training, observations and interviews revealed that library assistants learned about several ideas. First, the training sessions

communicated LPL's conception of diversity, which was never explicitly defined but seemed to be an umbrella term for the many dimensions along which an individual might vary, such as physical abilities, sexual orientation, or ethnic/racial background. LAs were reminded to keep such dimensions in mind as they planned and conducted early literacy programs and to maintain a welcoming environment for program participants. While the need to consider diversity was stressed in training, LAs were not given tools to sensitively gain the knowledge of children and families necessary for enacting culturally responsive, community-driven early literacy programs (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008).

In two of the three training sessions, room set-up was another focal point. It was communicated that rooms should be arranged to maximize accessibility and that available materials should include name tags, storybooks, and resources for parents. Additionally, training included recommended ways to prepare for early literacy programs (shadow, assist, and connect), with the expectation that LAs seek out such preparation methods.

Across all training sessions, content also included techniques and strategies that support early literacy development, including storybook reading, children's songs, and rhymes. One training session included examples of dialogic reading, but this was presented as a controversial practice. Additionally, LAs were told about the need for oral language skills in order to build other literacy skills such as alphabet knowledge, which was linked to the reading of storybooks and repetition in early literacy programs. LAs also learned how to extend more traditional strategies such as storybook reading through movement-based narratives like yoga-pose stories, along with discussions of the importance of visuals and tactile experiences for the development of narrative skills. The importance of songs to the development of oral language skills was also highlighted in training, with LAs being given the autonomy to change the lyrics of songs to that

of other languages if they were so able. The autonomy given to LAs to change the language of program songs is an example of how LAs could be culturally responsive in their programming if given access to knowledge of children and families' cultural contexts.

At times, the techniques and strategies intended to develop early literacy skills were presented without clear information about the criteria used to select them and/or the evidence base to support them. Often, these elements were offered as lists without context, and discussions of their use centered on ways they could be adapted. In this way, LAs were positioned to use their interpretations of this information to fuel their early literacy programming decisions. For example, training conversations focused more on adapting curriculum materials such as nursery rhymes to different linguistic contexts rather than the theory supporting the use of such materials.

LAs also learned about expectations surrounding consistency, or the level of similarity between programs, in training. Sometimes these were explicitly discussed by trainers, and sometimes these were implied expectations. These expectations came from the families who attend early literacy programs, the trainers, and each branch's management. Depending on the training session, the level of expected consistency varied, but LAs were always encouraged to maintain consistency when possible.

How is early literacy training realized?

Using observations, document analysis, interviews, and a survey, I found that, at LPL, early literacy training for library assistants was led by trainers who were selected through informal processes and developed training content in-house, leading to a discrete community of trainers. In terms of training processes, early literacy training most often involved a one-way lecture, interspersed with small- and large-group activities and discussions. Below, I summarize my findings in relation to this content, beginning with the trainer selection process.

In interviews, the learning and development team discussed how the informal criteria and process for selecting trainers led to the privileging of well connected individuals within the library. Additionally, the criteria favored long-term, permanent librarians over newer, temporary, and/or library assistant staff. While this emphasis on a particular kind of staff member makes sense from an organizational point of view, it does have the disadvantage of unintentionally negating the potential early literacy knowledge that some newer or temporary LAs might have. It may also privilege library staff of particular genders, ethnicities, ability statuses, or other backgrounds due to their likelihood of being long-term, permanent staff, which may undermine LPL's attempts to create community-driven programming (American Library Association, 2011).

This staffing model also assumes that all librarians have knowledge of early literacy programming and therefore can act as trainers, even though interviews with trainers at LPL have revealed a range of understandings. In other words, the criteria for selecting trainers assumes that all librarians have the domain, or knowledge and skills, needed for developing and implementing early literacy program training and that LAs do not, furthering the sense that these two groups make up separate communities (Kunter et al., 2013; Lave, 1991).

By relying on informal selection criteria and favoring one kind of staff member, even when it may be that this kind of staff member may not be the optimal trainer in terms of their knowledge, LPL inadvertently contributed to a closed community of trainers, separate from LAs and without clear indication of how an LA might seek to become part of this community.

Some trainers at LPL saw themselves as the originators of training content, while others perceived themselves more as receiving pre-made content that they could then enact. As previously discussed, these differing views of training content point to an apprenticing

relationship between older and newer trainers, with older trainers acting as the masters and newer ones beginning to inherit and understand the masters' tools (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997). In this way, the group of trainers acted as a closed community with levels of cognitive apprenticeship within itself, akin to professional organizations that self-regulate training and certification (Shulman, 2005).

Additionally, the decision-making process around the content of training further points to a closed community of trainers. The L & D specialist, Ashley, along with some of the trainers indicated in interviews that they were the decision makers in terms of content. Neither Ashley nor the trainers described how the views or needs of LAs were considered in this process - instead, they based their decisions on what they perceived the needs of LAs to be or their own priorities. Once again, it may be that proceeding in this way is the most efficient, especially given that content is updated every two years and must be shared with hundreds of LAs, and it may be that this process serves to create a consistent early literacy programming experience for LPL, which are very important aspects of training. Nevertheless, this process does reinforce a separation between the trainers and the LAs, with the latter being directly affected by the content of training while also being unable to directly affect it.

Once planned, training sessions generally used a lecture-based format in which LAs were introduced to ideas and resources and occasionally had the opportunity to attempt to try new techniques. In the various training sessions, there were opportunities for some small- and large-group activities and discussions, though these were occasionally skipped due to time constraints. While this mostly lecture-based format allows for the efficient dissemination of lots of material to large groups, because there is considerable privilege given to the trainers' voice, the format positions the trainer as the only participant with valuable knowledge. LAs, on the other hand,

were not given many opportunities to share their experiences and deeply explore the knowledge of their peers, indicating that their knowledge was not valued in the same way as that of trainers.

When viewed through the criteria for identifying professional educational work and the lens of situated cognition, the structure of training allows trainers to share their knowledge while positioning LAs as though they have limited professional knowledge to contribute (Kunter et al., 2013). While it may be that some LAs do not have relevant knowledge to contribute, the use of primarily lecture-based training format does not allow for the deep understanding of the theory and metacognition needed for professional work, further positioning LAs as non-professionals (Bromme, 2001; Shulman, 1998). Moreover, a lecture-focused format is contrary to what situated cognition theorists would call legitimate peripheral participation in that it does not allow for the observation of existing practitioners followed by the increasing performance of the tasks in question (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Despite the largely one-way nature of training sessions, trainers also explicitly invited LAs to engage in behaviors that allow legitimate peripheral participation, such as shadowing. However, LAs described those behaviors as though they were not official aspects of training, and some faced barriers in terms of access. Legitimate peripheral participation is the purview of newcomers to a community, and the lack of such participation here implies that LAs are not considered as part of the same community as trainers. Therefore, the format of training separates trainers and LAs into two groups, one with professional competence to share and one without.

Training content, processes, and professional status at LPL.

Trainers and LAs were afforded differing professional statuses within LPL. Trainers, consistently viewed as professionals, were able to direct the content of training, regulate their own internal training, and share their knowledge with other trainers and LAs. On the other hand,

LAs were viewed more variably, with different elements of training either bolstering or undermining their professional status. Because of this variable view, LAs did not always receive the content or manner of training that they desired, often receiving information instead of sharing their existing knowledge (Bromme, 2001).

The content and processes of training described above led to two distinct communities at LPL: trainers and LAs. Because they form separate communities, trainers provided LAs with the information needed for their work (i.e., the domain of LAs) but were not able to consistently provide authentic tasks that rely on, enact, or extend this foundation. Additionally, trainers were not able to benefit from the knowledge of LAs, echoing some of the tensions felt by the expert novices described in Williams' (2013) study of teacherly communities of practice. Based on this separation of communities and inconsistent professionalizing view, LAs described a particular pattern for how they responded to their training, which will be discussed further below.

In interviews, LAs communicated that they generally viewed training content favorably. For example, LAs described positive responses to discussions of program plan formats, which they used to design early literacy programs along with other techniques and strategies that LAs could immediately implement in their programs.

After completing training, and sometimes before, LAs reported pursuing their own means of extending their training, which often relied on their peers. Using shadowing, meetings with their in-branch colleagues, existing program plans, and the actual enactment of programs, LAs built upon their in-person training. All of these supplemental actions align with the tenets of situated cognition in that they are authentic tasks that provide LAs with increasing levels of independence as they learn more and more about early literacy programs (Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1991). In other words, LAs used their early literacy training as a starting point to inform

the additional training they pursued at their home branches in order to create their own hybrid training programs.

Additionally, these augmentations to training are elements that are consistently seen in other, more officially professional communities. For example, shadowing and relying on peers for resources and information is seen within clinical rounds in medical school, teacher preparation, and other professional communities (Shulman, 2005; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Because LAs pursued these aspects, it is likely that a more official professional identity, recognized by LPL, amongst LAs would allow them to more fully and completely create and expand training opportunities that resonate within their community. For example, more official recognition of the benefits of self-regulating their knowledge and deepening in their focus on the "crucial problems" of early literacy programming - recognition that would come from establishing a professional identity - might lead to more LAs taking up the training practices that their peers have found beneficial, and more managers giving them the room to do so (Kunter et al., 2013; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

Communities at LPL and the role of previous work and educational experiences.

The implementation of formal training and the supplemental informal training practices of LAs are also informed by their previous work and educational experiences. For LAs, previous work and educational experiences informed their literacy programming practices in several ways. First, while it was a small group, LAs with previous teaching experience and/or coursework in Education relied on their teaching skills and knowledge in their early literacy programming work. In particular, these LAs incorporated elements that they had learned from teaching, such as fingerplays, rhymes, and other types of oral language development activities, when planning and enacting early literacy programs. They also used their previous teaching and Education

experience and knowledge to give them confidence and legitimacy in early literacy programming, and described sharing their knowledge with other LAs and with librarians. LAs without the same background did not have the same skills or knowledge, and did not express the same feelings of confidence or legitimacy. Therefore, the sub-group of LAs with teaching-specific knowledge and experience - in other words, previous related professional experience - had the ability to create and enact early literacy programs that other LAs did not as long as they worked in branches that supported this autonomy.

Those without teaching-specific knowledge or experience discussed other elements from their previous work and educational experiences that informed their literacy programming practices. For example, an LA discussed the connections between literature degrees and readers' advisory as a helpful element of their work and educational backgrounds. However, unlike those with teaching or Education backgrounds, these LAs did not form a cohesive group with similar stances on their previous experiences.

Observational data also revealed that, in some instances, previous work and educational experiences can inform LAs' understandings of early literacy. In one observation of training, a discussion about the need for "commentary" (one LA's term for dialogic reading) led to a trainer indicating that the decision to incorporate dialogic reading into programs was up to each LA. For the LAs at that training session, no clear guidance on this practice was given, which means that each LA would then have to rely on their previous experiences when planning an early literacy program. The particular LA who raised the question of "commentary" may have made the decision to exclude dialogic reading in their future programs, based on their statement that another trainer told them to avoid the practice. In the absence of sound theoretical or evidence-based knowledge in training sessions, LAs would have to rely on their previous experiences to

inform their literacy programming practices, which may or may not align with current

understandings of early literacy development.

Implications and Applications

The findings from this study about the features of early literacy training and the responses

of LAs to this training have implications for both the site of the study, LPL, trainers and early

literacy educators at other sites, such as other public libraries, community centers, or other sites

of public education, and parents. Below, I discuss these implications for LPL and then explore

what these findings mean for other sites. I then conclude this section by considering what these

findings mean for parents of young children.

Implications for Longlake Public Library.

In terms of the early literacy content of training, LPL may benefit from more deliberate

and continuous attention to strategies related to early literacy development and the evidence base

that supports them. For example, the contradictory discussion over the benefits of dialogic

reading could be replaced with clear rationales so that LAs would be positioned to make

informed curricular decisions when creating and enacting programs.

Additionally, a recognition of the knowledge of LAs who come into LPL with related

previous professional experiences, such as teachers, may support a streamlining of training to

align what trainers and LAs desire. Focusing on hiring LAs with specific, related previous

experiences may promote the sharing of that knowledge with other LAs, strengthening the

knowledge base of LAs in general (Bromme, 2001). Situating LAs with a more cemented

professional status may also provide them with more opportunities to pursue the kinds of training

that they find beneficial, such as shadowing peers, as discussed above. In recognizing the early

literacy knowledge of LAs with related previous experiences, LPL would position LAs to seek

support from within their communities collaboratively, a hallmark of effective educator development (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Moreover, a clear professional status for LAs would enable them to contribute their situation-related, experience-based knowledge to training, augmenting the knowledge base available to all LAs (Bromme, 2001).

A focus on hiring LAs with related previous professional experiences may allow LPL to further change its early literacy programming structure to one that has fewer LAs conducting early literacy programming more often. In other words, some LAs could specialize in early literacy work, in much the same way as teachers specialize in subject areas and age groups. This would allow training content to shift from what some LAs consider to be a too-brief and sometimes confusing overview to a place where deep learning occurs around complex ideas, building upon the existing knowledge of early literacy-specific LAs. Moreover, this kind of model would mean that LAs could credibly develop their own professional learning community centered on early literacy programming, an act which has been identified as key to the development of relevant knowledge among educators (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Having this structure would also mean that LPL branch managers could have higher expectations of LAs, since they would come in with the same level of base knowledge and would be expected to continuously deepen their thoughtfulness.

However, given the constraints that LPL may face in terms of funding, current union-negotiated hiring practices, and the existing LA complement, it may not be possible to incorporate such changes. Other approaches, though, may be possible within the current structure. For example, LPL trainers could consider why there are elements of training that LAs tended to respond favorably to, such as the hands-on aspects of training, and decide how to bridge the divide between these elements and the less favorably viewed ones. In particular,

trainers could consider incorporating explicit rationales or moments of meta-cognition to support LAs in understanding strategies that support early literacy. In addition, more consideration and direct incorporation of pre-reading materials into the face-to-face training sessions could be beneficial. For example, discussion questions that prompt reflection and application of the pre-reading into the early literacy work of LAs may alleviate confusion amongst LAs (e.g., pre-reading around the evidence behind dialogic reading that is then discussed by LAs may clarify this process and its benefits) and can demonstrate how LAs might take evidence-based practices and adapt or adopt them to their contexts. Moreover, increasing the expectations around and time given to apply evidence to early literacy programming would push LPL as a whole closer to their ideal of consistency from branch to branch, since LAs would be able to make evidence-based decisions that they have discussed with their peers. If approached thoughtfully, this would likely be more beneficial to consistency than the use of a shared plan which some LAs later decide to change or abandon.

Additionally, changing training in order to be increasingly multi-pronged could smooth over differences from branch to branch and support LAs more fully. Currently, the centralized model of training is one that is dependent on managers, with LAs unable to attend courses if their managers do not schedule them in. Furthermore, interviews with LAs revealed that same managers do not believe in the worth of training for temporary LAs, though these LAs are still asked to conduct early literacy programs. Changing training to be less dependent on managers could support a larger group of LAs to experience training sooner in their work lives. For example, LPL's Learning and Development team could make training mandatory for all LAs in their first six weeks of employment. Guidelines such as these remove the decision from

managers and can streamline the process for LAs, providing all LAs with early literacy training before they begin programming.

Finally, including information on how LPL defines literacy (e.g., what counts as a "text") and how LAs might learn more about their program participants would position them to use children and families' cultural practices, understandings, and viewpoints when planning and enacting programs (Serafini & Gee, 2017). This sensitivity to difference would support participants in feeling welcomed and included at LPL (Gay, 2002).

Implications for trainers and early literacy educators at other sites.

For those who provide early literacy support at other sites, such as other public libraries, community centers, or other sites of public education, this study has many potential implications for practice. As previously discussed, LPL is recognized for its high quality literacy programs, and as such its training can be instructive for similar organizations. In particular, this study provides early literacy educators at various sites with a sense of helpful content for potential educator training: An emphasis on oral language skills, attention to repetition, exploring multiple forms of narratives through alternative storytelling methods, discussing the importance of songs, and the linking of these ideas to the home languages of families are ideas that are supportive for early literacy development and, as such, should be included in training for similar programs.

This study also demonstrates that those who hire and train early literacy educators to provide program-based support to children and families should consider the many facets of professional practice and what their hiring and training practices do and do not align with in that regard. For example, early literacy programs that depend on the use of script depend on a view of educators as having less of a professional role than those programs that allow educators to create their own plan. While it may be that some sites can only function with the use of scripts - for

example, those with multiple short-term volunteers - being aware of the implied professional status of educators as communicated through hiring and training practices ensures that educators can be given a fuller understanding of their potential role when choosing which institution to work within. For those educators who value autonomy and creativity, having clear communications about expectations around these aspects can be supportive in choosing a work environment.

That library assistants at LPL largely understood the need for consistency across different branches may also have implications for educators at other, similar sites. In particular, the ways in which LPL communicated expectations around consistency could be adopted for training at other sites, should consistency between programs be a necessary feature of other early literacy programs. For example, sites that use scripted programs created by those with extensive knowledge of early literacy development for particular groups may wish to emphasize consistency in similar ways. This could be sites that have programs with songs or rhymes adapted for or chosen in response to a particular group's home language, for instance, where reverting to the dominant language would not be as supportive of early literacy development.

In addition, an understanding of the benefits and constraints of professional status is key for other sites where early literacy learning occurs such as preschools. As this study demonstrated, those with professional experience, such as former teachers who had informal planning conversations with librarians, felt legitimate in providing advice and planning their early literacy programs when able to do so. In this way, the domain, or knowledge and skills, that goes along with membership in a professional community can be of benefit to sites where early literacy learning occurs, as that knowledge is likely to be shared. However, this study also demonstrated that those with longstanding membership in professional communities, such as

long-term librarians, sometimes rely on early literacy knowledge that is out-of-date or based on their own experiences rather than current research. This out-of-date or potentially idiosyncratic knowledge is then likely to be shared and replicated across early literacy learning sites. As such, it is imperative that those who are in professional capacities where they may be asked to share their early literacy expertise are provided with their own opportunities to stay up-to-date on related theoretical knowledge.

Furthermore, taking into account the multiple backgrounds of each educator can lead to a richer environment for all in many contexts. For example, allowing educators with backgrounds in Education to lead program design in public libraries while allowing educators with backgrounds in other areas to use their expertise to create a team that works together can increase the professional satisfaction of all educators. Additionally, honoring existing expertise makes it more likely that those with knowledge of the theory and evidence base for early literacy development would rely on that base when developing programming, increasing the effectiveness of programs (as long as this knowledge is up-to-date, as discussed above). Moreover, such an approach means that each site can tailor its programming to its mission, content, and community without losing the elements that foster early literacy development.

Similarly, the backgrounds of program participants must be considered with sensitivity. As this analysis has uncovered, it is not clear how participants' varied racial backgrounds, class statuses, gender identities, and ability levels might be accounted for when planning drop-in early literacy programming that is open to all. However, this analysis has also uncovered that it is possible for training to introduce the need for considering difference and the role of public libraries and other public spaces in being welcoming and inclusive. The next imperative step for these sites is to construct ways to ascertain and respond to these differences without

essentializing or demeaning children and families. Part of this work is to provide space and time for early literacy educators to think critically about their own subjectivities as a key element of inclusive programming.

Finally, sites where early literacy learning occurs may benefit from examining the relationships between theoretical knowledge, its applications, and what happens "in the room" - these aspects of educator preparation and practice cannot exist without one another. As such, it is in each institution's best interests to consider where these elements align and where they disagree, in order to address potential confusions. As has been demonstrated in this study, if knowledge of theory is lacking, educators may rely on what they believe or what they experienced previously, which may be incorrect and/or out-of-date. Moreover, educators who are not provided with rationales for the use of some early literacy development techniques, such as dialogic reading, may adopt or adapt them incorrectly or only partially, as they are not positioned to identify which elements of the techniques are supportive to early literacy learners. These incorrect practices may prevent children and families from improving their early literacy skills, negating their participation in these programs. As such, sites of early literacy learning need to be deliberate about all aspects to ensure that children and families receive the information and support that best serves them.

Implications for parents and parent education.

This study revealed that parents are conceptualized by this public library as customers who desire consistency in their early literacy programs. This view runs the risk of assimilating parents into what is often seen as the norm - a white, middle-class majority - since their cultural contexts are not being considered when consistency is prized (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additionally, there is also the potential for a hierarchy to exist between LAs and parents in the

same way as there exists one between trainers and LAs, with the former positioned as more knowledgeable than the latter in both instances. Should this hierarchy exist between LAs and parents, there is a risk that the strengths of parents might not be valued as part of early literacy development. Moreover, as the majority of LPL staff (and, indeed, public library staff in general) identified or presented as white and female, parents who differ from these ethnic and gender categories may require extra support and attention in order to feel welcome and included in early literacy programs (American Library Association, 2011). LPL's attentiveness to differences such as home language and ability are an important first step in this process, and could continue to be built on by organizations and individuals who support parents.

Limitations of the study

This study faced several limitations that restrict the generalizability of its conclusions. Firstly, having a very small group of LAs to draw conclusions from is quite limiting, since this small group may not reflect the ideas and experiences of LAs as a whole. As such, caution should be exercised when considering the potential applications of this study. Further, an even smaller pool of LAs made up the group with past educational and professional experiences in Education, making it ill-advised to overgeneralize their past experiences to other spaces and groups. Additionally, the review of related literature in chapter two focused on research from English-speaking environments such as parts of Canada and similar countries, further limiting the transferability of the study, especially those findings related to the early literacy content of training. However, exploratory case studies are intended to describe a particular case in a real-world context, not to produce generalizable results, so these limitations have been anticipated in the design of the study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

Additionally, due to constraints within LPL, I was not able to ask about some specific markers of identity, such as ethnicity, in this study as I had originally planned. A shortened version of this question appeared only in the survey and was optional. This restriction limited my ability to illuminate the interplay and impact of elements such as ethnicity, race, class, and gender on LAs, libraries, and early literacy program training. For example, it is possible that the Learning and Development team at LPL may be selecting trainers who are primarily white and female given that they are more likely to be long-term, permanent library staff, leading to an over-representation of particular groups (American Library Association, 2011). Unfortunately, as I was unable to collect data relevant to these issues, such an interpretation is outside the scope of this dissertation.

Avenues for Future Research

Future iterations of this study could extend in several dimensions, some of which could mitigate some of the limitations discussed above. For example, gathering similar data from more LAs or from different public library systems could further illuminate or corroborate the patterns seen in this study. Additionally, gathering more equity, diversity, and inclusion-related data, such as information on the ethnicity, race, class, and gender of both LAs and trainers could address an important limitation of this study. Examining this data for possible connections between how trainers create training, the features of training, and how LAs respond to training is needed to support the field of educator preparation and public libraries in better understanding how these elements impact LAs, libraries, and early literacy education.

This study could also be extended to investigate other dimensions of how LAs perceive and use their early literacy training. For example, observing and documenting early literacy programs themselves could reveal whether LAs are relying on and using the content

communicated in training, their own approaches to early literacy programming, a combination of them, or something else altogether. An understanding of these dimensions is needed in order to identify which practices should be included in early literacy training, which should be expanded, and which should be removed. Identifying these features of training is key for those at sites where early literacy learning occurs in order to support educators.

Those who experience these early literacy programs make up a key population for an extension of this study. For example, seeking to learn how families experience these programs is needed to support the field of early literacy in understanding what, if any, difference these programs make to things like caregiver perceptions of early literacy, children's library use, later literacy skills, and school readiness.

Collaborations with LPL could also provide avenues for future research. For example, a collaborative project in which early literacy researchers and LPL come together to co-plan and jointly implement new training approaches could be fruitful. One could then investigate whether these new approaches result in changes to early literacy programs in terms of consistency or perceived quality, or to changes in how LAs are viewed (e.g., given more agency by being seen as professionals). The impact of these changes on the likelihood of LAs staying in their jobs for significant periods of time or on their likelihood to pursue librarianship could then be used by LPL and other public libraries in planning their hiring and training approaches.

The above avenues for future research could further illuminate the relationships at play within and among communities of practice, contributing to the literature on this concept. For example, gathering information on the ethnicity, race, class, and gender of both LAs and trainers could provide insights on how these factors relate to membership within communities of practice. This deeper understanding could then be used to ameliorate hiring, training, and work

policies not only for LAs, but also for other kinds of early literacy educators who work within communities of practice.

Conclusion

Public libraries, which tend to be geographically dispersed, free to use, welcoming and oriented to families, are well suited to deliver literacy education for children who are not yet receiving formal schooling (Britton, 2012; Lankes, 2012). However, little research has been conducted to understand and describe the preparation that library staff (called library assistants or LAs at the research site) have in order to provide this preschool literacy education. As such, this study was designed to answer two research questions: What is the content of early literacy training for library assistants? How is early literacy training realized?

This case study, with data from observations, interviews, a survey, and document analysis, illuminated not only what and how LAs learn in training but also factors which impact how LAs describe their experiences of training and planning programs: that consistency from program to program is highly valued, that children and families' contexts are valued and need further attention, and that LAs and their trainers are positioned as separate communities with different professional statuses. This study also revealed that LAs are interested in authentic, embodied, and hands-on tasks in their training. Finally, a small subgroup of LAs with previous experience in the field of Education demonstrated the value they perceived this experience provided to their work as early literacy programmers.

Overall, this study has demonstrated how early literacy training can function to create and sustain communities of practice, along with some of the outcomes possible when practitioners are inconsistently considered professionals in hierarchical organizations (Shulman, 1998). As

such, it offers both public libraries and other literacy-focused organizations an arena to consider what these results might mean for them.

Coda

It has now been almost a decade since I left my library assistant position at my local library. Nevertheless, I often think of the parent who asked me how long she should read to her child. Despite knowing what I know now about early literacy, and having created and lived through this research project, I still lack a 'magic' number of minutes that will produce a literate child. As someone who could now credibly position herself as an early literacy professional, I do not believe that such a number could ever exist. Early literacy and the factors that contribute to it are too complex for sweeping generalizations that flatten our contexts, experiences, and identities. Indeed, the work that I have engaged in over the last seven years has demonstrated to me that my original answer - "I would read until it isn't fun anymore" - was in some ways the most culturally competent answer I could have given (Ladson-Billings, 1995). After all, that answer privileges the knowledge of both the parent and the child, and makes space for them to share their experiences, just as culturally responsive literacy educators advocate for (Serpell et al., 2005).

I wonder, too, if my answer would have differed had I felt as though I was part of a larger community of early literacy educators during my time at LPL. I did not know that much about the other LAs at my branch, and those who may have been supportive (for example, those who had previously been teachers) were obscured by the librarian-focused training that I had experienced. Had I known more about the knowledge, expertise, and humanity of those around me, I would likely have reached out and connected this parent with someone whose understandings of literacy could have made this question answerable.

Appendix A: Survey for Library Assistants

Table 8

Survey for library assistants

This survey was provided to library assistants electronically and all questions were optional. References for this instrument follow this table.

Survey Item	Reference
I would like to start by gathering some information about you. Remember, your responses are confidential.	
*1. What is your **current age**? (in years):*	Fowler, 2014; Gray & Guppy, 2003; Groves et al., 2004; & Sue & Ritter, 2012
*2. What is your **gender**?*	Human Rights Campaign, 2016
*3. What is your **ethnic and racial background**? Choose as many as applicable.* - Caucasian - Visible Minority - Indigenous - Prefer not to respond	

*4. Please list the **languages you communicate in** below. For each language, **choose the number that best fits how well you understand, speak, read, and write it**.*				Adapted from Gail Shuck's LING 205 Course Questionnaire (given to students at the beginning of the semester), in which students are asked to list the languages they know and then rank their proficiency in each using a Likert scale.

1= Not well
2= I can, but with a lot of difficulty
3= I can, but with a little difficulty
4= Very well

Language	*Under stand*	*Speak*	*Read*	*Write*
	1 2 3 4	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*
	1 2 3 4	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*
	1 2 3 4	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*	*1 2 3 4*

*5. Do you hold the following **degrees, diplomas, or certificates**? For each degree, diploma, or certificate held, **please list your major and minor fields** of study.* ***Example**: A Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with Anthropology as a major and Art History as a minor would be entered as:* *Bachelor's Degree: Bachelor of Art, Anthropology (Major), Art History (Minor)* *Bachelor's Degree:* *Master's Degree:* *Doctoral Degree:* *Other degree(s), diploma(s) certificate(s), or endorsement(s):*	Larson, 2014
*6. Do you or did you ever hold an interim or permanent **teaching certificate**? (if yes, go to question 7. If no, move to the next section)*	Larson, 2014
*7. Did you **teach in a school**? If so, please indicate **the number of years in the blank**.*	Larson, 2014
*8. When you taught, **which age group/level did you teach**? Please choose all that apply:* *Pre-kindergarten/Preschool* *Elementary (Kindergarten – Grade 6)* *Secondary (Grade 7-12)*	
Now, I would like to find out more information about your work at LPL. When entering dates, please use a MM/YYYY format (for example, December 1995 would be entered as 12/1995). If you are unsure of dates, please estimate to the best of your abilities.	

*9. When did you **begin working for Longlake Public Library**? (please indicate the month and year in MM/YYYY format):*	Fowler, 2014; Gray & Guppy, 2003; Groves et al., 2004; & Sue & Ritter, 2012
*10. Since beginning your work at LPL, **how many early literacy training sessions** have you attended?*	Fowler, 2014; Gray & Guppy, 2003; Groves et al., 2004; & Sue & Ritter, 2012
*11. Which **age group do you spend the most time with** at LPL? Please choose only one.* *0-2 years old* *3-5 years old* *More than 5 years old*	
*12. In an average week, what **percentage of your time do you spend with the age group** you identified in Question 12?* *0-25%* *26-50%* *51-75%* *76-100%*	
*13. Imagine you are facilitating an early literacy program at your branch. In this scenario, what is the **most common advice or information on early literacy you would provide to parents**? Please fill in the blank.*	
The final questions for this survey are below. Please write your response in the text box below each question.	
*14. What were **the dominant factors that influenced your decision to become a library assistant**?*	Larson, 2014

15. Based on your experience as a Library Assistant this year, **what was the most valuable or helpful idea you learned from early literacy training at LPL? What makes it the most valuable or helpful?**	Wright, 2011
16. Is there **anything else you would like to share about early literacy training at LPL***? If so, please use the space below.*	

Survey References

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Library Assistants

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Library Assistants

- What is a typical day like as a library assistant?

- Tell me about the training you received for this position.

- Tell me about your first experience creating an early literacy program (Follow-up: What kinds of resources did you use?)

- Tell me about your first experience delivering an early literacy program (Follow-ups: What were some things you learned in training that you used? What were some things that you wish you had known before you began the program?)

- Tell me about the adults who participate in your programs. (Follow-ups: Are they usually parents, or do they have a different relationship with the children? How involved are they during the program? What do you ask them to do during a program?)

- If I followed you in a typical early literacy program, what would I see you doing?

- What are some common questions from parents or guardians that you receive as a library assistant? (Follow-up: How do you answer those questions?)

- What are some of the expectations that your managers have about the early literacy programs in this branch?

- Where did you work before LPL? Is there anything from that job that you use in your work as a library assistant?

- What is your educational background? Is there anything from your diploma/degree that you use in your work as a library assistant?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Trainers

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Trainers

- How long have you been providing training for LPL?

- What is a typical day like as a trainer for LPL?

- Tell me about the training you received for this position

- Tell me about your first experience creating early literacy program training (Follow-up: What kinds of resources did you use?)

- Tell me about your first experience delivering early literacy program training

- If I followed you in a typical early literacy program training session, what would I see you doing?

- What are some common questions that you receive as a trainer? (Follow-up: How do you answer those questions?)

- When you are training, do you provide advice or information specifically about parents or guardians who participate in programs? (Follow-up: What advice or information do you provide about parents or guardians?)

- What are some of the expectations that your managers have about the early literacy programs at EPL?

- Where did you work before this position? Is there anything from that job that you use in your work as a trainer?

- What is your educational background? Is there anything from your diploma/degree that you use in your work as a trainer?

Appendix D: Qualitative Data Codes

Table 9

Final set of codes for qualitative data

Code	Definition	Data Example
Why LPL	Reasons for choosing LPL as an employer	"I love books and working with people.... I love to talk to people and get to know them."
What programs look like	Descriptions of the activities that occur during an early literacy program	"I think you would see me doing all the rhymes and the songs."
What happens at training	Descriptions from LAs and trainers of the activities and content of training, such as the singing of songs, or small-group discussions. This code is only used for interview data.	"The part [of training] I still remember, is when we did a demo [program] together. All of us trainees acted like kids.... That was the most helpful, I think."
Training in parts	When an LA describes how they spent significant time at LPL before or in-between training sessions.	"So I'd go to kind of one course here, one course there, to kind of hone my programming skills. But it was very spread out, and I still haven't even finished all the core LPL courses."
Roadblocks	In general: When an LA describes the roadblocks they face, and these roadblocks do not fit into one of the sub-code categories below	"There's kind of this paralyzing fear of technology."

	Sub-code: *Time*: Time as a finite resource and an element that impacts their access to training	"Because we're a small branch, it was taking up way too much off desk time to plan a program and come up with everything."
	Sub-code: *Staff*: Staff-related roadblocks (e.g., not enough staff)	"On the floor we have a second staff assigned to assist if they get to 50 people [in a program].... I know that some of the smaller libraries are like, 'Oh. We can do this by ourselves.' Well, yeah. If you have eight people, maybe you don't need two staff, right? It's my personal opinion that we need two people doing every [program], but whatever."
	Sub-code: *Parents*: Parent-related roadblocks, such as attendance or behavior	"They may glance at the handouts, but they don't really talk too much or ask many questions, I've found."
	Sub-code: *Ownership or agency*: Roadblocks related to a lack of ownership or agency	"So we've created this intellectual assembly line where we're assembling these programs. They come pre-assembled, but that work is actually for a lot of staff quite enjoyable and fun."
	Sub-code: *Over-reliance on the past*: When previous experience prevented LAs from attending training	"When I finally became a library assistant, because I had already had kind of the previous LPL job, I think they skipped out on a lot of the training."
	Sub-code: *Not qualified*: A lack of qualifications as a roadblock	"And I know that staff have expressed in staff meetings that they don't feel qualified to offer early literacy sprinkles."
	Sub-code: *No programming*: When an LA describes how they do not have the opportunity to facilitate early literacy programs	"When I was first a library assistant, it was at the downtown location, and there the children's division is separate so... I didn't do any children's programming there."

	Sub-code: *Consistency*: When the notion of consistency between branches is discussed as a roadblock to attending training	"In the name of consistency we've taken away some of that creativity and autonomy from people that causes them to enjoy their jobs and remain in their jobs for a long time."
	Sub-code: *Accessibility*: Descriptions of how difficult it is to access training	"I think a lot of the reason why I didn't get as much training as I wanted, or needed even, was due to it being a temporary position. I think there was a lot of, 'You're temporary, it doesn't matter.'"
Relying on general knowledge	Descriptions of how LAs use their general knowledge (i.e., not from from previous work or education, but from other sources) in their role as an early literacy programmer or early literacy program trainer	"While I have no biological children on my own, I've raised nine…. I have experience…. I also would volunteer at things, like there'd be these big family outings, so the kids would be around."
Recruiting trainers	Descriptions of the process through which trainers are selected, recruited, and prepared for early literacy program training	"I would say right now it's a pretty informal process of me just being familiar with different people."
Questions from parents	When questions from parents at the library are described and/or discussed	"Can I take a picture of the rhymes you did? Do you have any music you can recommend? Lots about music…. I don't tend to get a lot of questions after the program."
Previous work	When previous paid work is described	"Retail, waitress, I worked for catering company for years."
	Sub-code: *Relying on previous work*: When LAs describe how their previous work experience is used in their current programming work	"Catering is probably the job that I fall back those skills I draw upon the most…. Because in catering, everyday I would be in a new place doing new things, talking to new people, having a smile."

Previous education	When post-secondary education (either at the undergraduate or graduate level) is described	"I actually have a music ed degree…. And it is for secondary education, so I was trained to teach like band and choir in high school."
	Sub-code: *Relying on previous education*: When LAs describe how their education is used in their current programming work	Researcher: "Is there anything from your degree that you use in your work right now?" Interviewee: "When I was doing programming, I did a lot of singing and rhythm kind of stuff."
Not English	When the use of a language other than English is discussed	"Because if it's in another language... if I don't know the language,... I don't want to butcher anyone's language."
Most helpful part of training	When LAs describe the element(s) of training that they find most helpful and/or valuable	"The part [of training] I still remember, is when we did a demo [program] together. All of us trainees acted like kids.... That was the most helpful, I think."
Informal training	Sub-code: *Shadowing*: when an LA watches another LA as a way to prepare for facilitating early literacy programs	"I think shadowing is what helped me a lot. So, not just like talking about the programs, but watching them done, observing. But I like to learn that way. Maybe not everyone would learn well that way. But yeah, before doing my first story time, I found it really helpful to shadow many more people."
	Sub-code: *Relying on colleagues (formal)*: When an LA has a formal, scheduled meeting with a librarian to discuss resources and program plans	"Our community librarian at [branch], she went to some kind of conference that was about early literacy and brain development and she came back to a staff meeting and had really good feedback for us about how to improve."
	Sub-code: *Relying on colleagues (informal)*: When, over lunch or break times, colleagues share resources like new songs or books	"Pretty much all my training was informal through my colleagues and asking questions."
	Sub-code: *Using existing plans*: When LAs use an existing plan from either the staff intranet or a peer in	"My supervisor pointed me towards our staff web where we have a lot of just program plans and ... actually, I won't say, "A lot." We have a few program plans and so I just took one of

	order to prepare an early literacy program	those. And I felt really overwhelmed, immediately, because it was full of a whole bunch of songs and rhymes that I had never heard of. So as best as I could, I tried to switch them out for all the ones I remembered from my childhood was kind of all I did."
	Sub-code: *Doing it*: When LAs prepare for early literacy programs by, in the absence of training, actually conducting the programs.	"I programmed for about a year and a half before I was sent on course."
Ideal training	When LAs and trainers describe what their ideal training structure and/or content would look like	"I would love to have just gotten almost like a week or something of just basic programming training from the get-go."
Ideal resources	When LAs and trainers describe what their ideal resources for conducting early literacy programs would look like	"I think it would have been really great to have a recommended reads portion.... If you want to read further about these and deepen your knowledge, here's some books in our collection you can read, which is an easy enough thing to do when you work in a library. And to be given some time to really work on those or to do some deeper reading I think would be really, really crucial. Because I do really feel that we need to build staff confidence and competency in being early literacy experts."
Gatekeeping	When the differing roles and backgrounds of LAs and librarians are discussed	"When I came here,... I realized we were asking all these library assistants who had none of this background to do story time and that was really shocking to me. I felt like, how do they do this without that theory?"
First time programming	Descriptions of the first time LAs prepared for and conducted an early literacy program	"It felt awkward to me because while I had the program plan and I had all these songs and rhymes put together, I remember not understanding how the flow of [the program] should go."
Existing resources	Descriptions of the resources that are currently available at LPL	"We have a cart of materials. We've got a big plastic envelope, and it's got kind of the lesson plan, sheets with pictures of the signs, a

		flannel, if they're using a flannel. Then the songs are already queued on the playlist on the iPad. The books would be there and then anything else."
Content of training	Used to code observational and document data for instances of content in training sessions. For example, when room management strategies are shared, or expectations concerning programs are discussed	"An LA asks if there is a limit on the number of people that should be allowed to participate in the program."
	Sub-code: *Early literacy content*: When early literacy-related content is shared or discussed in training	"[The trainer] switches the PowerPoint presentation slide and begins talking about adapting rhymes, which is changing them to fit a certain topic or group."
Consistency	Discussions of the notion of consistency between branches.	Learning outcome from ECF 2: "Recognize some of the varying needs and expectations of families attending [LPL]'s early literacy programs - families expect consistency."
Community - Parents	When collaborative moves designed to build relationships/community with parents are discussed and/or described	"[The trainer] explains that the parents are the most important thing to consider in the program."
Collaborative Practice	In observational data, strategies designed to allow for collaboration amongst trainees in order to build community and/or generate content.	"[The trainer] then directs us to discuss sprinkles in partners to see if we can think of any examples."
Choosing resources	When participants discuss the methods and/or criteria they have for choosing resources	"I just kind of think about, like, seasonal…. Yeah, I feel like seasonal is a huge theme. Like, it just makes sense. When it's summertime, 'Let's do like outdoorsy books,' or you know, go to the beach, stuff like that."

Changes at LPL	Descriptions of changes in terms of training delivery, training content, program delivery, scheduling, or content over their time with the library	"I feel like since I've been here it's been really evolving - the way that we have been doing training - and I can barely remember the training that I received."
	Sub-code: *Training use*: When changes relate to how training is used in programming work	"When I first got here that was the type of training that I was taking. Very, very quickly I became involved with organizing the training and running the training so for me a lot of my training has been putting the training together. We shifted away from doing specific programs to targeting groups."
	Sub-code: *Work or Education*: When changes relate to the use of previous work or education in programming	"Something I remember from my time with [mentor teacher] was his comment that at the first school I was at they did. a lot of theme-based stuff. And he said to me, he's like, 'This is a very old way of teaching.' …. And so, I think at a staff meeting… we talked about that…"

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    income families. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 24*(1), 1-15.

Vita

Alvina Mardhani-Bayne

Education

Certificate of University Teaching	Syracuse University	2015
MSc, Linguistics	University of Alberta	2011
BA (Hons), History of Art, Design, and Visual Culture	University of Alberta	2009
BA, Linguistics and Anthropology	University of Alberta	2007

Awards and Honours

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award	Syracuse University	2017
William D. Sheldon Fellowship	Syracuse University	2015
Research & Creative Grant	Syracuse University	2015
Himan Brown Fund Travel Award	Syracuse University	2013
Graduate Student Scholarship	Alberta Advanced Education	2011
J-A Bombardier Scholarship	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada	2010
Walter H. Johns Graduate Fellowship	University of Alberta	2010
Jason Lang Scholarship	Government of Alberta	2004-06
Alexander Rutherford Scholarship	Government of Alberta	2003

Post-Secondary Teaching Experience

Instructor, Infant and Toddler Care and Development, MacEwan University	2019
Instructor, Literacy Across the Curriculum, Syracuse University	2015
Field Supervisor, Literacy Across the Curriculum, Syracuse University	2013-15

Presentations and Workshops

Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference	Co-Presenter "Action Research within a Public School District: Successes, Challenges, and Limitations in Building a Culture of Research"	2019
Literacy Research Association Conference	Roundtable Presenter "Early Childhood Literacy Training in Public Libraries: A Descriptive Case Study of Library Assistants' Training, Previous Experiences, and Practices"	2018
Books, Publishing, and Libraries Conference	Paper Presenter "Early Childhood Literacy Education in Public Libraries: How Life Before the Library Matters"	2018
University of Alberta Festival of Teaching and Learning	Workshop Co-Presenter "Making a Big Class Feel Like a Small One: Small-Group Discussions in Classes of Over 100 Students," "Exit Tickets to Encourage Active Engagement in the Post-Secondary Classroom," and "Research Critical Thinking (RCT) Activity"	2017
University of Alberta Graduate Student Research Showcase	Poster Presenter "Early Childhood Literacy Training in Public Libraries: Preliminary Data from a Descriptive Case Study of Library Assistants' Training, Previous Experiences, and Practices"	2017
National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention	Co-Presenter "Writing for their Lives: Supporting Civically and Community-Engaged Writing"	2015
Central New York Reading Council Annual Teacher's Conference	Workshop Facilitator "Encouraging Student Authorship through Technology"	2015
SUNY Oswego Oswego Writing Institute	Co-Presenter "Radical Youth Literacies: Moving Toward Civically and Community-Engaged Writing"	2014
Syracuse University Writing Our Lives Writing Conference	Parent Workshop Facilitator "Listen Up!: Communication as an Act of Love"	2013

Publications

Haddix, M., & Mardhani-Bayne, A. (2016). Writing Our Lives: The Power of Youth Literacies and Community Engagement. In S. Greene, K. Burke, & M. McKenna (Eds.), *Youth Voices, Literacies, and Civic Engagement*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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University Service

Syracuse University School of Education Diversity Committee	2014-15
Graduate Students' Association Departmental Councillor	2010-11
Graduate Students' Association Student Affairs Committee	2010-11
University of Alberta's New Student Orientation Volunteer	2004-11
Department of Linguistics Master's Student Representative	2009-10
University of Alberta's Student Life Sustainability Advisory Committee	2008-09

Journal Editing and Reviewing

Member, Editorial Review Board, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*	2015-present