Educators' Storybook Reading Practices, Attitudes Toward Adopting Dialogic Reading, and Child Language Status in an Inclusive Early Learning Environment

Ruth Gorlin
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EDUCATORS’ STORYBOOK READING PRACTICES,
ATTITUDES TOWARD ADOPTING DIALOGIC READING,
AND CHILD LANGUAGE STATUS IN AN INCLUSIVE EARLY
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

by

RUTH GORLIN
M.A. University of Central Florida, 1985

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
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Major Professor: Jacqueline Towson
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive study is to characterize the natural context of routine storybook reading in an inclusive early learning environment by looking at educator variables and child language status. Early childhood researchers and scholars have well documented the importance of oral language development in young children for future reading and academic success. Evidence-based research literature advocates engaging young children in high quality interactive reading experiences, such as Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005), as effective means to facilitate young children’s oral language development and emergent literacy acquisition. By understanding the features of natural story-time routines, researchers, speech-language pathologists, and early childhood administrators can better isolate the variables and develop models of educating early childhood practitioners in high quality professional learning programs for learning Dialogic Reading strategies. Data are presented for four early childhood educators in an inclusive early learning center and thirty-four young children, ranging in age from three- to five-years, populated naturally across their classrooms. Data were collected through demographic questionnaires, video-recorded observations of routine story-time activities, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) Stages of Concern Questionnaire (S0CQ) (Hall & Hord, 2019), and language assessment measures. Study results provide a unique description of the participating educators’ storybook reading behaviors and their attitudes towards adopting Dialogic Reading as a new instructional practice, along with the quantified oral language needs of the children in their preschool classes. Results from this descriptive study provide an important contribution to researchers and practitioners to inform development of individualized high-quality professional learning programs related to Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) as an instructional interactive storybook reading practice.
For Todd, Mom, Dad, Connie, John, and Moishe,  
in loving memoriam.  
I miss you every day.  

Shalom Aleichem  
“Peace be upon you”
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHA</td>
<td>American Speech-Language Hearing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBAM</td>
<td>Concerns Based Adoption Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Child Development Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>Classroom Assessment Scoring System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROWD</td>
<td>Completion, Recall, Open-ended, Wh-question, Distancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Division for Early Childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.R.</td>
<td>Dialogic Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECERS-R</td>
<td>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAE</td>
<td>International Academy of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC MAP</td>
<td>Innovation Configuration Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAECY</td>
<td>National Association for The Education of Young Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind (Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELP</td>
<td>National Early Literacy Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPDCI</td>
<td>National Professional Development Center on Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEER</td>
<td>Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Public Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPVT-3</td>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Assessment – Third Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPVT-4</td>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Assessment – Fourth Edition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RTI  Response To Intervention
SoC  Stages of Concern
SoCQ Stages of Concern Questionnaire
TACL-4 Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language – Fourth Edition
UCF  University of Central Florida
U.S.  United States
ZPD  Zone of Proximal Development
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a descriptive study exploring the characteristics of routine story-time activities in an inclusive early childhood learning environment providing an informative framework for future design, implementation, and measurement of a high-quality professional learning program for Dialogic Reading. The purpose of this study is to characterize the natural context of routine storybook reading in an inclusive early learning environment by exploring educator variables and child oral language status. The general understanding of typical story-time will be explored by describing the characteristics of educators’ routine storybook reading behaviors, the educators’ concerns, attitudes, and perceptions toward learning new interactive shared storybook reading strategies, and the characteristics of the children’s oral language knowledge and skills in an inclusive early learning setting. By examining the typical story-time context, using descriptive statistical approaches, we can better understand which language and emergent literacy facilitation strategies are being practiced to support children’s (both typically and atypically developing) language and emergent literacy growth. With this understanding, researchers can better isolate variables and develop models for educating early childhood professionals in facilitating oral language growth during storybook reading activities.

Background of The Study

Preschool is a term widely used to describe any organized program that young children attend prior to entering formal school and is designed to promote children’s social-emotional, language, and literacy development (Mashburn, 2008). Public preschool programs have been available in the United States for decades and were originally dedicated to targeting children
from low-income families to prevent the negative impacts of living in poverty. More recently, the recognition that early intervention has a powerful impact on improving children’s well-being has resulted in the widespread formation of publicly funded preschool and early childhood learning programs. In addition to individual states, the United States federal government recognizes that the majority of children require some type of preschool programming prior to entering formal kindergarten. This recognition has brought forth reform efforts for establishing developmentally appropriate and effective practices in early childhood settings.

**Preschool in the United States**

Preschool programs in the United States are an important part of early educational experiences for young children. Within the preschool education framework in the United States, prekindergarten is a voluntary classroom-based program offering some educational content for children typically of the ages three to five years. Prekindergarten programs are important matters of most state legislatures. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), 40 states report they enroll four-year-old children in a state-funded preschool program. Most programs that receive state and federal funding focus on children who are considered at risk, including children from low-income families, children from families that do not speak English at home, and children from families that have other disadvantages. In these programs, both state and federal policies determine who is eligible to attend, how the programs are designed, what services need to be provided, and what qualifications are required for personnel involved with the education and care of young children. Each of these elements may impact a program’s effectiveness in promoting the social-emotional, language, and literacy needs of young children (Mashburn, 2008). Recently, reviews of research evidence have informed policy makers as to
what environmental and learning features should be present in order to optimize early intervention (Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010). Policy makers are beginning to acknowledge that no matter how up-to-date the environmental and learning features are, they will only be effective when competent and qualified early childhood personnel implement the features.

**Informed Approaches to Preschool Education**

Policy makers have turned to researchers to inform them about effective early education practices, particularly for at-risk children. In 2002, the National Institute for Literacy called upon the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), in consultation with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the United States Department of Education, the Head Start Bureau, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to conduct a series of methodological research syntheses of empirical studies of early literacy development. Based on their report, NELP assembled in 2008 to determine the skills and abilities children from birth through five years of age need to develop that predict later reading success, the instructional practices that promote the development of these early literacy skills, the environments that are related to promoting these skills in young children, and the characteristics of a child are concomitant with later literacy outcomes. The panel used meta-analytic techniques to examine the empirical studies to determine the skills observed in children from birth through five years that are highly predictive of conventional literacy. The skills identified by NELP (2008) included alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid automatized letter naming, rapid automatized object/color naming, name writing, and phonological memory. In addition, five other skills were identified as moderately correlating with at least one measure of later literacy achievement. These skills included print concepts, print knowledge, reading readiness,
visual processing, and oral language. NELP (2008) defined oral language as the adeptness to produce and comprehend spoken language.

**Impact of Oral Language Abilities on Children’s Language.** Moreover, NELP (2008) explored the oral language category and discovered that there are larger impacts in later literacy achievement, specifically reading comprehension, when oral language competency is measured with more complex composites such as grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Additionally, composite measures of oral language, which include multiple levels of linguistic complexity, were found to be the strongest predictors of decoding and reading comprehension attainment. In fact, children’s oral language skills are currently regarded as one of the most critical areas for developing academic success, especially in regard to children’s later reading achievement (Cabell et al., 2011). Furthermore, NELP (2008) identified studies that used experimental or quasi-experimental methods to inform the panel the instructional strategies or programs that were most effective in teaching these early literacy skills. The categories yielding statistically significant and large effect sizes for effectiveness with facilitating oral language skills were shared book reading interventions and multi-sensory language enhancement interventions. Although the panel identified several instructional practices resulting in positive impacts on children’s early literacy development, there are many challenges associated with preschools adopting literacy curricula and teaching developmentally appropriate language skills to young children, particularly those with disabilities (Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010).

**Impact of the Preschool Environment on Children’s Language.** Despite the evidence for designing high-quality preschool programs, observational research evidence suggests that
many preschool classroom environments are deficient in fostering children’s language and emergent literacy development, especially those programs that serve children from economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse backgrounds (Justice et al., 2008). Based on the research evidence, the implementation of high-quality language and emergent literacy instruction within preschool programs should be an important priority in the education of young children. Yet, as funds are circulating into early childhood programs, policy research indicates that quality personnel preparation is an area that has made little progress (Markussen-Brown, et al., 2017; Winton, et al., 1997). A major challenge of the past decade in early childhood intervention has been creating and maintaining quality services provided by typical early childhood personnel. In order to ensure quality services, early childhood personnel must be educated on the most updated knowledge and innovative practices in the field. However, the quality of professional learning available to entry-level and existing early childhood educators is often uneven, unpredictable, and ineffective (Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006).

Informed Approaches to Inclusive Preschool Education

Inclusive education is the practice of integrating students of all abilities in the same classroom and is mandated by federal law. The intent of inclusive education is to provide learning and socialization opportunities for students with disabilities alongside their peers that they would not have if they spent their entire day in a special education setting. Researchers, scholars, and leaders in early childhood special education have advocated for inclusive early educational environments that utilize naturalistic intervention approaches, such as embedded learning opportunities (Odom et al., 2011).
United States Legislation for the Education of Children with Disabilities. The United States Congress passed the Education for ALL Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) in 1975. This law mandated all children, regardless of any disability, are entitled to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. In 1986, this law was amended into Public Law (PL) 99-457, which strengthened and expanded the mandate for providing services to children with disabilities. The amendments added a mandate for assisting individual states with planning, developing, and implementing programs for all young children with disabilities from birth through age two-years. In 1990, PL94-142 was again further amended and became The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; PL101-476). The amended legislation included changes such as adding autism and traumatic brain injury to the list of disability categories and changing language that references children first before their disability (e.g., children with disabilities). Additional legislative initiatives, including Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, strongly support inclusionary, interdisciplinary, and family-centered approaches to serving young children with disabilities (Blosser, 2012).

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Preschool. As social and political pressure to bring individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of society mounted, schools began to include students who are receiving special education into the general education classroom for parts of the school day. This educational practice was followed by the practice of full inclusion, whereby children receiving special education are included in the general education classroom for the full day. The rationale for fully including children with disabilities rests in the tenet that when children with disabilities are among their same-age peers, they will demonstrate more
appropriate behavior as well as demonstrate improvement in mastering grade-level curricular
with accommodations and adaptations (Siegel, 1996). Odom (2011) contends that inclusion
involves the active participation of young children with disabilities and typically developing
children in the same classroom environment.

A joint position statement for providing early education to young children with
disabilities in inclusive learning environments has been developed by the Division for Early
Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAECY)
(Division for Early Childhood [DEC], 2009). Learning objectives for young children with and
without disabilities in early learning programs are unique, as compared to school-age children
and adolescents, and are centered around the domains of language, cognition, social-emotional
development, and adaptive / motor behavior. As outlined in the DEC and NAEYC joint position
statement, instructional strategies are designed to encourage child-initiated learning and active
physical engagement.

**Specialized Instructional Practices.** Key components of high-quality inclusion
programs that are essential in reaching desired outcomes for young children and their families
include specialized instruction, interventions, and scaffold supports (Odom, 2011). Horn and
Banerjee (2009) advocated for specialized instructional practices used in inclusive early learning
settings to include naturalistic intervention approaches, such as embedded learning opportunities.
Likewise, Odom (2004) acclaimed it is critical that early childhood “practitioners embed
instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments to provide contextually
relevant learning opportunities” (p. 12). Early childhood inclusion programs require educators
who promote children’s communication development and language acquisition by observing,
interpreting, responding contingently, modeling, expanding, and providing natural contexts for children to express their thoughts, ideas, needs, and preferences.

**Professional Learning Practices for Preschool Educators**

Considering the unique language-learning needs of young children who are typically and atypically developing, researchers and leaders in inclusive early childhood education have focused on aspects of programs that strengthen classroom quality. The National Association for the Education of Young Children’s standards emphasize the linkages between program quality and an early childhood educator’s mastery and application of knowledge and skills in specific content areas, including language acquisition (NAECY, 2003). However, pre-service preparation and professional learning programs for early childhood educators have been found to be variable and not effective in ensuring educators learn and sustain effective instructional practices (Tout et al., 2005).

Traditional professional learning practices for preschool educators have been in the form of concise workshops, which tend to be ineffective for several reasons. To begin with, the workshop content is often vague and disconnected from the classroom context and curricula. Workshop methods lack follow-up of learned material and often involve passive learning techniques (Haymore-Sandhollz, 2002). Additionally, the workshop method is typically designed to address immediate demands of large numbers of personnel, resulting in a crisis-mentality approach to instruction (Yates & Hains, 1997). Although some professional learning studies have shown significant impacts on preschool children’s language skill learning, the teacher learning is often provided at such intensity levels that it lacks real-world sustainability.
and practicality (Cabell et al., 2011). Consequently, there is a recent movement toward reforming how early childhood personnel are prepared with the design of professional learning activities that are active, collaborative, and embedded within the classroom context. In addition, the dimensions of implementing high-quality professional learning programs must meet financial feasibility as a valuable investment in terms of quality of care and children’s school readiness (Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006). Furthermore, promoting high-quality professional learning experiences for early childhood personnel requires rigorous program monitoring and evaluation techniques that ensure all children have the high-quality learning experiences that lead to future academic success (Mashburn, 2008).

Theoretical Framework for this Study

Language development theories provide researchers and scholars explanations for how and why young “children develop their capacity for language across the different domains” (Pence Turnbull & Justice, 2017, p. 95). This descriptive study is supported by the theories that suggest children’s acquisition of language and emergent literacy is influenced by their environments and interactions with adults.

Theories of Language Development

Language development is a unique human phenomenon, which is remarkable in many ways. For this reason, many theories regarding language acquisition and development exist today. Human behaviorists tend to group language development as the Nature and the Nurture inspired theories. For the nature-inspired theorists, language knowledge is innate and genetically passed on to infants rather than learned through experience. Some of the well-known
proponents of nature-inspired language development theorists include Chomsky (1965) and Fodor (1983). In contrast, *nurture-inspired* theorists consider infants to be born a “blank slate” (Pence-Turnbull & Justice, 2012; p. 56) and language emerges through interactions with adults and peers. Well-known proponents of nurture-inspired theories include Bloom (2000), Piaget (1923), Skinner (1957), Tomasello (2003), and Vygotsky (1978).

In fact, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (1996) suggested considering three questions regarding language development when ruminating about a theoretical framework. For the purpose of this study, three theoretical questions are posed and reasoned using a nurture-inspired theoretical support. The first question is, what do infants bring to the task of language development? To answer this question, attention is directed toward Skinner’s (1957) theory, which posits language development does not reflect a special innate talent. Language, according to Skinner (1957), is learned through operant conditioning and shaping. In other words, children learn language by means of adults reinforcing their verbalizations in their environment.

Secondly, what are the mechanisms determining language acquisition? This question is pondered by examining the theories of Piaget (1923) and Vygotsky (1978). Piaget (1923) hypothesized certain cognitive achievements need to be in place before language achievements can emerge. Utilizing his cognition hypothesis, Piaget (1923) viewed language as a series of developments reflected in other areas of growth, including cognitive and social processes. Vygotsky (1978) continued this theory by posing that language emerges through social interaction with peers and adults. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the underpinning for the instructional techniques of direct instruction and scaffolding.
The final question regarding a theory of language development asks what types of input support the language-learning system? Some theorists have proposed as children are exposed to increasingly more language, they use the exposure to make assumptions about the structure of their native language. Bloom (2000) added to this assumption and proposed the Intentionality Model of Language Development whereby a child’s desire to communicate to another human compels language development. Similarly, Tomasello (2003) described the Usage-based Theory in which children attend to and understand other human’s intentions, thereby imitating those intentional communicative interactions in order to learn language. The key concept in Tomasello’s (2003) theory is joint attention, which is also an important concept in reading achievement.

Hence, this descriptive study is grounded in the theories developed from the nurture-inspired theories of language acquisition and development. Language is, therefore, viewed as a complex series of developmental phases, in which the phases may overlap and are reinforced and shaped through a series of communicative actions supported by peers and adults in multiple settings and contexts.

*Early Childhood Language and Emergent Literacy Acquisition*

With regard to the learning setting for young children, the typical preschool classroom is an active environment where young children are developing socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Children are dynamically involved in activities such as playing, painting, building, drawing, eating, and conversing. By spontaneously engaging in these activities, children learn about the world and, as they learn more concepts, continuously broaden their view of the world around them (Massey, 2004). Although language development begins at birth,
preschool-age children, between ages three- and five-years, begin to use their language to talk about their observations and experiences as they explore the world.

Considering a preschooler’s language acquisition at about three-and-a-half years of age, the child will use approximately one thousand five hundred words and understand upwards of two thousand words. In addition to the quantity of words used and understood, a preschooler demonstrates a notable shift in the quality of their language. For example, at about four years of age, a typical preschooler will combine four to seven words in a sentence and begin to construct true narrative verbal utterances. During the preschool years, children display developmental achievements in the use of conversational and narrative discourse as they begin to incorporate decontextualized language in their conversations (Pence Turnbull & Justice, 2012).

Conversational discourse is described by Pence Turnbull and Justice (2012) as the conversational turns required to maintain a discussion topic in order to facilitate understanding of that topic. Conversational turn taking is an important foundational skill required for discussing concepts and ideas, particularly those that are not in the immediate here and now.

Specifically, decontextualized language involves the concept of not relying on the immediate context in order to convey content (Pence Turnbull & Justice, 2012). For a child who wishes to discuss people, places, objects, and events that are not immediately present, the use of decontextualized language becomes necessary. Pence Turnbull and Justice (2012) state, “the ability to use decontextualized language is fundamental to academic success because nearly all the learning that occurs in school focuses on events and concepts beyond the classroom walls” (p. 238). Many of the conversational devices used by adults to scaffold children’s language as a means to facilitate language development include behaviors for asking questions, expanding on children’s utterances, and providing corrective feedback. Descriptive studies have provided
evidence that the same conversational devices are evident in various interactive settings such as meal time, play time, and shared storybook reading experiences (Huebner, 2006).

**Importance of Social and Linguistic Interaction Among Young Children.** Derived from the social interactionism theories of child development, the preschool environment becomes an important place where children begin to express their ideas and understand others around them. Preschoolers begin to expand their vocabularies, model more complex sentence structures, and learn how conversations function by observing and interacting with adults (Massey, 2004). “A rich vocabulary and the functional skills to use it are important milestones in cognitive and social development, and are related to later developments in emerging literacy (Huebner, 2006, p. 171). There are abundant opportunities for early childhood educators to talk to their preschoolers throughout the day including circle time, playtime, learning center time, mealtime, and story-time (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004), which may promote optimal development in social communication, language, and linguistic prerequisites for literacy skills. However, many challenges exist in achieving preschool learning environments whereby children have the opportunities to engage in multi-turn conversations with their teacher. Much of the previous research on early childhood educator and child interactions has demonstrated that a preschool educator’s language is frequently directive and managerial (Girolametto et al., 2006). For example, early childhood educators may only occasionally facilitate children’s language skills through such techniques as expanding on the children’s utterances, maintaining conversational topics over several successive turns, asking open-ended questions that invite responses at the children’s linguistic level, or modeling appropriate grammatical structures (Cabell et al., 2011).
Importance of Shared Storybook Reading in Preschool. The context of story-time is common in preschool classroom environments. Research and policy documents emphasize the importance of providing young children “generous access to storybooks and engaging them in high-quality interactive reading” (Ezell & Justice, 2005, p. 2). Ezell and Justice (2005) describe the concept of interactive reading as “the interaction that occurs between an adult and a child when reading or looking at a book” (p. 2) and dubbed by emergent literacy and language experts as book sharing, storybook reading, dialogic reading, or shared storybook reading. A continuum of research has explored the positive connection between an interactive style of reading and children’s oral language development. Researchers have identified shared reading as an effective and deliberate way to support the growth of children’s oral language skills (Huebner, 2006). The context of interactive reading provides a multitude of opportunities for children to learn and experience language by allowing them exposure to (a) a range of vocabulary and linguistic concepts that may be different from what they experience at home; (b) events, concepts, and ideas that go beyond the here and now; (c) the sound structure of oral language and understanding grammatical structures; (d) the concepts about the alphabet and how written language is organized; and (e) the pragmatic rules that regulate the use of language (Cabell, et al., 2008; Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000; van Kleeck, 2014). Importantly, interactive reading experiences provide young children with opportunities to build interpersonal relationships with the adults in their lives whereby foundational competencies about language and emerging literacies can develop (Pianta, 2000).

Despite the plethora of positive learning experiences interactive reading affords young children, “the extent to which storybooks are a routine part of children’s daily educational experiences varies considerably, and this variability influences children’s language and literacy
achievements in the classroom” (Ezell & Justice, 2005, p. 8). Both quantity and quality of interactive or shared reading experiences have been the focus of many research studies. Although there has been some disparity among researchers as to the extent to which interactive reading experiences contribute to children’s development of later literacy skills, Lonigan (1994) considered systematic shared reading experiences between adult and child as a practical course of action for all children in both home and preschool environments. Notably, interactive reading experiences are not intended to teach preschool children how to read, but rather to lay the foundational underpinnings for future literacy acquisition by enhancing skills for vocabulary development and narrative comprehension through facilitating children’s active involvement (Snow et al., 1998).

**Strategic and Intentional Story-Time Activities.** Even though reading a story to children may appear to be a simple activity, the combined elements that make interactive reading effective for facilitating language are not always so obvious. In order to capture the essence of effective interactive reading, researchers have studied how shared reading should look and sound. Ideal shared reading experiences involve both the adult and children as active participants. As the adult reads, discussions are initiated by both the adult and children centered on the characters, events, and everyday experiences. As turn-taking opportunities are shared, the adult is responsive to the children’s comments, questions, or concerns. The concept of responsiveness allows the adult reader to respond and build upon the children’s communicative attempts. Girolametto and Weitzman (2002) have characterized active levels of responsiveness by three behaviors used by adults, which include: child-oriented behaviors, interaction – promoting behaviors, and language – modeling behaviors. Researchers have determined that a
more responsive quality of interaction during a shared book reading experience is of higher value when facilitating children’s language development and emergent literacy acquisition (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 1998; Lonigan et al., 1988; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

**Dialogic Reading.** Dialogic Reading (DR) is a specific type of interactive reading developed by Whitehurst and colleagues (1988). The reading techniques utilized in Dialogic Reading encourage children to become active storytellers over time. The role of the adult in dialogic reading is to prompt children with questions, expand their responses, and praise their efforts to retell the story. Techniques involved in Dialogic Reading include the steps to follow when asking questions and responding to a child during reading (PEER) and the different kinds of questions or prompts used to initiate an interactive sequence (CROWD). Table 1 describes the steps and essential techniques the adult uses to encourage conversation during adult and child interactions while reading a story to a child. Table 2 describes the kinds of questions or prompts utilized by the adult (CROWD).

The dialogic style of reading requires the adult to intentionally shift from a style where the child is a passive recipient of language to a “lively interaction ripe with opportunities to learn new concepts, new words, and more grammatical constructions and practice using language to gather and communicate information through conversation” (Huebner, 2006, p. 171). The developmental process that guides language and literacy acquisition is complex. Dialogic Reading is an approach to enhance young children’s language acquisition that promotes the foundation for developing important oral language skills, including expressive vocabulary. van Kleeck and colleagues (1997) advocate that educational programs for young children use approaches like Dialogic Reading to enhance emergent literacy acquisition by first focusing on
oral language and then introducing other skills including phonological and print awareness that are important precursors for later decoding skills.
## Table 1
Dialogic Reading *PEER* Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P = Prompt the child</strong></td>
<td>The adult invites a child to talk about something on the page or in the story. This promotes the child’s focused attention, engages the child in the story, helps the child understand the plot, and provides vocabulary - learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E = Evaluate what the child says</strong></td>
<td>The adult listens and thinks about what the child says, and then determines the accuracy of the response. This prompts the adult to correct the child’s response and add information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E = Expand on what the child says</strong></td>
<td>The adult adds a few words to the child’s response. This encourages the child to say a little bit more than he would naturally and also provides vocabulary - learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R = Repeat</strong></td>
<td>The adult asks the child to repeat the expanded or correct response. This encourages the child to use language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whitehurst, 2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C = Completion</td>
<td>Adult asks the child to complete a common word or phrase in the story. This will encourage them to listen and use language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R = Recall</td>
<td>Adult asks the child to answer questions about what happened in the story or what the characters are doing. This helps the child to understand a story’s plot or sequence and helps her recall details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O = Open-Ended</td>
<td>Adult asks the child about what is happening in the picture. This provides an opportunity for the child to use language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W = Wh-questions</td>
<td>Adult asks the child to name an object or action by using who, what, where, when, why, and how questions. This provides vocabulary-learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Distancing</td>
<td>Adult asks child questions that relate the pictures or words to their own experiences. This helps the child make connections between books and life as well as provides opportunities to use language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whitehurst, 2005
Statement of the Problem

One overarching literacy problem our nation faces is approximately one-third of the United States’ fourth graders cannot read well enough to understand a passage from a grade-level textbook (NELP, 2000). In the United States, the ability to succeed in life is contingent on the ability to proficiently read (Huebner, 2006). With regard to children’s early development, Huebner (2006) asserts, “During the most active period in early language development, in the United States, there is no regular source of advice for parents to help them support their child’s language growth” (p. 156). Many researchers, policy developers, and literacy experts share the concern with Huebner (2006) that children who begin formal school with low vocabulary, poor knowledge of sounds of language, and the lack of home reading experiences struggle with learning to read; “children who start behind, stay behind” (Huebner, 2006, p. 175). Additionally, language development and emergent literacy literature illuminates substantial gaps between the vocabulary knowledge of preschoolers who come from households of higher family incomes compared to those who come from lower family incomes and / or cultural minorities (Hart & Risley, 1995; Lee & Burkam, 2002). Furthermore, the social structure in the United States is evolving and young children are often entering into the care of others as both parents work out of the home. This has resulted in fewer opportunities for children to learn through immersion and observation. According to the statistics from the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics (2017), 76% of children in the United States between the ages of three- to five-years had at least one weekly non-parental care arrangement in 2012 and 60% had weekly center-based care.

Although research findings have identified quality language and emergent literacy instruction as a positive method for promoting the skills necessary for children’s school
readiness, the research literature on how to achieve effective implementation of high-quality oral language instruction in preschool settings is limited. For example, research on facilitating the development of language and emergent literacy with preschool age children by means of interactive reading experiences presents favorable results when observed between parent and child. However, results have not consistently displayed similar impact when interactive techniques are implemented with groups of children in the preschool classroom setting. Results from interactive reading intervention studies present a trend of weakening in quality of the experience as group size increases (Hueber, 2006).

Moreover, when research evidence supports the positive impacts interactive reading yields on young children’s vocabulary, listening comprehension, and verbal expression, why is it not standard practice in preschools to read to all children in an interactive way? Additional evidence regarding instructional practices that facilitate oral language development in young children like Dialogic Reading are critical because of their potential to impact children’s language and literacy acquisition early. There appears to be widespread obstacles at the systems level when it comes to teaching and supporting early childhood educators the evidence-based practices for maximizing language and literacy growth in a preschool classroom environment through practices like Dialogic Reading (Huebner, 2006). Additionally, there is little research evidence regarding the sequence of professional learning activities for early childhood educators that targets specific oral language facilitation content to help children progress toward school readiness and support later literacy and academic success, along with educators’ perceptions and attitudes toward adoption of a new practice. Further research is greatly needed for high-quality professional learning programs that are effective, economically efficient, and scalable to educate early childhood educators in facilitating language growth by being conversationally responsive.
to children in their classrooms, particularly during story reading contexts. Additionally, further research is warranted to describe the types of supports that are necessary to accommodate children with disabilities in inclusive early learning settings (Odem, 2004).

Therefore, the need exists to broaden current knowledge of the characteristics describing typical story-time routines in inclusive early learning environments as a basis for designing, implementing, and measuring high quality professional learning that is effective and sustainable for promoting young children’s language and emergent literacy acquisition. We need to better understand which elements of interactive storybook reading techniques are present and not present during a typical story-time reading activities as well as understand early childhood educators’ concerns, attitudes, and perceptions toward learning new evidence-based interactive storybook reading strategies such as the Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) method. We also need to know the oral language status of children in inclusive early learning environments to understand the challenges educators face in facilitating language acquisition during story-time activities. A descriptive study characterizing the natural context of routine storybook reading that explores educator variables and child language status in an inclusive early learning environment can provide the foundation for researchers, administrators, speech-language pathologists, and other early childhood practitioners to design, implement, and measure high quality professional learning programs. Early childhood educators need high quality professional learning programs that provide individualized support with employing substantive conversational strategies used to engage young children as active participants in the story-time reading experience (Girolametto et al., 2004; Roskos et al., 2009; Tannock & Girolametto, 1992; Whitehurst et. al.,1988; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).
The Research Questions

Within the framework of describing the natural context of routine story-time activities and children’s oral language abilities in an inclusive early learning environment, this study considers three research questions to be explored. The research questions are:

1. What are the natural storybook reading behaviors used by four early childhood educators during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?

2. What are the concerns, attitudes, and perceptions of four early childhood educators regarding the use or the potential use of evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?

3. What are the oral language abilities of young children populated across four inclusive early learning classrooms?

Professional Significance of the Study

Early childhood research literature supports the importance of the key content areas of language development and emergent literacy acquisition in preparing children for later reading success (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004). In addition to delivering interventions facilitating children’s language development and emergent literacy acquisition, the research literature supports facilitating these skills in environments cultivating the social-emotional well-being of a child. These environments should promote responsiveness to the children, limit levels of communication restrictions, and provide opportunities for educators to adapt to a child’s changing needs (Justice et al., 2008; Landry et al., 2006). High quality professional learning models promoting communication responsiveness should encourage a combination of educator-
directed and child-centered approaches to learning and language development (Landry et al., 2006). The research literature substantiates young children require the support of adult interactions, opportunities for self-directed discovery, and opportunities for explicit instruction with alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, and oral language (Justice et al., 2008). Indeed, young children need to be noticed when they are attempting to communicate their learning experiences. Early childhood scholars agree that children deserve early childhood educators who are emotionally present and who can enable open conversations while modeling appropriate morpho-syntactic language structures.

The consensus among researchers and language experts is that children who enter kindergarten with sizeable vocabularies, knowledge of the sounds of language, and exposure to expanded sentence structures will learn to read faster and better than those children who do not have such skills (Cabell et al., 2011; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hindman et al., 2012; Justice et al., 2008; Markussen-Brown et al., 2017; NELP, 2008). Therefore, in order to satisfy the essential language and learning needs of all young children, including those who have language impairments or who are at risk of developing later reading difficulty due to social-economic disadvantage, there is a great need to educate early childhood educators to be conversationally responsive partners with children and maximize opportunities for language learning during story reading (Justice et al., 2008).

This descriptive study explores the characteristics of routine storybook reading in an inclusive early learning environment by looking at educator variables and child language abilities. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the field of practice by informing speech-language pathologists as to their role in supporting early childhood educators by facilitating them to maximize quality storybook reading for early language development and emergent literacy
acquisition through evidence-based systematic interactive reading experiences. Further, it is the aim of this study to better understand the shared reading techniques currently practiced by early childhood educators to support children’s (both typically and atypically developing) language and emergent literacy growth. From this understanding, effective high-quality models for educating early childhood educators in accelerating oral language growth in young children through routine story-time activities can be developed.

**Operational Definitions of Incorporated Terms**

Several terms utilized throughout this dissertation are defined.

**Dialogic Reading**

Dialogic Reading is a specific type of interactive storybook reading involving the process of having a dialogue with children around the text that is being read. This dialogue involves the adult reader and the child interacting through the use of prompts and responses, encouraging children to practice the use of their language (Whitehurst et al., 1988).

**Emergent Literacy**

Emergent literacy is the phase of development transcending the preschool years in which children acquire knowledge about books, letters, numbers, and print prior to learning to read and write (Pence-Turnbull & Justice, 2012).
**Inclusion**

In education, inclusion is “the placement of students of all abilities in the same classroom. The term captures the societal ideology that involves securing opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms” (International Literacy Association, 2019, Glossary section).

**Interactive Storybook Reading**

Interactive storybook reading is the skilled and purposeful approaches used by the adult reader to actively engage children as participants in the shared reading experience. Strategic elements include facilitating conversations centered around the text and pictures through scaffolded prompts and questions, allowing children to respond with informal interruptions, modeling mature sentence structures, expanding on children’s responses, and reading with enthusiasm and excitement (Cabell et al, 2008).

**Language**

Language is the rule-based set of processes consisting of dynamic and integrated systems (phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics) which represent thoughts, ideas, and feelings that can be communicated in spoken, written, and signed forms (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). Children acquire language in the critical period transcending birth through puberty (Ezell & Justice, 2005).
**Literacy**

“Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context” (International Literacy Association, 2019, Glossary section).

**Oral Language Comprehension**

Oral language comprehension involves a child’s ability to integrate the processes of language in order to listen, accurately and quickly recognize the words she hears, relate the new information she hears to what she already knows, and formulate a response that demonstrates derived meaning (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009).

**Reading**

“Reading is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (International Literacy Association, 2019, Glossary section).

**Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is the intentional conversation strategies adults use to support and assist language learning towards independent performance. Scaffolding helps children go beyond what they already know and achieve skills they could not do alone but are still within appropriate developmental parameters. Scaffolding is grounded in Vygotsky’s (1978) educational theory of Zone of Proximal Development.
**Storybook**

A storybook is a book written and illustrated for children that contains a written narrative and tells a story (Ezell & Justice, 2005).

**Substantive Conversation**

Substantive conversation is a form of dialogue between an adult and a child that informs, explains, and elaborates on ideas (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009).

**Vocabulary**

Vocabulary refers to an individual’s knowledge of words understood (receptive) and used (expressive), as well as an individual’s understanding of the concepts those words signify (Christie, 2008).

**Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Zone of Proximal Development is the point at which learning is achieved on a task whereby the task is neither too difficult nor too easy. A child’s ZPD is based on Vygotsky’s (1978) educational theory entailing “the difference between the level of actual performance and the learning potential of a child” (Bordova & Leong, 2003, p. 17). As a child achieves independence with a task at a certain level, the adult intentionally assists the child by introducing him to a task that is slightly more difficult.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the research literature presenting the knowledge base upon which this descriptive study was formed. The review acknowledges past contributions and theoretical foundations pertaining to language and emergent literacy acquisition in young children. The review also presents recent contributions to the body of research informing scholars and practitioners regarding the constructs of high quality professional learning in inclusive early childhood settings, implications for early childhood educators instructing young children with disabilities, and instructional practices related to promoting emergent literacy acquisition in young children of all abilities.

Since the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 (Public Law 99-457) and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), there have been many federal, state, and local initiatives to expand and improve the quality of, as well as coordinate financial support for, programs providing care and early intervention for young children. These initiatives have primarily focused on features associated with providing quality preschool programming to young children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds for the purposes of mitigating developmental achievement gaps. Over the past four decades, researchers have presented evidence regarding the likelihood children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will have delays in communication and language (Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Hart & Risley, 1995; Justice & Ezell, 2001), which are then associated with risks of developing later academic, reading, and social skills (Lee & Burkam, 2002; Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010; Snow et al., 1998). As policy initiatives support the growth of early care and intervention programs, there is significant attention on advancing the quality of these programs through instituting
developmentally focused curriculum, impactful instructional strategies, and professional
development of early childhood personnel.

**Professional Learning in Early Childhood Settings**

Professional development (i.e., learning) has been identified as a vital catalyst to ensure early childhood personnel implement evidence-based practices to improve the developmental and educational outcomes of young children (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006; Snyder et al., 2011). However, despite the opportunities for scientific advancement of early childhood professional development, Guskey (2014) suggests professional development in education, including early childhood education, lacks “strong and convincing evidence from activities and programs implemented in diverse contexts that (have) resulted in better practice and improved student learning” (Guskey, 2014, p. 12). By the year 2000, the early childhood field established recommended practices related to early childhood personnel preparation; however, these recommendations were based on descriptive, pre-experimental, and single-case experimental research (Snyder et al., 2011). Most of the evidence supporting professional development program effectiveness in early childhood research is descriptive, anecdotal, and highly variable (Maxwell et al., 2006; Tout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006). In order to advance the scientific basis for quality professional development in early childhood care, intervention, and education, researchers and leaders in the field have advocated for (a) defining what is denoted as professional development, (b) pinpointing the features thought to be effective for improving intervention quality, (c) identifying the components necessary to evoke change in early educators’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes, (d) conducting experimental studies that support or
refute a specific hypothesized action, and (e) analyzing the necessary components of an evaluated professional development program (Curenton, 2006; Dunst, 2015; Guskey, 2014; Markussen-Brown et al., 2017; Snyder et al., 2011;).

**Defining and Measuring Professional Learning**

Until recently, a common definition for the term “professional development” in early childhood literature did not exist. In a review of studies published between 1988 and 2003, Maxwell and colleagues (2006) found extensive variability in terminology in the research literature signifying professional learning and similar wide-spread variability in the terms used to measure the aspects of professional learning, including levels of education of the participants, the contents of the particular activities, and the settings, conditions, and contexts in which activities took place. These findings pose concern that early childhood practitioners, researchers, and policymakers cannot make accurate decisions regarding effectiveness of a professional learning program due to inconsistencies in how professional learning is defined, categorized, and measured in the early childhood research literature (Maxwell et al., 2006).

In general, professional learning in early childhood education refers to the various experiences that promote the education, learning, and growth of practitioners who will work with young children (Sheridan et al., 2009). Maxwell and colleagues (2006) identified three common components in the way researchers in the early childhood field address the topic of defining and measuring professional learning in their studies, which included education, learned skills, and credentials of study participants. Based on their review, Maxwell and colleagues (2006) amalgamated a definition for the term “education” as activities that are learned within the formal education system and pertain to either the general level of education attainment (i.e., high school,
some college, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, etc.) or specific formal educational activities that relate to young children and their development. Again, the researchers found a wide range in variability in levels of education reported in the reviewed studies among early childhood caregivers and educators. Additionally, there is little evidence of a standard education requirement for early childhood educators in many early childhood settings across the United States (Maxwell et al., 2006).

The term “training” emerged frequently from Maxwell and colleague’s (2006) early childhood professional development research review and was defined as those activities that took place outside of the formal education system. Yet again, they found wide variability among the types, amounts, and content of these skill-learning activities and descriptive terms were not used consistently across the research literature, making it difficult for stakeholders to understand the impact of so called “training”. The researchers deemed the use of the word “training” as the most problematic area used in early childhood professional learning literature because of the lack of consistency. The term was sometimes used to “1) describe specialized education in early childhood, 2) encompass professional learning activities within and out-side of the formal education system, or 3) describe only informal or in-service professional development activities” (Maxwell et al., 2006, p. 39).

Finally, the variation in defining and measuring the term “credential” within the early childhood education professional development literature is not startling. In their review, Maxwell and colleagues (2006) found researchers interchanged the terms “credential”, “certificate”, and “license” even though the terms are not necessarily the same in early childhood personnel preparation. Complicating the matter, state departments of health and human services often manage certification of people working with children under the age of 5 years, whereas
state departments of education typically provide certification for those working in early childhood with children ranging from 5 through 8 years. In addition, some of the education components of particular credentials, for example, the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, may be completed through educational or workshop components. Maxwell and colleagues (2006) recommend researchers clearly define early childhood credentials in professional learning research, especially in cross-state studies.

**Professional Learning Definition Changes.** Around 2010, President Obama and his administration rebranded the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Public Law 114-95), which was signed into law in 2015. In the new federal law which took effect in the 2017-2018 school year, the term “professional learning” was used to refer to personnel preparation approaches that were intensive, comprehensive, and sustainable. The definition for professional learning included features such as participative, classroom-focused, aligned with content standards, scientifically research-based, evaluated for impact, designed for diverse populations, including children with limited English proficiency and special needs, and data-focused. Short-term teachings and one-day workshops or conferences were specifically acknowledged as not meeting the criteria or definition of professional learning (Snyder, Hemmeter et al, 2011).

In 2008, researchers for the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) developed and disseminated a shared definition of professional learning which states, “Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice” (NPDCI, 2008, p. 3). Organizations such
as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAECY) and the International Academy of Education (IAE) support a new generation of early childhood professional learning research that charges researchers not only to be clear and consistent in their descriptions, definitions, and features of professional development, but also include experimental investigations that parse out the essential components and processes hypothesized to be associated with instructional quality and effectiveness (Zaslow, 2009). Interestingly, Campbell and Sawyer (2009) attested early childhood personnel surveys continue to show workshop attendance as the most frequently used form of professional learning.

**High Quality Professional Learning**

The new generation of professional learning considers facilitating teaching and learning experiences focusing on what knowledge, skills, and temperaments are needed by early childhood practitioners and under which contexts and conditions activities occur. This gives way to an innovative conceptual framework distinguished as high-quality professional learning. Investigations comparing schools making little gains in student performance on state assessments with schools making positive gains in student performance show a relationship between specific professional learning components and the use of new instructional teaching techniques. “These components include (a) engaging teachers with content knowledge directly relevant to what students are learning, (b) providing follow-up and support in implementing new skills, (c) developing an understanding of the rationale behind the new skills, (d) using peer study groups to learn about the new skills, (e) demonstrating the new skill live or through videotaped sessions, and (f) studying the change process in trying new skills” (Guskey, 2000, pp. 198-182).
**Goal of High Quality Professional Learning.** The goal of most professional development and learning programs is to facilitate a change in participants’ beliefs, attitudes, and temperaments about the implementation of a new technique or strategy, which will ultimately result in improved student learning. Results from professional learning studies attempting to disseminate information on innovative programs in classrooms led Guskey (2000) to present an alternative model for the teacher change process. According to Guskey’s (2000) Model of Teacher Change, a significant change in a practitioner’s attitudes and beliefs occurs after they gain evidence of student learning. Support of this model acknowledges professional learning participants become committed to implementing new practices after they have become actively involved with using them in their classrooms and have measured gains in student learning.

**Principles of High Quality Professional Learning.** Designing, implementing, engaging, and measuring high quality professional learning in early childhood settings can be challenging, particularly given the wide variance of education level and credentialing of early childhood professionals. International Academy of Education (IAE; 2008) researchers synthesized research evidence on teacher professional learning and identified the key components of a high-quality professional experience as content-focused, teacher- and student-centered, and instructionally relevant. The researchers developed ten guiding principles related to helping educators advance the professional skills they need to teach evidence-based curricula and interventions to diverse students, including students who are not typically developing or who are struggling to learn in current educational systems. These guiding principles are described in Table 3 and serve as important process features for education leaders designing and implementing high-quality professional learning experiences.
**Process of High Quality Professional Learning.** High quality professional learning in early childhood education comprises a range of activities intended to increase the knowledge base, skill set, and attitudinal perceptions of professionals. Sheridan et al. (2009) identified the primary objectives of professional learning in the field of early childhood as not only advancing the knowledge, skill, and motivations for applying new skills in an impactful manner, but also sustaining the high-quality professional practices once the “instructor” has left the building.
### Table 3
Guiding Principles for Professional Learning (IAE, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Focus on Valued Student Outcomes</td>
<td>Professional learning experiences that focus on the relationship between specific teaching activities and valued student outcomes are associated with positive impacts on those outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Include Worthwhile Content</td>
<td>The knowledge and skills developed for professional learning activities are those that have been established through empirical research as effective in achieving valued student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Integrate Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>The integration of vital participant knowledge and skills promotes deep learning and effective changes in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engage in Professional Inquiry Through Assessment</td>
<td>Information about what students need to know is used to identify the pedagogical content for what participants need to know and do. Assessing student progress should go beyond standardized testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide Multiple Opportunities to Learn and Apply Information</td>
<td>Participants need multiple opportunities to learn new information and understand its implications for practice in order to make significant changes to their practice. They need to encounter these opportunities in environments that offer both trust and challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Utilize Approaches Responsive to Individual Learning Processes</td>
<td>The promotion of professional learning requires different approaches depending on the alignment of new ideas or approaches with assumptions that currently underpin a participant’s practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Provide Opportunities to Process New Learning With Peers</td>
<td>Collegial interaction that is focused on student outcomes can help participants integrate new learning into existing practice.</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provide Knowledgeable Expertise</td>
<td>Expertise external to the professional learning participants is necessary to challenge existing assumptions and develop the kinds of new knowledge and skills associated with positive student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Provide Active Leadership</td>
<td>Designated educational leaders have a key role in developing a vision of new possibilities for improved student outcomes, promoting participant engagement, and organizing the professional learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Maintain Momentum</td>
<td>Sustained improvement in student outcomes requires that participants have strong theoretical knowledge, evidence-based inquiry skills, and supportive organizational conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In other words, an important component of high-quality professional learning must include the assurance that the professionals’ growth is transferred to and sustained within the educational setting. Therefore, the process of high quality professional learning must characterize how early childhood professionals advance from the knowledge or awareness phase to the action phase of adopting an innovative practice. There are very few empirical research studies dedicated to illuminating how early childhood professionals gain new knowledge, skill, and perspectives and scarce consideration has been given to identify mechanisms for sustaining professionals’ growth (Sheridan et al., 2009). Even though early childhood program quality is often linked to professional development and growth, shared understanding of what high quality professional learning in early childhood education actually looks like appears to be deficient.

**Planning Professional Learning.** Professional learning programs that include the components researchers have identified essential for effectiveness have often provided disappointing results in terms of better practice and improved student outcomes (Guskey, 2014). Guskey (2014) suggested this is due to the general lack of program purpose, cohesiveness, and direction. “For decades, schools have implemented professional learning not knowing exactly what they hoped to accomplish” (Guskey, 2014, p. 12). Too often, those who plan professional learning fall into the “activity trap”, planning for what they are going to do and the resources they will need, and not for the purpose of the activities or what they are hoping to accomplish. Guskey (2014) suggested a sounder way toward professional learning planning is to apply a backward design approach such that, to use Guskey’s (2014) analogy, in a professional learning journey, the destination should be identified prior to the route.
When it comes to considering the “Why?” and “What do we hope to accomplish?” in a professional learning investigation, Guskey (2000) suggested five critical levels of evidence when evaluating professional learning activities. The levels are arranged in hierarchical order from simple to complex and success at one level is necessary for success at the levels that follow. The five critical levels of professional learning evaluation (Guskey, 2000) are:

- Participants’ reactions to the activities,
- Participants’ learning of new knowledge and skills,
- Organizational support and change,
- Participants’ use of new knowledge and skills, and
- Student learning outcomes.

Guskey (2014) suggested reversing the order of these levels when planning a professional learning program. Since the primary goal of any professional learning program is to improve student-learning outcomes, planning must begin by identifying and describing the desired outcomes. Therefore, Guskey’s (2014) order of steps for professional learning planning becomes:

- Student learning outcomes,
- New practices to be implemented,
- Needed organizational support,
- Desired educator knowledge and skills, and
- Optimal professional learning activities.

Hence, “high-quality professional learning is the foundation on which any improvement effort in education must build. …Our success in the end will depend on how we begin” (Guskey, 2014, p. 16). Specifically, designing, implementing, and monitoring high quality professional learning in
early childhood settings becomes the mechanism through which the process of early childhood education transfers the benefits to young children who attend (Hamre et al., 2014). The language and emergent literacy benefits for young children can only be diffused when early childhood professional learning programs are structured to impart change by ensuring program activities are active, collaborative, and embedded with the classroom context. Thus, early childhood program quality must be examined through the process of high quality professional learning for facilitating what young children experience directly, including the nature of interactions between the educators and their children (Hamre et al., 2014). High quality professional learning is an essential mechanism for cultivating young children’s language and emergent literacy development by improving the quality of teacher-child interactions within a preschool classroom environment.

**Quality in Early Childhood Educational Settings**

Early childhood researchers and scholars generally agree that the quality of the interactions between early childhood educators and their children contributes greatly to a young child’s language and emergent literacy development (Cassidy et al., 2005). Further, the quality of these interactions is primarily determined by the general behaviors of the educator (Barnett et al., 2004). Although both state and federal governments have invested public funds in prekindergarten programs specifically to promote school readiness for four-year-old children based on the abundant research supporting the cognitive and social benefits of attending preschool, most of the programs have not been evaluated for the specific features of classroom quality that promote young children’s academic achievement (Burchinal et al., 2008). Pianta and
colleagues (2007) highlighted the features of preschool programs that are often determined by state policies, including eligibility criteria, teacher qualifications, amount and type of teacher professional development, and classroom quality approaches. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; 2005) established the following preschool classroom practice guidelines:

- Implementation of a curriculum that is sensitive to the developmental capabilities and backgrounds of the children, addresses multiple domains of children’s development, and supports the view that children are active participants in their own learning,
- Effective teaching characterized by coherent development of ideas, informative and supportive feedback to children, and multiple instructional approaches to optimize children’s learning,
- Ongoing assessment of children’s development for individualization of instruction for individual children as well as overall program improvement,
- The centrality of positive teacher-child relationships to children’s school success.

**Rationale for Quality Early Childhood Programs**

Several factors supporting the importance of investing in young children with quality programs have been identified in the early childhood literature. Foremost are the large gaps in language and cognitive skills between children from disadvantaged or diverse environments and children from more advantaged socio-economic environments that exist when all young children enter formal school at age six years in the United States. Disparities exist for young children from environments of low family income with regard to poor prenatal and perinatal health,
limited access to healthcare in the first years of life, limited access to books and other cognitively stimulating materials, and exposure to environmental toxins. While achievement gaps continue to grow substantially as academic demands increase, there has been a consensus among researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders that there needs to be intervention before young children begin formal school that is based on developmental standards and in the context of adult communication responsiveness (Hughes, 2010).

Another factor backing the importance of quality early childhood programs is related to the large increases of maternal employment outside of the home over the past several decades, particularly among families with lower income. Legislation supporting making preschool available to all young children has been on the agenda of the federal and most state governments in recent years. The premise is young children from lower-income families who need to be in the care of someone outside of the home will obtain more out of formal school (kindergarten through twelfth grade) if they master a number of language, emergent literacy, and cognitive skills before they start. In addition, the assumption that children from low-income families have parents who are less educated supports the need to provide opportunities that promote learning and development (Yoshikawa et al., 2016).

Ultimately, young children are sensitive to the brain development that occurs from environmental enrichment. The neural systems in a young child’s brain undergo rapid development. Input experiences early in a young child’s life that are culturally and linguistically rich influence the development and acquisition of many essential skills such as language, emerging literacy, mathematical, self-regulation, and executive function (Pence et al., 2017).
Measuring Program Quality

As momentum builds in the United States and across the globe for developing high-quality early childhood education programs for young children ages 3 through 5 years, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders need to agree upon what high-quality programs look like (Espinosa, 2003). Several research investigations have found positive correlations between classroom quality factors, such as teacher preparation, and, specifically, the quality of teacher-child interactions (Cassidy et al., 2005). State regulatory boards pertaining to prekindergarten programs have consistently emphasized the importance of providing high-quality services; however, there remains disparity among measures of classroom quality in prekindergarten programs (Mashburn et al., 2008).

Cassidy et al. (2005) conducted a large-scale investigation involving 1,313 preschool classrooms across North Carolina to examine the items on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R; Harms & Clifford, 1998), which is an observational measure of appearances of the classroom environment including space and furnishings, activities, interactions, routines, language reasoning, and program structure. They systematically examined the items on the ECERS-R (1998) using exploratory factor analysis to determine which items differentiated lower- and higher-quality classrooms. In a previous study conducted by Burchinal et al., (2002), classrooms with teachers who had Bachelor’s degrees scored significantly higher on the ECERS-R (1998) than classrooms with teachers who had less of an educational background. In addition, the child participants in Burchinal et al.’s (2002) study performed significantly better in language skills when they were from classrooms with teachers who had Bachelor’s degrees than in classrooms where teachers had less education. Results from Cassidy et al.’s (2005) investigation confirmed previous evidence regarding the dimensions of quality in
early childhood classrooms as measured by ECERS-R (1998). The researchers concluded the ECERS-R (1998) is a valuable measurement tool for regulatory purposes, providing helpful implications for quality improvement plans for programs to provide appropriate activities and materials as well as high-quality teacher-child interactions along with the necessary health and safety practices.

In another large-scale study, Mashburn et al. (2008) investigated associations between children’s academic, language, and social development and observations of the overall quality of the prekindergarten environment as well as the quality of teacher-child emotional and instructional interactions. The overall quality of the classroom environment was measured using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS; Harms & Clifford, 1980). Observations of the quality of teacher-child interactions was measured using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2007), which is an observational measure of the features that reflect the sensitivity and responsivity to children’s needs. Children’s language skills were measured using a battery of assessments, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) and The Oral Expression Scale from the Oral and Written Language Scale (OWLS; Carrow-Woolfolk, 1995). The study utilized a nesting design and hierarchical linear modeling. Surprising to the researchers, there was a general lack of significant associations with child outcomes for many of the features of program quality that had been shown in other studies to be predictive of early learning outcomes. Statistical analysis of the results did indicate overall classroom quality was positively associated with the children’s development of expressive language skills. The researchers attributed the children’s learning gains as related to the extent to which teachers interacted positively with their young students.
and promoted the use of language in their classroom by providing contingent informative feedback.

Results of the aforementioned study are important to early childhood stakeholders. Structural program features, such as class size and teacher-child ratios, may not inform on whether children are learning and developing language and emergent literacy skills necessary for school readiness. Mashburn et al.’s (2008) contribution suggests early learning and language development competencies occur through high-quality emotional and instructional interactions between early childhood educators and their young children. Shared storybook reading interactions provide valuable opportunities for children to be exposed to new words and decontextualized conversations, which require children to access and learn skills across all of the language domains (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics). As children’s language and emergent literacy skills develop, their oral language abilities become more sophisticated. Young children’s facilitated use and understanding of more advanced syntax, more precise vocabulary, and awareness of narrative story structures are important areas of mastery because they provide the foundation for learning conventional literacy (i.e., reading fluency and comprehension) during the early elementary school years (Justice & Pence, 2005).

**Implications for Early Education of Young Children with Disabilities**

Inclusive early learning environments that integrate learning opportunities for children who are typically and atypically developing places unique demands on educators for promoting language and emergent literacy acquisition. Since the United States Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act [(PL) 94-142] in 1975, it is mandated that all
children, regardless of any disability, are entitled to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment possible. This mandate has brought forth increasing social and political pressure to bring individuals who have disabilities into the mainstream of society. In schools, “mainstreaming” denoted special education students were included in general education classrooms for a portion of the school day. This educational practice has evolved into the practice of “full inclusion”, whereby students with disabilities are in general education classrooms and with their general education peers for the full school day. The rationale supporting full inclusion centers around the principles that students with disabilities will show more age-appropriate behavior and will display more academic growth by participating with more advanced curricular content with the support of accommodations (Siegel, 1996).

Scholarly reviews on the benefits for children with disabilities participating in full inclusive programs in terms of cognitive development has been inconsistent and frequently flawed with many studies having at least one threat to the validity in the research methodology. However, study results have shown more positive evidence on outcomes when adults facilitated instructional activities that encouraged interactions between students with and without disabilities (Jenkins et al., 1985).

**Inclusion in Early Childhood Education**

Odom (2004) and colleagues have reported that inclusion in early childhood programs do not similarly resemble inclusion programs at the elementary and high school levels. The factors that are unique to early childhood settings include (a) the nature of young children’s development and early childhood instructional practices, (b) the organizational structure of early childhood centers, and (c) teacher preparation requirements. In early childhood education, the
The definition of inclusion has multiple meanings. In a broad sense, the working definition involves “the active participation of young children with disabilities and typically developing children in the same classroom” (Odom et al., 2004; p. 19).

One concern of detractors of early childhood inclusive programs is that the language, cognitive, and social development of typically developing young children will be negatively impacted. In a recently published experimental investigation, Rhoad-Drogalis & Justice (2019) found wide variance in the proportion of young children with disabilities in inclusive early childhood classrooms, which ranged from seven percent to ninety-two percent. Despite this variance, they found evidence to support the outcomes of children’s spring achievements in oral language, knowledge of concepts about print, and alphabet knowledge were not related to the proportion of children with disabilities in the classroom. The core philosophies of inclusion for all children in early childhood education encompass the sense of belonging, participation, and attaining one’s full potential in a diverse community (Odom et al., 2011).

**Instructional Practice in Inclusive Early Childhood Programs.** The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (2014) for young children who have or who are at risk for developing disabilities incorporates standards across several domains including Instruction and Interaction. According to the DEC (2014),

> “Instructional practices are intentional and systematic strategies to inform what to teach, when to teach, how to evaluate the effects of teaching, and how to support and evaluate the quality of instructional practices implemented by others” (p. 11).

The DEC (2014) states several recommendations regarding instructional practices incorporating embedded instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments as well as using
systematic instructional strategies with fidelity to facilitate child learning and engagement. The nature of learning objectives in both general and inclusive early childhood programs is grounded in language, cognitive, and social development. Similarly, instructional strategies implemented in both general and inclusive early childhood programs are designed to encourage child-initiated learning and active physical engagement (Odom et al., 2004).

The DEC (2014) reports, “Sensitive and responsive interactional practices are the foundation for promoting the development of a child’s language, cognitive, and emotional competence” (p. 14). An essential role of early childhood practitioners is to promote children’s communication development by listening to and interpreting messages, responding contingently to communication attempts, and providing natural opportunities for young children to use verbal and non-verbal communication. Additionally, practitioners facilitate language growth in young children by using and modeling language to expand on children’s requests, needs, preferences, and interests (DEC, 2014).

**Frameworks for Emergent Literacy**

In order for early childhood educators to promote language and emergent literacy acquisition in young children, they need to understand the important literacy skills that allow children to begin to comprehend and use written language. Emergent literacy is based on the recognition that young children develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of reading and writing before learning to conventionally read and write. Federal and state policy initiatives for educating children during the preschool years has enhanced developmentally appropriate standards to include the quantity of knowledge and skills specific to emergent literacy and the
relationship among language development, emergent literacy, and later literacy development (Snow et al., 2001). The reciprocity of the development of oral language skills in language and emerging literacy acquisition is of notable interest to researchers. Oral language represents a young child’s ability to comprehend spoken language and to express oneself verbally (Bryan et al., 2008). Children’s development about the structure of words is acquired through oral language development and the word knowledge children gain through oral language development is central to learning about printed words. Glazer (1989) suggests, “without oral language, it might be impossible to develop the ability to read and write” (p. 19).

Teale and Sulzby (1986) have supported research findings suggesting the concept of emergent literacy is a continuum of development beginning at birth (Clay, 1991; Justice, 2006) and lasts until the age of five years when children in the United States enter kindergarten (Justice, 2006). Although emergent literacy acquisition is widely characterized as a developmental milestone stage, Justice (2006) has considered this period of development to be a continuum of skill acquisition and not a “cut and dry” stage. Justice (2006) described emergent literacy as a series of phases, whereby emerging literacy is blurred across overlapping phases of skill acquisition. As a result of this construct, Justice (2006) suggested the phrase “emergent literacy stage” be used as a manner of “categorization of skills and an estimation of where children are along a continuum of development” (p. 8).

In the research literature, the frameworks for the emergent literacy phases of acquisition have been categorized according to three distinct perspectives, which are the (a) developmental perspective, (b) components perspective, and (c) child and environmental influences perspective.
**Developmental Perspective**

Researchers have viewed the developmental perspective framework for emergent literacy development as the progression in children’s acquisition of knowledge and skills that build upon one another in facilitating growth toward conventional literacy. Goodman (1986) and McCormick and Mason (1986) proposed that children progress through hierarchical levels of pre-literacy knowledge and skills. Goodman’s (1986) developmental process model includes (a) print awareness in situational contexts, (b) print awareness in discourse, (c) functions and forms of writing (i.e., scribbling or line drawings), (d) oral language for talking about the functions of print, and (e) meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness about written language. McCormick and Mason (1986) described three hierarchical levels of emerging literacy development, including (a) functions of print, (b) form of print (i.e., inventive spelling), and (c) coordination of the form and function of print. These early perspectives on the development of emergent literacy have many limitations, including the absence of any environmental components or family literacy practices.

**Components Perspective**

In the components perspective, scholars have considered children’s exposure to language and literacy as the factor that shapes emergent literacy development. Whitehurst and Lonigan’s (1998) model differentiate emergent literacy development into two distinct processes, which are inside-out processes (i.e., code related skills including phonological awareness, concepts about print, and syntactic structure) and outside-in processes (i.e., oral language skills including vocabulary and conceptual knowledge).
Likewise, Storch and Whitehurst (2002) have categorized emergent literacy development into two main components, which are code-related skills and oral language skills. Code-related skills include (a) conventions of print (i.e., directionality of reading), (b) beginning forms of writing (i.e., writing one’s name), (c) grapheme knowledge (i.e., identifying letters of the alphabet), (d) knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence (i.e., letter / sound matching), and (e) phonological awareness (i.e., beginning sounds in words). Oral language skills involve (a) semantic knowledge (i.e., word knowledge / vocabulary), (b) syntactic knowledge (i.e., word order / grammar rules), (c) narrative discourse (i.e., telling a story), and (d) conceptual knowledge (i.e., knowledge about the world).

van Kleeck’s (2003) perspective involves an interrelationship among four components or processors, which include the (a) context processor (i.e., word and syntax knowledge, narrative development, book conventions, abstract language, and functions of print), (b) meaning processor (i.e., word awareness and vocabulary development), (c) orthographic processor (i.e., print conventions and letter knowledge), and (d) phonological processor (i.e., syllable segmentation, rhyming, onset / rime knowledge, and phoneme segmentation).

All of the scholars and researchers mentioned have viewed components of emergent literacy as characteristics describing skill acquisition and have refrained from categorizing acquisition as stages of development, since components may overlap during periods of acquisition. This is commensurate Justice’s (2006) view of emergent literacy as a continuum, where skills are acquired throughout phases of development. One limitation to the components perspective is environmental factors, such as social or cultural factors, which are not explicitly addressed; however, van Kleeck (2004) has addressed cultural factors as an integral component of adult – child interactions during the emergent and early literacy phases of acquisition.
Child and Environmental Influences Perspective

Researchers McNaughton (1995) and Wasik (2004) have viewed emergent literacy development through the child and environmental influences perspective. In McNaughton’s (1995) socialization model, emergent literacy development is structured within family experiences, built from specific activities, and formed into systems of expertise. Four components of family literacy practices are emphasized in the socialization model, which include (a) family practices (i.e., how children are socialized in literate or non-literate families), (b) activities (i.e., routine reading activities), (c) systems for learning (i.e., book sharing activities), and (d) relationships between settings (i.e., how a child uses literacy in different settings).

Wasik (2004) categorized the child and environmental perspective of emergent literacy development by children’s interactions with four major variables in family practices. These variables are (a) parental characteristics (i.e., culture and ethnicity, parental beliefs, and socioeconomic level), (b) child characteristics (i.e., child’s level of engagement and social interaction), (c) home literacy environment (i.e., book sharing experiences between parent and child), and (d) parent-child relationship (i.e., social emotional and interpersonal aspects of parent / child relationship). Differing from the developmental and components perspectives, the child and environmental influences perspective includes the importance of family literacies and social-environmental factors in the development of emerging literacies. However, this perspective does not describe the characteristics of knowledge and skill development in any particular developmental order.

It has been the consensus among researchers and scholars that combined perspectives of emergent literacy development may offer early childhood stakeholders a more comprehensive approach to designing emergent literacy intervention programs (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; van
Kleeck, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Justice and Kaderavek (2004) have provided an example of a combined perspectives approach. Their embedded-explicit approach to emergent literacy acquisition involves the development of (a) basic literacy skills linked with reading achievement (i.e., print concepts, phonological awareness, letter knowledge) through explicit instruction and (b) a positive learning attitude in children and an understanding of the function and intention of literacy through literacy-embedded activities (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

**Promoting Emergent Literacy Acquisition**

A single model for facilitating emergent literacy acquisition that serves all children is neither practical nor reasonable; therefore, it is necessary to consider the emerging literacy needs of individual children when choosing effective approaches to promote children’s emergent literacy development. It is accepted in the research literature that the two emergent literacy processes, oral language and code-related skills, are densely interrelated and mediated by social-cultural factors (Justice & Ezell, 2002; Justice & Kaderavek, 2004; van Kleeck, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Oral language skills have an impact on the development of code-related knowledge and skills; thus, are considered as the underpinnings that should be facilitated in children’s language and emergent literacy development. The reciprocity of oral language and code-related processes is of significance; oral language development influences code-related knowledge and skill development, which influences the development of later reading ability (Cohrssen et al., 2016). Substantiated by the nurture inspired theories of language development, children acquire most of their language and emergent literacy knowledge and skills through naturalistic interactions with the adults in their lives (Justice & Pence, 2005). The interactions
between an adult and child during storybook reading has been viewed by many researchers and scholars as one of the most powerful contexts for language and emergent literacy learning (Justice & Pence, 2005; Snow et al., 2001; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Whitehurst et al., 1988).

**Interactive Shared Book Reading Practices**

Children’s exposure to books is viewed as a basis for learning to read (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Mol et al, 2009). Although children’s early interactions with storybooks read by adults often promote development of oral language skills (i.e., vocabulary, syntax structure, narrative discourse), children’s exposure to print within the story text attracts them to letters and sounds, which in turn promotes the code-related knowledge and skills (i.e., alphabet knowledge, print awareness, phonological awareness) (Mol et al., 2009). Additionally, there is compelling empirical evidence that one of the most prominent aspects of early childhood programs’ efforts on children’s development is the nature and quality of educators’ interactions with children (Burchinal et al., 2010; Dickinson & Brady, 2006; Guo et al., 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008). Scholars have suggested that sharing books with young children is a primary context for oral language development (Snow, 1983; van Kleeck, 2004;). Therefore, it is important to identify and differentiate the various storybook reading contexts as they relate to facilitating incidental and natural language and emergent literacy acquisition, such as interactive storybook reading and dialogic reading. Further, it is also important to identify and the most effective instructional practices for early childhood educators that maximize the benefits of reading storybooks and promote adult-child interactions, like the Dialogic Reading method (Towson et al., 2016).
**Interactive Book Reading.** As Cabell and colleagues (2008) note, “Interactive reading involves an extended, meaningful exchange between adults and children, during which both parties are actively engaged in the learning process…As adults read with children, they provide the support children need to work at a level that surpasses their independent capabilities” (p. 199).

The research literature regarding interactive shared book reading has indicated not only the importance of reading to young children, but also the extensive benefits of engaging them with conversations about the text and illustrations. van Kleeck (2004) has illuminated the instructional strategies that characterize the language interactions between adult and child(ren) that optimize book sharing routines. These include (a) gradually shifting the role of the conversationalist from the adult to the child, (b) structuring interactions within the child’s Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), and (c) requesting verbal participation from the child in the form of extensions, question prompts, and comments.

A meta-analysis conducted in 2009 examining the effect of interactive book reading on the language and literacy growth of children in the pre-reading phase of development in educational settings ($N_{studies} = 31$) revealed about 6% of children’s oral language skill growth could be explained by the benefits of an interactive reading intervention in a natural classroom setting (Mol et al., 2009). Studies included utilized an interactive reading approach that elicited and reinforced verbal responses by the child. Based on the meta-analysis results, the researchers reported the following relevant findings:

1. Random effects analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between types of reading intervention programs, with interactive reading yielding a strong effect, followed by interactive reading plus embedded activities yielding a low average
effect, followed by dialogic reading yielding a small effect on oral language composite scores.

2. Researchers implementing the reading interventions were moderately effective in eliciting oral language gains while teachers trained in dialogic reading strategies did not reveal effects.

3. Interactive reading sessions explained moderate effects in expressive vocabulary growth, interpreted as indicating the quality of book reading is important in addition to its frequency.

4. Children from the analyzed studies who participated in an interactive reading program showed a twenty-eight percent more gain in oral language outcomes than comparison children (children involved in interactive reading displayed 64% improvement in oral language composites, compared to children who displayed 36% gain without intervention).

5. Children receiving interactive reading sessions in whole-groups showed improvement in oral language and print knowledge (Mol et al., 2009).

**Dialogic Reading.** The Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) method of reading with young children is an instructional practice that has been supported as having positive language development outcomes for both children at-risk for developing later reading difficulty and children who have language disabilities (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Milburn, Girolametto et al., 2014; Rezzonico et al., 2015; Towson et al., 2016; Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The approach is based on the premise that the shared story creates a launch pad from which conversations, or dialogue, can be exchanged between the adult and the child,
facilitating expanded critical thinking, grammatical structure usage, and receptive and expressive vocabulary development. The Dialogic Reading method focuses on the child’s active participation before, during, and after the book reading process and positions the child as the story teller as he is prompted by the adult with comments and questions (Whitehurst et al., 1988).

Whitehurst’s (2005) fundamental technique in dialogic reading is the PEER sequence, styled as a short interaction between a child and an adult partner. In this brief interaction, the adult (a) Prompts the child to say something about the book, (b) Evaluates the child’s response, (c) Expands the child’s response by rephrasing and adding information, and (d) Repeats the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion. Five specific prompts are used in the dialogic reading method and are referred to as the CROWD sequence of prompts, which include (a) Completion, (b) Recall, (c) Open-ended prompts, (d) Wh – questions, and (e) Distancing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Although more recent empirical research investigations involving the Dialogic Reading approach have demonstrated positive effects on children’s oral language and code-related processes, there is great variability in the research literature concerning the contexts and settings in which the studies were managed (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Lever & Senechel, 2011; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Wasik & Bond, 2001). These include (a) varied use of the dialogic reading approach (i.e., Dialogic Reading, interactive reading, shared-storybook reading), (b) the context (one-on-one, small group, large group), (c) the setting (home, day care center, preschool classroom, Head Start classroom, library), (d) the background of the adult partner (i.e., educator, researcher, parent, graduate student), (e) the background of the child or children (i.e., typically developing, from low income family environments, culturally diverse, identified with disabilities), (f) the dosage (i.e., number of readings per week), and (g) the type of support
provided to an adult partner (i.e., coaching, training, scripted materials). This wide range of variability concerning the contexts and settings of Dialogic Reading investigations has made it difficult for researchers to replicate studies in the natural classroom environment (Mol et al., 2009).

**Shared Storybook Reading as an Instructional Routine.** Shared storybook reading practices have been identified as the keystone of effective language and literacy practice in mainstream early childhood programs in not only the United States, but also in many other countries including China, Australia, and most European countries. Reading with young children provides a rich context for literate dialogue and print referencing (Kaderavek & Justice, 2002). Although there is a considerable literature base for supporting the positive effects that shared reading practices have on the oral language development and emergent literacy acquisition in young children, there continues to be large variance in how educators incorporate this practice into their everyday instructional routine. Several factors influencing how educators read to young children in the context of a routine learning environment have been identified in the literature. Some of these factors include the educator’s educational level (Burchinal et al., 2002), knowledge of language and literacy pedagogy (Markussen-Brown et al., 2017), beliefs and perceptions regarding quality preschool education (Banu, 2014), and cultural socialization practices (van Kleeck, 2004).

Damber (2015) explored how preschool educators incorporated routine book reading into their typical instructional day. In this study, a read-aloud was considered as the typical routine discipline involving early childhood personnel reading to children in the classroom. Observations of typical passive reading sessions were performed in 39 preschool classrooms in
Sweden for the purpose of identifying the (a) frequency of a read-aloud occurrence, (b) duration of the read-aloud, (c) manner in which the books were chosen, (d) personnel involved in the read-aloud, (e) incidence of dialogue during the read-aloud and (f) incidence of follow-up activities. Results from the observational investigation revealed the following:

- Read-alouds routinely occurred one time per instructional day.
- Read-alouds were infrequently planned nor embedded within a particular themed instructional context.
- Books were randomly chosen by the educator.
- Dialogue infrequently occurred during the read-alouds.
- Follow-up activities occurred for less than half of the reading occasions (27% of occasions).

**Strategic Shared Interactive Reading.** Early childhood scholars and researchers have extensively informed how educators can promote young children’s inside-out skills, including knowledge about print and phonological awareness, and outside-in skills, including vocabulary and inferential language skills, through the engagement of extra-textual conversations during storybook reading interactions (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Lonigan et al., 2013; van Kleeck et al., 2006; Whitehurst et al., 1988). The benefits of meaningful interactive reading for all young children are two-fold. First, interactive shared reading provides an exceptional context for scaffolding young children’s language and emerging literacy skills, whereby as adults read with children, they can provide support for children to use their language at a level that surpasses their individual capabilities. Second, interactive shared reading provides opportunities for young children to engage actively with their adult reading partner by
participating in dialogue with explicit discussions about the text and illustrations in addition to turning pages and labeling items. Active engagement with reading has been well documented in the research literature as an important vehicle for accelerating young children’s gains in emergent literacy and language acquisition (Justice & Ezell, 2002; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst et al., 1988).

Recently, many inclusive early childhood programs are integrating Response-to-Intervention (RTI) literature, which “advocates the need to layer support to meet children’s diverse needs and proactively reduce individual children’s risks for academic difficulties” (Cabell et al., 2008; p. 200). In the RTI framework, every typical and inclusive early childhood education classroom should include one large-group storybook reading experience, which is considered a Tier One experience (Fuchs, 2003). Ensuing the RTI framework, inclusive early childhood programs should layer these reading experiences with opportunities for children to experience more small-group reading interactions that involve children’s active engagement with explicit and strategic discussions about the text and illustrations in a manner that is supported (i.e., scaffolded) by the adult reader (Justice, 2006).

**Dialogic Reading in Inclusive Programs.** Foorman and Torgesen (2001) have asserted that reading interventions for young children with language disabilities or who are at risk for developing later reading difficulties should be explicit and strategic. The multi-tier program construct involving layered Tier One and Tier Two storybook reading experiences can be utilized to strategically support young children who have or who are at risk for developing language and literacy difficulties. Lonigan et al. (2013) has concurred by noting explicit interventions like Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 1992) promote the development of three crucial
emergent literacy skills, oral language, phonological awareness, and knowledge about print, which are highly related to later reading and academic success.

Furthermore, there is evidence supporting Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 1992) as an effective method for enhancing vocabulary growth in young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Coogle and colleagues (2018) replicated an experimental investigation employing a single-case adapted alternating treatments design to investigate the effects on vocabulary learning in young children with ASD utilizing Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 1992). The investigators examined vocabulary learning-outcomes using dialogic reading strategies in both traditional paperback and digital modes of storybooks and compared outcomes to baseline measures on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 4th Edition (PPVT-4; Dunn & Dunn, 2007) and the Expressive Vocabulary Test Second Edition (EVT-2; Williams, 2007) for definitional knowledge of vocabulary. A graduate student clinician delivered the intervention, who had been trained on the dialogic reading strategies by the principle investigator. Although individual participant definitional vocabulary gains were variable, the combined data revealed stable trends across all intervention sessions. The results provide evidence commensurate with previous investigations suggesting Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 1992) is a promising method for increasing vocabulary acquisition for children identified with ASD (Coogle et al., 2018).

**Summary**

High-quality professional learning programs for early childhood educators can make an essential contribution to providing quality instructional practices for young children in an authentic classroom setting. Planning early childhood high-quality professional learning
programs require focus and identification of desired child outcomes, empirical evidence supporting the benefits of a particular instructional practice, and optimal professional learning activities that support educators’ individual knowledge and skill needs while providing opportunities to integrate new learning into existing practice (Guskey, 2014). Limited research has been dedicated to investigating the process by which early childhood educators acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudinal dispositions regarding high-quality instructional practices and even less attention has been given to studying the mechanisms for sustaining educator growth and development. Throughout the early childhood research literature, program quality has been linked to high quality professional learning. A shared understanding of the current instructional practices in early childhood environments, including educators’ instructional behaviors, educators’ attitudes toward adopting a new practice, and the status of their children’s language abilities, is crucial for determining how educators and practitioners move from the general awareness and knowledge of language and literacy practices to the adoption and sustainment of a particular practice.

There is promising evidence in the early childhood research literature that interactive shared reading experiences in the natural early childhood classroom environment can improve the language and emergent literacy knowledge and skills of young children (Kaderavek et al., 2014; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Milburn et al., 2014; Pentimonti & Justice, 2009; Rezzonico et al., 2015; Towson et al., 2016). Children’s acquisition of vocabulary, conceptual knowledge about the world, grammatical structure, and extended thinking can be facilitated by purposeful and deliberate interactions between adults and children that reach far beyond just reading words on a page (Cohrssen et al., 2016; Justice, 2006; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Milburn et al., 2014; van Kleeck, 2003). Indication from Mol and colleauge’s (2009) meta-analysis
amalgamating evidence from interactive reading intervention studies suggests whole-group reading experiences with young children result in oral language gains.

Scholars and researchers have emphasized the importance of inclusive early childhood programs that engage young children with learning experiences that are both strategic and intentional. Interactive shared storybook reading practices provide young children with opportunities to use and learn new words, practice more sophisticated grammatical structures, and understand narrative story structures. Specifically, the Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) method of interactive shared storybook reading can be utilized by early childhood educators as a Tier Two instructional method, providing young children of all abilities with explicit opportunities to practice their oral language and emergent literacy skills. As stated by Kavale (1988), Tier Two instruction should be “more intensive, more relentless, more precisely delivered, more highly structured and direct, and more carefully monitored for procedural fidelity and efforts” (p. 335). However, Bradley and Reinking (2011) conclude it is often difficult to change early childhood educators’ patterns of reading interaction with children, particularly beyond large group book sharing contexts.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In recent years there has been growing interest in effective instructional methods and interventions to facilitate language development and emergent literacy acquisition in young children including those who are typically developing, learning English as a second language, at-risk for developing language difficulty due a variety of social factors, and have language delay or impairment. As discussed in this study’s review of the research literature, the importance of oral language development, namely vocabulary expansion, verbal expression of thoughts and ideas, and listening comprehension, in young children has been demonstrated in promoting speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills for future academic success, particularly when children begin to access learning through reading comprehension. The research literature has provided evidence-based suggestions for enhancing the growth of oral language in young children with none so valued as the benefits from shared book reading; however, there are wide variations as to how shared book reading for instructional purposes is defined, which types of book reading strategies early childhood educators are employing and with what frequency, and how early childhood educators are prepared for having knowledge in typical language development and using shared book reading strategies to enhance the language and literacy achievements in all young children in their instructional care.

The term shared book reading is generally understood to mean the activity of adult-child storybook reading. Although reading storybooks to young children certainly is beneficial, the interactions between children and adults have been identified as critical for maximizing children’s gains during this important activity. Hence, interactive storybook reading becomes
the context where both the child and the adult are active participants in the construction of dialogue surrounding the storybook. This dialogue is characteristic of adult sensitivity and responsiveness, whereby adults promote child engagement through initiating various types of questions and comments pertaining to the story and shaping children’s responses through supportive responses allowing children to be successful with practicing their language within their zone of proximal development. Whitehurst (2005) and colleagues contend how adults read to children is as important as to how often they read to them and developed a method of reading to young children known as Dialogic Reading. This method explicitly focuses on the premise of interactive storybook reading, in which young children learn most from sharing books when they are actively involved. In the Dialogic Reading method of interactive storybook reading, the adult’s systematic manipulation of interactions through a framework of prompts and elaborated responses fosters children’s language and literacy growth by providing opportunities for rich language models and practice with new oral language skills.

The aim of this study was to characterize educators’ storybook reading behaviors, their attitudes, concerns, and perceptions for adopting Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice, along with characterizing children’s oral language status. Identifying the characteristics of natural or routine story-time has implications for pinpointing the features required for differentiating the preparation of early childhood educators to learn new strategies for reading, such as Dialogic Reading, through high quality professional learning programs. In order to investigate important variables in storybook reading with young children in an inclusive early learning environment, this study explores the following questions:

1. What are the natural storybook reading behaviors used by four early childhood educators during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?
2. What are the concerns, attitudes, and perceptions of four early childhood educators regarding the use or potential use of evidence-based Dialogic Reading during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?

3. What are the oral language abilities of young children populated across four inclusive early learning classrooms?

This chapter outlines the methods employed in this study to explore these questions.

**Research Design**

In order to identify and describe the characteristics of the routine story-time context used by early childhood educators, a research design for descriptive analysis was employed. Data were collected to describe and elaborate on the context of naturalistic story-time in an inclusive early learning environment. Data collected relating to the educators who participated with this descriptive study included socio-demographic characteristics, mental states relative to their intensity of concern for using or potentially using new strategies for interactive storybook reading, namely Dialogic Reading, and their behaviors related to their interaction with their young children while reading storybooks during their routine instructional story-time activities. Data collected regarding child participants populated in the educators’ classrooms included socio-demographic characteristics and information describing their current levels of oral language abilities. Table 4 displays the data collected for both the adult educator and child participants.
Table 4
Type of Data Collected for Educator and Child Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Educator Participant</th>
<th>Child Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demographic Information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td>• Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age in Years</td>
<td>• Chronologic Age in Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race / Ethnicity</td>
<td>• Chronologic Age in Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education Level</td>
<td>• Race / Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Type of Certification</td>
<td>• Primary Exceptionality Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Type of Professional Learning in Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>• Home Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of Years of Teaching Experience</td>
<td><strong>Oral Language Assessments:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of Hours Worked Per Week</td>
<td>◆ Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language 4th Ed. (TACL-4; Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary Spoken Language</td>
<td>• Sum of Scaled Scores for Three Subtests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Secondary Spoken Language</td>
<td>• Receptive Language Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional Development Experience in Interactive Storybook Reading</td>
<td>• Descriptive Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional Development Experience in the Dialogic Reading Method</td>
<td>◆ Tier Two Receptive Vocabulary Assessment (non-standardized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Intensity for Stages of Concern (SoC) for Learning the Dialogic Reading Method</strong></td>
<td>• Percentage of total words correctly identified receptively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unconcerned</td>
<td>• Percentage of nouns correctly identified receptively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information</td>
<td>• Percentage of verbs correctly identified receptively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal</td>
<td>◆ Tier Two Expressive Vocabulary Assessment (non-standardized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management</td>
<td>• Percentage of total words correctly expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consequence</td>
<td>• Percentage of nouns correctly expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>• Percentage of verbs correctly expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refocusing</td>
<td><strong>Interactive Storybook Reading Key Behaviors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Storybook Reading Key Behaviors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Frequency of Prompt Types (Completion, Recall, Open-Ended, Wh-question, Distancing, or Other)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequency of Prompt Types (Completion, Recall, Open-Ended, Wh-question, Distancing, or Other)</td>
<td><strong>Frequency of Response Types Provided to Children (Pausing, Repeated Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Elicits Child to Repeat)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequency of Active Listening Characteristics</td>
<td><strong>Reading Group Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading Group Size</td>
<td><strong>Type of Early Childhood Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Type of Early Childhood Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants and Setting

A nonprobability sample based on convenience and availability was selected for this study (Creswell, 2014). A sample of four adult early childhood educators and the children naturally populated in their preschool or prekindergarten classes were recruited from an early learning charter school located in the central Florida area. Recruitment activities included participation invitations, an explanation of the research, request for willing volunteers, and a consent process. Inclusion criteria for the adult participants included (a) educators must be employees of the early childhood learning school; (b) educators must hold current childcare certification or licensure required by the early learning school; and (c) educators must volunteer as willing participants in the investigation. The adult educator and child participants’ informed consent was obtained according to the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Research Policy (see Appendix A).

Educator Participants

Three preschool and one prekindergarten classroom lead educators were recruited and participated in the study, for a total of four adult early childhood educator participants \( (N = 4) \). They are described as early childhood classroom educators for young children ranging in age from 3 through 6 years. Early childhood refers to children in the developmental period between birth and 8 years of age and is typically divided into developmental periods as opposed to chronological age. The preschool and prekindergarten developmental period typically includes children between three and five years of age. The classroom educator is characteristically the lead teacher, responsible for developing the schedules, enforcing routines, and planning and
implementing developmentally appropriate lessons and activities. For this study, all of the adult educator participants are referred to as *educators*.

**Socio-demographic Information.** Following study access approval, recruitment activities, and an explanation of participant responsibilities, the Adult Demographic Information Questionnaire was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the four participating early childhood educators (see Appendix B). Information on the questionnaire included *gender, age, race/ethnicity, education level, setting where they earned their degree, current and alternate certification information, early childhood education status, years of teaching experience, number of hours worked per week, primary and secondary languages spoken, and history of professional development in Dialogic Reading or interactive storybook reading.*

All four of the educators were female. Their mean age was 36 years (*M* = 36.25, *SD* = 9.47, range: 20) with a minimum age of 30 years and a maximum age of 50 years. The educators reported belonging to one or more social groups through self-identification. Three educator participants (75%) identified themselves as White, with two (50%) identifying themselves as White alone (i.e., no other ethnic origin). One educator (25%) identified herself as White with having an ethnic origin of Hispanic or Latino (Puerto Rican). One educator (25%) identified herself as belonging to the social group of Asian origin (Pakistan). All of the educators (100%) reported English as their primary spoken language. One educator (25%) reported Spanish as her secondary language and one educator (25%) reported Urdu as her secondary language (see Table 5).

**Levels of Education.** All of the participating educators were teachers of young children aged 3 through 6 years. Table 6 displays the participants’ education and professional learning
history. The highest level of educational attainment among the educators was a graduate degree. Three participating educators’ (75%) have attained a Bachelor’s Degree as their highest level of education. One educator (25%) has attained a Bachelor’s degree in Exceptional Student Education and a Master of Arts degree. All of the educators (100%) had their degrees awarded from a university. One educator (25%) has entered teaching through an alternate certificate program, which is designed to expedite the transition of non-teachers to a teaching career. The type of teaching certificate the educators reported ranged from having a standard Florida teaching certificate (25%), having a certificate but needing to complete a certification program in order to continue teaching (25%), being in the process of earning a certificate (25%), to not holding a teaching certificate in any state (25%) (see Table 6).

In terms of educational preparation in early childhood, one educator (25%) reported attaining her Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. One educator (25%) reported early childhood preparation as a Child Development Associate (CDA). Two educators (50%) reported not having any specialized preparation in early childhood education.

Professional Learning involves the ongoing process in which educators increase their teaching effectiveness for improving student learning outcomes. Two of the participating educators (50%) reported not having previous professional learning in either interactive storybook reading practices or the Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) method, with two educators (50%) reporting they were unsure of any previous professional learning experience related to reading stories to young children (see Table 6).

**Teaching Experience.** Each educator’s total years of experience in the teaching profession along with the number of years they have taught in their current teaching location is
displayed in Table 6. Total years of teaching experience varied among the educators and ranged from a minimum of one year (i.e., the current school year) to a maximum of 34 years. The number of years the educators reported teaching in their current teaching position ranged from a minimum of one year (i.e., the current school year) to a maximum of 24 years.
Table 5
Demographic Characteristics of the Participating Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Type of Classroom</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Race / Ethnicity</th>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Primary Language</th>
<th>Secondary Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PK</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Asian (Pakistan)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Hispanic (Puerto Rican)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Not of Asian nor Hispanic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Not of Asian nor Hispanic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>Entered Teaching Through Alternate Certificate Program</td>
<td>Type of Florida Teaching Certificate</td>
<td>Education in Early Childhood or Child Development</td>
<td>Previous Professional Learning in Dialogic Reading</td>
<td>Previous Professional Learning in Share Storybook Reading</td>
<td>Years of Teaching Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Teaching Certification</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>No Specialized Instruction</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Certificate Issued but must complete certification program to continue</td>
<td>No Specialized Instruction</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Standard Certificate</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Participants

Child participants included the young children naturally populated in three preschool classrooms and one prekindergarten classroom at the early learning charter school. Inclusionary criteria were not specified for the child participants. The children were nested within the educators’ established classrooms and participated with the investigation through developmentally appropriate story-time activities that were part of their typical education day. The early learning charter school is inclusive to all young children; therefore, typical educational days are integrated including all children (a) with developmental delays or disabilities; (b) who are gifted and talented; (c) whose families are culturally and linguistically diverse; (d) who are from diverse socioeconomic groups; and (e) who have other individual learning styles, strengths, or needs (National Association for the Education of Young Children; NAEYC, 2009).

Classroom Population. The typical early childhood classroom size at the charter school averages 13 preschool-age children. Although all of the young children nested in the participating educators’ classes joined in routine story-time as part of their typical instructional day, only the children who had been granted parental consent through the university’s IRB parental informed consent process participated with the language assessment procedures, and thus are regarded as the study’s child participants. The total child participant sample size following recruitment and informed parental consent processes was 34 children \((N = 34)\) across four preschool / prekindergarten classrooms. Table 7 reflects the distribution of the adult and child participants across the participating classrooms.
Table 7
Participants Across the Research Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Classroom Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom A</td>
<td>Adult Educator 1</td>
<td>PK* 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom B</td>
<td>Adult Educator 2</td>
<td>PS** 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom C</td>
<td>Adult Educator 3</td>
<td>PS 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom D</td>
<td>Adult Educator 4</td>
<td>PS 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Adult Participants = 4 (N = 4)
Total Number of Child Participants = 34 (N = 34)
*PK = Prekindergarten; **PS = Preschool
Child Participant Social Demographic Information. Following study access approval, recruitment activities, and informed parental consent process, the Child Demographic Information Questionnaire was used to collect social-demographic information describing the child participants nested in each of the four inclusive classrooms (see Appendix G). Information on the questionnaire included gender, date of birth, race / ethnicity, primary exceptional student education eligibility, and language spoken at home. The researcher used the information collected for the purpose of describing the social-demographic population of the children nested in each of the participating educators’ classrooms. The researcher also used the demographic questionnaire as the means for collecting child birthdates to calculate chronological ages in years and in months for each child participant, which were then used to calculate scaled scores, percentile ranks, and age equivalents on the administered language assessments.

A total of 12 female and 22 male (N = 34) child participants were nested in their respective educator’s prekindergarten and preschool classes. Most of the child participants were populated across three preschool classrooms (73.5%) while the remaining children (26.5%) were populated in one prekindergarten classroom. Child participants ranged in age from 3 to nearly 6 years. Table 8 displays the children’s social demographic information across each of the four educator’s classrooms. The mean age of the children was 3.94 years (M = 3.94, SD = .77) [chronological ages in terms of months ranged from 36 months to 71 months (M = 52.14, SD = 8.94)]. In the Prekindergarten classroom (i.e., Educator One), the children’s ages ranged from four years to five years (M = 4.66, SD = .50, range: 1) [chronological ages in terms of months ranged from 55 months to 71 months (M = 61.55, SD = 4.88, range: 16.0)]. In Educator Two’s preschool class, the children’s ages ranged from three years to five years (M = 4.0, SD = .82, range: 2) [chronological ages in terms of months ranged from 36 months to 62 months (M =
50.1, \(SD = 8.91\), range: 26]. In Educator Three’s preschool class, the children’s ages ranged from three years to four years (\(M = 3.83, SD = .41\), range: 1) [chronological ages in terms of months ranged from 47 months to 57 months (\(M = 53.50, SD = 3.78\), range: 10)]. In Educator Four’s preschool class, the children’s ages ranged from three years to four years (\(M = 3.22, SD = .44\), range: 1) [chronological ages in terms of months ranged from 38 months to 53 months (\(M = 44.11, SD = 5.41\), range: 15)]. Information collected on the child participant demographic questionnaires did not include whether children had met secondary speech and / or language eligibility criteria in addition to their primary eligibility for special education services.
Table 8
Child Participant Social Demographic Information Across Four Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Educator 1 Prekindergarten</th>
<th>Educator 2 Preschool</th>
<th>Educator 3 Preschool</th>
<th>Educator 4 Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Other Latino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Eligibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Delay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Special Eligibility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impaired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English / Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Autism Spectrum Disorder
**Instrumentation**

Instrumentation materials were used in this study to gather data describing the natural context of routine story-time in four inclusive early childhood classes. Instrumentation used for data collection purposes with the educator participants and the child participants is described below.

**Educators**

The instruments used to identify and measure the educators’ storybook reading behaviors and mental attitudes toward the use or potential use of a strategic interactive storybook reading method (i.e., Dialogic Reading) included the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ), Stages of Concern (SoC) Quick Scoring Device, Innovation Configuration (IC) Map, and a systematic observation scoring checklist. Each is described in the following paragraphs.

**Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ).** In this study, the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ; Archie et al., 2006) was used as a relevant diagnostic dimension of Hall and Hord’s (2019) Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (see Appendix C). The SoC questioning technique was used to gauge the educators’ reactions, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about the knowledge and skills involved in facilitating language growth in young children through interactive storybook reading practices. It was of interest to the researcher to assess the educators’ relative concerns regarding their use or potential use of Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) as a strategic method of interactive storybook reading since their early learning educational setting is fully inclusive to all learners. As such, it is critical to the educators’ young students that their language learning be explicit, systematic, strategic, and
embedded in multiple contexts of learning (Ezell & Justice, 2005). The educator’s responses on the questionnaire was used to inform where the educators are along the concerns continuum, which can be used to inform future high-quality professional learning programs as to how to differentiate and personalize the adoption of a new instructional interactive storybook reading method (i.e., Dialogic Reading), yielding success for both the educator and the children in terms of their language learning growth.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM; Hall & Hord, 2019) is a professional learning practice model acknowledging that learning a new innovation can bring about change in teaching methods and supporting individuals during the change process is crucial for a teacher’s learning of that innovation to become part of an everyday instructional practice. Certainly, the most important prospect in the field of education is the measured outcome gains of student learning. An educator’s adoption of a new evidence-based practice to meet that objective is challenging, dynamic, and personal. Grounded in the tenets of Fuller’s (1969) theory that a learner’s concerns are related to their past experience with a particular context (e.g., teaching young children), identifying and linking developing concerns for a new teaching technique can individualize the learner’s professional education of that new technique or way of practice. Fuller (1969) theorized the stages of concern are developmental, whereby an individual’s earlier concerns (i.e., lower in intensity) about a new teaching method need to be addressed during a high-quality professional learning program before later concerns (i.e., higher in intensity) can either emerge or increase in relative concern intensity. For example, when an educator is in the first year of learning a new method of reading stories to young children (e.g., using the Dialogic Reading method), they may have task-related concerns about how they are going organize resources to begin implementing the new method in their daily instructional routine. An
educator who has had some experience with reading to young children using some form of interactive storybook reading and employing conversational techniques (e.g., asking questions about the text and illustrations) during their routine instructional practices may have concerns more related to how the new method will impact the development of their young students.

As mentioned, the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) was used in this study as an instrument for exploring the educators’ mental contentions regarding their present involvement or potential involvement with using Dialogic Reading as a method of interactive storybook reading during routine story-time activities. Hall and Hord (2019) constructed the questionnaire to apply to all educational innovations; for this study, the instructional practice of Dialogic Reading was applied to the questionnaire. The composite representation of an educator’s feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the use or potential use of Dialogic Reading strategies is identified as concern. Hall and Hord (2019) have identified a set of seven specific categories of concern representing the stages or developmental flow of an individual’s (i.e., educator’s) adoption of a new instructional practice.

The seven categories or stages of concern progress through the following four levels: unrelated concerns, self-concerns, task concerns, and impact concerns. Relative intensity scores in SoC Stage 0 Unconcerned reflect the degree to which the educator is more concerned about other things unrelated to Dialogic Reading. Relative intensity scores in SoC Stage 1 Information reflect the degree to which the educator has a general awareness of Dialogic Reading and is interested in learning more details about the strategies. Relative intensity scores for Stage 2 Personal reflect the degree to which the educator is uncertain about the demands involved in Dialogic Reading or the ability to meet those demands. Relative intensity scores for Stage 3 Management reflect the degree to which the educator’s attention is focused on the processes or
tasks involved with using Dialogic Reading and the best use of information and resources. Relative intensity scores for Stage 4 Consequence reflect the degree to which the educator’s attention is focused on the impact Dialogic Reading has with young children in the immediate sphere of influence. Relative intensity scores for Stage 5 Collaboration reflect the degree to which the educator’s focus is on coordination and cooperation with other educators, practitioners, administrators, and parents regarding the use of Dialogic Reading. Relative intensity scores for Stage 6 Refocusing reflect the educator’s focus on the exploration of the more universal benefits from Dialogic Reading, like the possibility of major changes to the method or replacement with a more powerful alternative method.

The questionnaire consists of thirty-five statements expressing a particular concern about the use or potential use of the Dialogic Reading method of interactive storybook reading. The educators were to indicate the degree to which each concern is true for them by indicating a number on a 0 – 7 likert-type scale. High numbers on the scale (e.g., 6 or 7) indicate high concern, low numbers (e.g., 1 or 2) indicate low concern, and “0” indicates a completely irrelevant item. The SoCQ (Archie et al., 2006) has strong reliability estimates with test / retest reliabilities ranging from .65 to .86 and internal consistency with alpha-coefficients ranging from .66 to .83. The Stages of Concern (SoC) Quick Scoring Device (Archie et al., 2006) is a paper scoring form that was used to hand-score the SoCQ responses and plot an individual profile for each educator (see Appendix D). A tallied raw score for each scale (i.e., stage of concern) is obtained from an educator’s completed questionnaire and are converted to percentile scores using the percentile conversion chart on the SoC Quick Scoring Device. An educator’s percentile scores are plotted on a grid to produce a graphically represented individualized profile for the relative intensity rating for each of the seven stages of concern. The researcher used
clinical interpretation techniques to gain insight on the types of concerns that were most intense and least intense that each educator reported about the use or potential use of Dialogic Reading as an instructional method for interactive storybook reading.

**Innovation Configuration (IC) Map.** An additional diagnostic dimension of CBAM researchers use to address the definitional issues related to a particular paradigm is the Innovation Configuration (IC) Map (Hall & Hord, 2019). An Innovation Configuration Map provides a depiction of what constitutes high-quality implementation of an innovation. It serves as a model to guide and focus learners’ efforts toward adopting a new practice (i.e., innovation). For this study, an Innovation Configuration (IC) Map for Interactive Storybook Reading Using the Dialogic Reading Method was created to chart the elements of interactive storybook reading, including the Dialogic Reading strategies, that establish an individual’s implementation along an evidence continuum from ideal implementation to no implementation of the identified elements involved with high-quality interactive reading with young children (see Appendix E). Multiple sources were used to construct the IC Map including the research literature on interactive storybook reading and Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst, 2005) and collaboration between two language and literacy experts in speech-language pathology.

The IC Map for Interactive Storybook Reading Using the Dialogic Reading Method is an instrument that can be used in future differentiated professional learning programs to guide educators and practitioners toward high-quality implementation of evidence-based interactive storybook reading techniques. The IC Map identified the adult reader’s key behaviors that facilitate interaction with children, which provides opportunities for children to practice their language. The key behaviors identified for effective interactive storybook reading include the
interactive-promoting behaviors used in the Dialogic Reading method. These key behaviors include the Dialogic Reading prompting (i.e., CROWD) and response (i.e., PEER) frameworks, along with behaviors for promoting an active listening environment, clarifying challenging vocabulary, and maximizing children’s opportunities to use their language (i.e., dosage). The IC Map was utilized in this study to inform the development of a systematic observation scoring checklist that was used to measure the educator participants’ natural story-time reading behaviors. The key behaviors that were identified as the effective elements of interactive storybook reading were delineated on the scoring checklist as the educator’s observable reading behaviors during the natural story-time activities.

**Systematic Observation Scoring Checklist.** The Interactive Storybook Reading Using Dialogic Reading Strategies: Baseline Coding Checklist was used to measure the frequency of occurrence of story-time reading behaviors linked to Dialogic Reading strategies observed from video-recorded natural story-time activities carried out by the four participating early childhood educators (see Appendix F). The observation checklist was utilized for the systematic documentation of observable behaviors evidenced by the educators during four routine story-time reading activities, which were video-recorded using a Sony HDR-CX405 Handycam Recorder. The checklist provided the observer samples for criteria in collecting and evaluating the educators’ storybook reading behaviors. Two main sources were used to ensure the characteristics and descriptors listed in the scoring checklist instrument were clear, specific, and observable, which included the critical components for high-quality implementation of interactive storybook reading using Dialogic Reading strategies derived from the Interactive Storybook Reading IC Map (see Appendix E) and a similar baseline coding checklist used in a
recent research investigation (Towson et al., 2019). The storybook utilized for the routine story-time observations across all four early childhood classrooms was *The Dinosaur Who Lived In My Backyard* by B. G. Hennessy.

The Interactive Storybook Reading Using Dialogic Reading Strategies: Baseline Coding Checklist used in this study provided data collection criteria in two nominal categories. The first category involved a checklist used to evaluate the frequency of interactive storybook reading behaviors linked to the Dialogic Reading strategies for adult-reader prompts (*CROWD*) and elaborated responses (*PEER*) (Towson et al., 2019). A Yes / No coding system was used to facilitate the categorizing and counting of the specific *CROWD* and *PEER* behaviors as they occurred. The second category involved a checklist used to evaluate the behaviors exhibited by the educators relating to the promotion of an active listening and child engaging environment during the reading session. A Yes / No coding system was used to facilitate the categorization and counting of specific behaviors characteristic of a high-quality active listening environment promoting child engagement as they occurred during the routine story-time activities. The behaviors observed in this category included the educators’ application of visual engagement, energetic and well-modulated voice, positive affect, and child inclusion (see Appendix F).
Child Participants

The instruments used to describe the linguistic characteristics of the child participants nested in the four participating educators’ inclusive early learning classrooms included the Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language 4th Edition (TACL-4; Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014) and the Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment (Towson et al., 2019). Each is described in the following paragraphs.

Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language Fourth Edition (TACL-4). Following study access approval, recruitment activities, and informed parental consent process, the child participants were administered the Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language 4th Edition (TACL-4; Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014) for the research purpose of describing the overall nature of oral language abilities of the young children in the instructional care of each participating educator compared to other children of their similar age. Understanding the linguistic needs of children receiving or potentially receiving a change in instructional methods is a critical element to consider when planning, implementing, and measuring high quality professional learning programs promoting development and acquisition of young children’s language. The premise for designing high quality professional learning programs intending to affect changes in early childhood educators’ instructional practice like interactive storybook reading techniques (i.e., Dialogic Reading) is that the changes in practice will ultimately result in language and literacy learning for their young students in preparation for conventional reading (Guskey, 2014).

The Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language (TACL-4; Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014) is a validated, norm-referenced instrument used to measure receptive auditory (oral) language for children ages 3 years, 0 months (3-0) through 12 years, 11 months (12-11). The TACL-4 focuses
on the semantic and grammatical components involved with the receptive (i.e., message receiving) linguistic system for the processes of listening, decoding, and comprehension. The TACL-4 has three subtests that measure Vocabulary, Grammatical Morphemes, and Elaborated Phrases and Sentences. The Vocabulary subtest measures a child’s understanding of the literal and most common meanings of word classes, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, which represent basic precepts and concepts. The Grammatical Morphemes subtest measures a child’s understanding of grammatical morphemes such as function words (i.e., prepositions, pronouns, and determiners) and inflectional morphemes (i.e., bound morphemes such as noun number and case, verb number and case, and noun-verb agreement). The Elaborated Phrases and Sentences subtest measures the child’s understanding of syntactically based word relations, elaborated phrase and sentence constructions, embedded sentences, and partially and completely conjoined sentences (Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014).

The TACL-4 was normed on a sample of 1,142 children in twenty-six states. Reliability refers to the consistency with which a test measures a particular ability. Three types of correlation coefficients were calculated to measure error, including coefficient alpha, test-retest, and scorer difference. The TACL-4’s overall reliability for all three coefficients met the rigorous standards at or above .90, suggesting the TACL-4 possesses relatively little test error and that users can have confidence in the assessment’s results. Tests are considered valid if they accurately measure an intended ability. The TACL-4 displays evidence of content-description validity, criterion-prediction validity, and construct identification validity, suggesting the assessment is a valid measure of oral language and can be used with confidence to assess receptive oral language abilities.
Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Storybook Vocabulary Assessments. Following study access approval, recruitment activities, and informed parental consent process, the child participants were administered the Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Storybook Vocabulary Assessment (Towson et al., 2019). This researcher-developed instrument was used for the research purpose of unfolding the children’s oral language abilities for understanding (i.e., receptive) and using (i.e., expressive) tier-two vocabulary commonly found in young children’s storybook text. Beck and colleagues (2002) describe tier-two vocabulary as words that are frequently characteristic of written text but are infrequently used in conversation and acquiring tier-two level vocabulary is critical for children’s success with comprehension. In describing the context of routine story-time in four inclusive early learning classrooms, it was of importance to gauge the extent to which the children are acquiring vocabulary commonly encountered in children’s storybooks through experiences with typical story-time reading activities. Describing the effect an educator’s routine story-time reading techniques have on young children’s linguistic development is of high importance in the consideration of planning, implementing, and measuring differentiated high quality professional programs, particularly for inclusive early learning environments where children require vocabulary acquisition interventions that are intensive, systematic, strategic, and embedded in multiple instructional contexts.

The Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment was adapted from a researcher-developed measurement tool used in a recent research investigation to assess preschool children’s near transfer of tier-two vocabulary during a Dialogic Reading intervention (Towson et al., 2019). The tier-two pictured words used in the present study were all derived from storybooks in Read Together, Talk Together: A Dialogic Reading Program for Young Children (Pearson Education, 2005). The Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Storybook
Vocabulary Assessment included a picture stimulus book with 30 targeted tier-two words (18 nouns and 11 verbs) used to elicit receptive responses of the word forms and the same 30 targeted tier-two words (18 nouns and 11 verbs) used to elicit expressive responses of the word forms. Two scoring forms (i.e., Receptive and Expressive) were used to record the children’s responses (see Appendices H and I). For the Receptive portion, each of the thirty stimulus pictured words were presented on a page in a field of 4 choices, similar in format to the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 5th Edition (PPVT-5; Dunn & Dunn, 2019). For the Expressive portion, each picture was presented one at a time for the child to name. All of the stimulus pictures were scanned copies taken directly from the storybooks with copyright permission (Pearson Education, 2005).

**Recruitment Procedures**

Permission and approval for the research study was obtained from the University of Central Florida (UCF) Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the administrators in authority at the early learning charter school prior to participant recruitment activities (see Appendix A for IRB approval). The adult participants (i.e., early childhood educators) were informed regarding participant responsibilities and the possible risks and benefits of the investigation. There were six early childhood educators who had expressed interest in participating during recruitment activities; however, two of the educators chose not to volunteer since their classes were populated with children who had complex communication needs (i.e., non-verbal) and the educators did not utilize typical story-time activities as part of their routine instructional day. A total of four early childhood educators volunteered to participate with the study.
Preschool-aged children were nested within their educators’ classrooms, resulting in naturally formed groups. Child participants were recruited by distributing the university’s IRB approved Informed Parental Consent forms to the parents of the children in the participating educators’ classes. A total of 34 children across the four early childhood classes received informed parental consent to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Educators

Following study access approval and recruitment activities, data was collected for the research purpose of describing the characteristics, behaviors, and mental attitudes of the participating educators implementing routine story-time activities as an instructional practice in four inclusive early learning classrooms. Data collection procedures are described in the following paragraphs.

Demographic Information. Social-demographic information about the four participating educators was collected through the Adult Demographic Information Questionnaire (see Appendix B). Each questionnaire form was labeled with an educator identification number. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in a large envelope to each educator personally in their classroom at the research charter school site. Upon the educators’ completion, the researcher individually collected the envelopes containing the questionnaires from the educators. The de-identified questionnaires were stored in a locked cabinet inside a locked research laboratory located at the university. Only authorized student research assistants and personnel
had access to the laboratory. The information from the questionnaires was coded using alphabetic and numeral abbreviations and entered into an electronic data spreadsheet. Only the researcher had access to the educator data codebook. Using an encrypted computer device, data was then transferred from the electronic spreadsheet to a statistical software application (i.e., IBM SPSS) for the purpose of descriptive data analysis.

**Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ).** Data were collected regarding the educators’ feelings, perceptions, and concerns about the use or potential use of the Dialogic Reading method for interactive storybook reading using the Stages of Concern Questionnaires (SoCQs) (see Appendix C). The questionnaires were given to the four participating educators personally by the researcher at the charter school and collected individually in a sealed envelope, protecting the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher did not provide verbal explanations or specific details regarding the items on the questionnaire (e.g., description of Dialogic Reading); however, written instructions regarding the procedures for completing it accompanied the questionnaire (see Appendix C). Once collected individually from the educators, the questionnaires were labeled with the educator’s identification number and stored in a locked cabinet inside a locked research laboratory located at the university.

The researcher used the Stages of Concern (SoC) Quick Scoring Device (Archie et al., 2006) to hand-score the SoCQ responses and chart the educators’ individual profiles (see Appendix D). A tallied raw score for each scale (i.e., stage of concern) was obtained from each educator’s completed questionnaire and transferred to the paper-scoring device. The seven scales included *Unconcerned, Information, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration*, and *Refocusing*. After the seven raw scale scores were obtained, they were
converted to percentile scores using the percentile conversion chart for SoC from the SoC Quick Scoring Device (see Appendix D). The total score for each educator was obtained by calculating the sum of the seven raw scale scores, which were also converted to a percentile. Following, each educator’s percentile scores were plotted on a grid to produce a graphically represented individual profile for the relative intensity rating for each of the seven stages of concern. The researcher used clinical interpretation techniques to gain insight on the types of concerns that are most intense and least intense that each educator individually reported about the use or potential use of Dialogic Reading as an instructional method for interactive storybook reading.

**Routine Storybook Reading Systematic Observation.** Systematic observation data were collected which directly related to the educators’ storybook reading behaviors evidenced during a routine story-time reading session in their classroom as part of their typical instructional day. The researcher and a student research assistant logged a total of four observations by video-recording a routine story-time session in each of the educators’ classrooms using a Sony HDR-CX405 Handycam Recorder. The researcher and student assistant assumed the role of complete observer and were not participants in the story-time experiences before, during, or after the video-recordings other than a social greeting upon entering and exiting the classrooms.

The researcher provided each educator with the paperback storybook, *The Dinosaur Who Lived In My Back Yard* by B. G. Hennessy. The educators selected a day to incorporate the storybook into their routine story-time schedule. The prekindergarten educator and one preschool educator scheduled their observations to occur during their morning Circle Time routine of story-time. Two preschool educators scheduled their observations to occur during their afternoon routine of instructional story-time. Following each observation session in the
educators’ classroom, the student research assistant returned to the university laboratory and uploaded the recorded video file into an electronic encrypted computer file and the recorded observations were deleted from the video-recording device.

The Interactive Storybook Reading Using Dialogic Reading Strategies: Baseline Coding Checklist was the sign coding system used to facilitate the categorizing and counting of specific interactive storybook reading behaviors linked to the Dialogic Reading method as they occurred during the video-recording (see Appendix E). Two student research assistants (i.e., RA1, RA2) were educated on coding procedures via a recorded training video that explained Dialogic Reading and how to utilize the coding schema. After viewing the video, the research assistants coded practice videos, which were adapted from a previous research study. Once they coded a video, the laboratory coordinator checked it for reliability, discussed their disagreements with them, provided re-education as necessary and then they proceeded on to coding the next video. The research assistants coded as many videos as needed until they achieved 80% reliability across two consecutive Dialogic Reading videos. RA1 and RA2 independently coded the observations by viewing the encrypted uploaded video files on a computer and documented a Yes / No code for each behavior that occurred (or did not occur) during each of the educators’ story-time sessions. RA1 viewed 100% of each of the four video-recorded reading sessions. RA2 viewed 25% of each of the four video-recorded reading sessions.

After RA1 and RA2 independently coded each educator’s observable behaviors from the video-recorded story-time session (100% and 25%, respectively), the coded responses were tallied for each category. The nominal categories that were coded included type of CROWD prompt, PEER component, and Active Listening component. First, a total number of observed occurrences for each type of CROWD prompt were tallied (e.g., Completion, Recall Question,
Open-Ended Statement / Question, Wh-question, Distancing Question, and Other: Not CROWD). Next, the total number of coded “Yes” and the total number of coded “No” responses were tallied for each PEER responsiveness component (e.g., pause, Repeated prompt, Evaluates, Expands, elicits child to Repeat). Percentages of positive (i.e., “Yes”) occurrences for each component were calculated. Then, the total number of coded “Yes” and the total number of coded “No” responses were tallied for the active listening components and a percentage for the evidence of promoting active listening during story-time was calculated. The researcher transferred the coded data from the coding checklists to an electronic data spreadsheet. The data was then transferred from the electronic spreadsheet to a statistical software application (i.e., IBM SPSS) for the purpose of descriptive data analysis. The reliability of the direct observations was investigated by determining the extent to which the observers records were in-agreement. Inter-rater reliability (IRR) between RA1 (100% of each video observed) and RA2 (25% of each video observed) ranged from 67% to 100% across the four direct observations. An average IRR of 90.25% was calculated. RA1 and RA2 resolved all disagreements in coding behaviors.

Child Participants

Following study access approval, recruitment activities, and informed parental consent process, data were collected to describe the child participants from sources including the Child Demographic Information Questionnaire, the TACL-4 (Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014), and the Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment (adapted from Towson et al., 2019).

Demographic Information. Social-demographic information describing the child participants was collected from the Child Demographic Information Questionnaire (see
Appendix G. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in a large envelope to the respective educator for each child participant who had informed parental consent. The educators completed the questionnaires using the charter school’s student information database system. The researcher collected the child demographic questionnaires in the provided envelopes from the individual educators. Questionnaires were identified with a child participant’s study identification number and were stored in a locked cabinet inside a locked research laboratory located at the university. Only authorized student research assistants and personnel had access to the laboratory. The information from the questionnaires was coded using alphabetic and numeral abbreviations and entered into an electronic data spreadsheet. Only the researcher had access to the child participant data codebook. Using an encrypted computer device, data was then transferred from the electronic spreadsheet to statistical software application (i.e., IBM SPSS) for the purpose of descriptive data analysis.

**Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language Fourth Edition (TACL-4).** Data was collected describing the oral (receptive) language abilities of the child participants by calculating the individual results of the Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language Fourth Edition (TACL-4; Corrow-Woolfolk, 2014) administered to each child participant. Graduate student speech-language pathology clinicians administered the assessment individually to each child participant at the charter school in an unoccupied classroom minimizing distractions during testing. Testing time ranged from approximately 15 to 25 minutes per child. The graduate clinicians administered the TACL-4 subtests in the order in which they appeared on the Examiner Record Booklet (i.e., Vocabulary, Grammatical Morphemes, and Elaborated Phrases and Sentences). The assessment was administered according to the testing protocol instructed in the
Examiner’s Manual. The entry point for administering each subtest was item Number 1 due to the young children’s ages. Since all of children were between the ages of 3 through 6 years, the establishment of a basal score was not necessary. Ceiling scores were established when the child had 3 consecutive incorrect responses. Each stimulus item was presented using the Picture Book and the child was instructed to respond to the stimulus by choosing a corresponding picture out of a field of four picture choices. At the beginning of each subtest, the phrase “Show me” was used to introduce each stimulus item. Once the child understood what they were to do, the phrase was eliminated and only the stimulus word was queried (i.e., “Show me bicycle” became “bicycle”). Children who were unassertive with responses were encouraged to respond and testing was discontinued when a child refused to answer successive items despite encouragement.

The clinicians scored each correct item as “1” and each incorrect item as “0”. The total number of correct responses was tallied for each subtest yielding three raw scores. Raw scores for each subtest were converted to normative scores (e.g., age equivalents, percentile ranks, and scaled scores) using the conversion tables provided in the TACL-4 Examiner’s Manual. Scaled scores were summed and the value was converted into a Receptive Language Index. Descriptive terms corresponding to the Receptive Language Index were assigned and included the terms: Gifted or very advanced, Superior, Above average, Average, Below average, Borderline impaired or delayed, and Impaired or delayed.

The scores and descriptive terms were recorded on each child’s individual record booklet, which were identified with the child participant’s identification number. The TACL-4 record booklets were placed in the child’s individual folder (along with their demographic questionnaire) and were stored in a locked cabinet inside a locked laboratory at the university.
The researcher transferred the collected data (i.e., scores) to an electronic data spreadsheet stored in an encrypted electronic file on a computer. The data was then transferred from the spreadsheet to a statistical software application (i.e., IBM SPSS) for the purpose of descriptive data analysis.

**Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment.** Data were collected describing the child participants’ knowledge for understanding (receptive) and use (expressive) of tier-two storybook vocabulary by calculating the individual child participant results of the Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment (adapted from Towson et al., 2019) administered by graduate speech-language pathology clinicians. The assessment was administered individually to each child participant at the charter school in an unoccupied classroom minimizing distractions during testing. Testing time averaged approximately twenty minutes per child. Since this was not a standardized, normative assessment, basal and ceiling scores were not applicable. The assessment for both receptive and expressive portions began with the first item and continued through the last item.

A picture book with thirty target items for both receptive and expressive portions was used to elicit the child’s response. The assessment began with the Expressive portion, whereby the graduate clinician asked the child to name the picture they saw on the page (e.g., “What is the name of this?” or “What is the man holding?”). Correct responses were recorded as “C” and incorrect responses were recorded as “I” on the corresponding scoring form (see Appendix I). The receptive portion of the assessment followed the completion of the expressive portion. The graduate clinician elicited the receptive response from a field of 4 choices by telling the child, “Point to the picture that I say.” Presentation of the receptive portion of the assessment was
similar to the administration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 5th Edition (*PPVT*-5; Dunn & Dunn, 2019). The child’s responses were recorded on the receptive scoring form (see Appendix H). Correct responses were tallied for both receptive and expressive portions of the assessment yielding two raw scores (i.e., expressive raw score and receptive raw score). In addition, raw sub-scores were calculated by tallying the number of correct responses corresponding to noun forms and correct responses corresponding to verb forms for each of the receptive and expressive portions of the assessment. Percentages of correct responses were calculated yielding percentage scores for the following Expressive Vocabulary: *total number of words correct, total number of nouns correct,* and *total number of verbs correct.* Percentages of correct responses were calculated yielding percentage scores for the following Receptive Vocabulary: *total number of words correct, total number of nouns correct,* and *total number of verbs correct.*

The expressive and receptive vocabulary scores recorded on each child’s individual scoring forms were identified with the child participant’s identification number. Both forms were placed in the child’s individual folder (along with their demographic questionnaire and *TACL*-4 record booklet) and were stored in a locked cabinet inside a locked laboratory at the university. The researcher transferred the collected data (i.e., scores) to an electronic data spreadsheet stored in an encrypted electronic file on a computer. The data was then transferred from the spreadsheet to a statistical software application (i.e., IBM SPSS) for the purpose of descriptive data analysis.
**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues were considered throughout the study in order to protect the participants and develop a trust with them, promote the integrity and scientific validity of the research, guard against misconduct that may reflect on the university or the charter school research site, and ensure personal privacy during traditional and electronic data collection and storage methods. The principal researcher ensured strict adherence to both the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA; 2010) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Code of Ethics (ASHA; 2016). Prior to the beginning of the investigation, research approval was obtained from the University of Central Florida’s Institutional Review Board to provide protection against human rights violation. Written permission to access the study site and participants was obtained from the administrators and individuals in authority at the early learning charter school.

Following IRB approval, verbal consent was obtained from the adult participants (i.e., educators) and signed informed parental consent forms were obtained from child participants’ parents / legal guardians. Participation in the investigation was seen as voluntary and participants could decide not to participate. It was the responsibility of the principal researcher to anticipate and respect any and all cultural, religious, gender, or other differences in the participants and at the charter school site. Following the access restrictions to the charter school due to the global pandemic health crisis, the researcher will ensure the final research report will be shared with the participants in order to avoid exploitation of participants. In addition, the researcher fully respected the privacy and confidentiality of all participants by labeling collected data in a de-identifying manner, such as numerals or pseudonyms, to protect the identities of the participants.
The researcher ensured an accurate account of the collected information when interpreting all data from the multiple sources. The researcher will provide debriefing opportunities between the researcher and the participants following access restrictions due to the global pandemic health crisis. All raw data and other investigation materials will be kept in double-locked storage for a reasonable amount of time following the investigation.

Summary

This chapter has explained the scientific methodology utilized in this descriptive study of an inclusive early learning charter school’s use of routine story-time as part of the typical instructional day in four early learning classrooms. The research questions central to this investigation are:

1. What are the natural storybook reading behaviors used by four early childhood educators during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?
2. What are the attitudes, concerns, and perceptions of four early childhood educators regarding the use or potential use of evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?
3. What are the oral language abilities of young children populated across four inclusive early learning classrooms?

The next chapter presents the results obtained from the descriptive study methods and data collection procedures used in this investigation.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In this study, the researcher aimed to describe the characteristics of educators’ reading behaviors, attitudes, concerns, and perceptions about adopting Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice, and child oral language status during routine story-time activities in four inclusive early childhood learning classrooms at a charter school located in the central Florida area. The researcher utilized a descriptive study design. Within the framework of natural story-time activities, four research questions were explored using a variety of data collection sources. The purpose for describing these routine story-time activities was to identify distinct attributes that might influence the design, implementation, and measurement of individualized high-quality professional learning programs for educating early childhood teachers in the use of the Dialogic Reading method (Whitehurst, 2005), thereby facilitating oral language growth and emergent literacy acquisition in typically developing children, children identified with language impairment or delay, and children who may be at risk for developing language difficulty. The results pertaining to each research question are described in this chapter.

Research Question One

What are the natural storybook reading behaviors used by four early childhood educators during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment? To describe the storybook reading behaviors demonstrated by the educators, data were collected from video-recorded observations from the four early childhood educator participants, each sharing in a story-time activity that was part of the typical instructional day. The typical storybook reading techniques utilized by the educators characterize their natural responsiveness to their children
while sharing a storybook and were evaluated in the context of the interactive shared storybook reading strategies associated with the Dialogic Reading method (Whitehurst, 2005). Specifically, data on the types of prompts and system of responses used by the educators while reading a story were collected from video-recorded observations during routine story-time activities.

**Prompting Techniques**

Prompts are utilized by the adult reader as a means to engage children in the storybook reading activity by facilitating active listening, providing opportunities to hear and use expanded grammatical structures, and providing opportunities to hear and use unique vocabulary. The types of prompts explicitly demonstrated by the educators during the storybook reading sessions in this study were categorized according to the Dialogic Reading set of *CROWD* prompting behaviors, which is the acronym describing the prompts used to elicit children to say something related to the story. The types of prompts fundamental to the Dialogic Reading *CROWD* set of prompts are *Completion, Recall, Open-ended, Wh-question*, and *Distancing*.

Table 9 describes the frequency of occurrence for each *CROWD* and other non-specified (i.e., not *CROWD*) type of prompt utilized during each educator’s typical story-time session. Across the four typical reading sessions, *Completion* prompts were the most infrequently used prompts, with 50% of the sessions not evidencing the use of a completion, or fill-in-the-blank, type prompt \((M = 1.00, SD = 1.41)\). Similarly, utilization of *Open-ended* prompts was evidenced in two of the sessions, by two educators, resulting in 50% of the sessions exhibiting the occurrence of this prompt type \((M = 1.50, SD = 2.38)\). There were three sessions (75%) that showed evidence of educators using a *Recall* prompt \((M = 1.75, SD = 1.50)\) and *Distancing*
prompts ($M = 1.25, SD = .957$) during their typical story-time activity. The most frequently occurring type of prompt evidenced during all four observed sessions (100%) was the use of *Wh*-question prompts (e.g., What, When, Where, Why) ($M = 6.00, SD = 7.43$). With the exception of Wh-question prompts, the educators used other (i.e., not *CROWD*) types of prompts, like those requiring yes / no responses (e.g., “Do you like dinosaurs?”) or those requiring pointing responses (e.g., “Show me big.”), with more frequency than *CROWD* prompts ($M = 3.50, SD = 3.31$) (see Table 10).
Table 9
Frequency and Percentages within CROWD and All Prompts

| Educator Prompt Behavior | Educator One | | Educator Two | | Educator Three | | Educator Four | |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                          | n            | %              | n              | %              | n              | %              | n              | %              |
| Completion               | 3 (10.0; 7.9)| 1 (7.7; 5.9)  | 0 (0.0; 0.0)   | 0 (0.0; 0.0)   |                |                |                |                |
| Recall                   | 3 (10.0; 7.9)| 5 (38.4; 29.4)| 1 (33.3; 25.0) | 0 (0.0; 0.0)   |                |                |                |                |
| Open-ended               | 5 (16.7; 13.2)| 1 (7.7; 5.9)  | 0 (0.0; 0.0)   | 0 (0.0; 0.0)   |                |                |                |                |
| Wh-question              | 17 (56.7; 44.7)| 4 (30.7; 23.5)| 1 (33.3; 25.0)| 2 (100.0; 66.7)|                |                |                |                |
| Distancing               | 2 (6.7; 5.2) | 2 (15.4; 11.8)| 1 (33.3; 25.0)| 0 (0.0; 0.0)   |                |                |                |                |
| Other *                  | 8 (0.0; 21.0)| 4 (0.0; 23.5) | 1 (0.0; 25.0)  | 1 (0.0; 33.3)  |                |                |                |                |
| Total CROWD Prompts     | 30 (78.9)    | 13 (76.5)     | 3 (75.0)       | 2 (66.7)       |                |                |                |                |
| Total All Prompts       | 38           | 17            | 4              | 3              |                |                |                |                |

*Not specified as a CROWD prompt
Table 10
Descriptive Statistics for Types of Prompts Used by Educators ($N = 4$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Prompts</th>
<th>Recall Prompts</th>
<th>Open-ended Prompts</th>
<th>Wh-question Prompts</th>
<th>Distancing Prompts</th>
<th>Non-specified Other Prompts</th>
<th>Total Prompts ($CROWD + Other$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>6.000</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>3.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>.5000</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.5000</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>2.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00*</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.4142</td>
<td>1.5000</td>
<td>2.3804</td>
<td>7.4386</td>
<td>.95743</td>
<td>3.3166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown
Response Techniques

Central to the concept of sharing storybooks with children as an important emergent literacy activity is the language interaction between the adult reader and the child(ren). Data were collected to describe these interactions during natural story-time activities through video-recorded observations and were linked to the specific shared reading strategies in Whitehurst’s (2005) Dialogic Reading PEER set of interaction behaviors, which is the acronym representing Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Repeat. During this interaction, the adult uses CROWD prompts to elicit responses from the children during the reading session. Using this framework, the adult prompts an interaction and pauses, allowing a few seconds for a child to use language to formulate a response, and then the adult Evaluates the child’s response for correctness. Next, the adult Expands upon the child’s utterance by rephrasing and adding a little more information and Repeats the prompt again to ensure the child has the opportunity to practice the expanded language.

Data collected regarding the interactions between the educators and their children across four natural story-time activities were reported by describing the percentage of response opportunities appropriated by the educators to facilitate language interaction during the story-time activity in the context of the Dialogic Reading PEER set of responses. The use of the Evaluate response was the highest occurring across reading sessions, in which three of the four educators (75%) responded to the correctness of their children’s responses with nearly every prompt they provided. The largest variance was with Expand responses, which ranged between non-use (0%) for one of the educators, partial use for two of the educators (27% and 18%), and consistent and total use (100%) for one of the educators. The Repeat response was used the
least, with three of the four educators never eliciting a child to repeat an expanded prompt (see Table 11).
Table 11
Percentage of Response Behaviors Following *CROWD* Prompt Observed During Typical Reading Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator Response Behavior</th>
<th>Educator One</th>
<th>Educator Two</th>
<th>Educator Three</th>
<th>Educator Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate correctness</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand child’s utterance</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeats prompt</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Listening Environment**

In addition to categorizing the interactions between the educators and their children during natural story-time activities, data were collected to assess the educators’ practice for promoting an energetic and active listening climate during the reading sessions. Characteristics of the listening environment included (a) engaging the children visually by pointing to words and illustrations while reading, (b) employing a well-modulated and dramatic voice, (c) demonstrating a positive affect by minimizing management-type talk, and (d) providing inclusive opportunities for all of the children to participate. All of the educators (100%) displayed the behaviors for engaging the children visually with the storybook by pointing to words and illustrations and promoting an inclusive participation environment by encouraging all of the children to have an opportunity to interact and respond in the context of the Dialogic Reading prompting and responding techniques (i.e., CROWD, PEER). There was variability in the educators’ use of modulated and dramatic voicing during the story and use of positive statements (i.e., not management-type expressions like, “Be quiet.”), resulting in 50% of the educators evidencing a well-modulated voice while reading aloud and 50% of the educators evidencing a positive affect (see Table 12).
Table 12
Frequency and Percentages of Educators’ Use of Active Listening Characteristics ($N = 4$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visual Engagement</th>
<th>Positive Affect</th>
<th>Modulated Dramatic Voice</th>
<th>Inclusive Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Two

What are the concerns, attitudes, and perceptions of four early childhood educators regarding the use or the potential use of evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment? Data were collected to describe the educators’ feelings and perceptions about potential changes to their current story-time instructional practices using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM; Hall & Hord, 2019) diagnostic dimensions for their relative intensities for each stage of concern.

Stages of Concern

Of the study adult population, 50% of the educators completed and returned the SoCQ. The researcher was unable to obtain questionnaires from the remaining educators due to the charter school’s closure and inaccessibility as a response to the global health pandemic crisis. Data collected from the educators’ questionnaires was transferred to the SoC Quick Scoring Device, where raw scores for each stage of concern were calculated and plotted on a graph. A description of the educators’ stages of concern for using or potentially using the Dialogic Reading method is described below.

Educator 2: Stages of Concern (SoC). Raw scores corresponding to the relative intensity of concern for each of the seven categories were calculated and converted to percentiles using the SoC Quick Scoring Device (Hall & Hord, 2019). Using the calculated percentiles for each concern, a graphic representation depicting Educator 2’s individual SoC profile is displayed in Figure 1. The relative intensity profile revealed that the most prominent concerns, or highest intensities, were exhibited in the categories of Unconcerned (i.e., having little concern for or
involvement with Dialogic Reading) (97%) and Information (i.e., having general awareness of Dialogic Reading and interested in learning more details regarding its use) (80%). This educator exhibited less concern, or lowest intensity, in the category of Refocusing (i.e., not concerned with the universal benefits of Dialogic Reading) (26%). The Management category displayed that this educator feels indifferent about processes of or tasks involved with Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice (56%).
Figure 1
Stages of Concern (SoC) Intensity Profile: Educator 2

Figure 2
Stages of Concern (SoC) Intensity Profile: Educator 4
**Educator 4: Stages of Concern.** Raw scores corresponding to the relative intensity of concern for each of the seven categories were calculated and converted to percentiles using the SoC Quick Scoring Device (Hall & Hord, 2019). Using the calculated percentiles for each concern, a graphic representation depicting Educator 4’s individual SoC profile is displayed in Figure 2. The relative intensity profile revealed that the most prominent concerns, or highest intensities, were exhibited in the categories of Unconcerned (i.e., having little concern for or involvement with Dialogic Reading) (81%) and Information (i.e., having general awareness of Dialogic Reading and interested in learning more details regarding its use) (84%) as were commensurate with the profile of an individual not using the practice. The educator exhibited less concern, or lowest intensity, in the category of Management (i.e., attention is not focused on the processes or tasks associated with using Dialogic Reading) (27%). Collaboration category showed the educator feels indifferent concern, or moderate intensity, for working with others regarding the use of Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice (68%).

**Research Question Three**

What are the oral language abilities of young children populated across four inclusive early learning classrooms? Data were collected to describe the oral language abilities of the child participants through a norm-referenced receptive language assessment and a non-standardized receptive and expressive vocabulary assessment.
To assess their current receptive oral language abilities, the Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language 4th Edition (TACL-4; Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014) was administered to the child participants in each of the 4 participating early childhood inclusive classes. Of the study’s 34 child participants, 6 of the children did not participate with the assessment due to absences from preschool on the multiple dates the assessment was administered. The children ($n = 28$) were administered three subtests, which included Subtest 1: Vocabulary, Subtest 2: Grammatical Morphemes, and Subtest 3: Elaborated Phrases and Sentences. Each child’s raw scores for the subtests were converted to normative scores for age equivalents, percentile ranks, and scaled scores. Summed scaled scores for the subtests were converted into a Receptive Language Index. Descriptive scores corresponding to the scaled scores and the Receptive Language Index were provided. These terms ranged from impaired or delayed to gifted or very advanced.

The mean sum of scaled scores on the 3 subtests for the total population of child participants ($n = 28$) was 20.93 ($M = 20.93, SD = 8.92$, range: 31), the median sum of scaled scores was 22.50, and the mode was 33.00. The minimum sum of scaled scores was 3.00 and the maximum sum of scaled scores was 34.00. The mean Receptive Language Index score for the total population of child participants ($n = 28$) was 81.34 ($M = 81.34, SD = 18.27$, range: 63). The minimum Receptive Language Index score was 45.00 and the maximum score was 108.00. The Receptive Language Index descriptive term for the combined total population of child participants across the four early childhood classrooms based on the mean Receptive Language Index was Below Average ($M = 2.678, SD = 1.30$) and ranged from Impaired or Delayed (minimum) to Average (maximum). Table 13 describes the mean sum of scaled scores, the mean
Receptive Language Index scores, and descriptive terms of the child participants as separate populations of each educator’s early childhood classroom.
Table 13
Descriptive Statistics for TACL-4 Scales Per Classroom Educator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator</th>
<th>Sum of Scaled Scores</th>
<th>Receptive Language Index</th>
<th>Descriptive Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10**</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6***</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Missing 3 cases  
**Missing 2 cases  
***Missing 1 case
**Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment**

To assess their understanding (i.e., receptive) and use (i.e., expressive) of tier-two vocabulary typically used in children’s storybook literature, the Tier Two Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Assessment (adapted from Towson et al., 2019) was administered to the child participants in each of the four participating early childhood inclusive classes.

**Tier-Two Receptive Vocabulary.** Of the study’s 34 child participants, 26 children participated with the receptive portion of the assessment (76%). There were eight child participants who did not participate with the receptive vocabulary portion of the assessment due to absences from preschool on the multiple days the assessment was administered. There were three categories of percentage scores that were reported, including the total number of words receptively identified (i.e., Total Words), the number of noun-forms receptively identified (i.e., Nouns), and the number of verb-forms receptively identified (i.e., Verbs). The percentage scores were reported as the average receptive score for the child participants across all four early childhood classrooms. The average receptive percentage score for the category of Total Words resulted in 62% accuracy ($M = 62.42$, $SD = 21.87$, range: 70) and scores ranged from a minimum of 23% to a maximum of 93% accuracy. The average receptive percentage score for the category of Nouns resulted in 62% accuracy ($M = 61.85$, $SD = 22.74$, range: 73) and scores ranged from a minimum of 22% to a maximum of 95% accuracy. The average receptive percentage score for the category of Verbs resulted in 63% accuracy ($M = 63.35$, $SD = 25.01$, range: 92) and scores ranged from a minimum of 8% to a maximum of 100% accuracy (see Table 14).
Tier Two Expressive Vocabulary. Of the study’s 34 child participants, 23 children participated with the expressive portion of the assessment (68%). There were 8 child participants who did not participate with the expressive vocabulary portion of the assessment due to absences from preschool on the multiple days the assessment was administered. There were 3 children who were unable to complete the expressive vocabulary portion of the assessment due to their unassertive behavior. Three categories of percentage scores were reported, including the total number of words correctly expressed (i.e., Total Words), the number of noun-forms correctly expressed (i.e., Nouns), and the number of verb-forms correctly expressed (i.e., Verbs). The percentage scores were reported as the average expressive score for the child participants across all four early childhood classrooms (see table 13). The average expressive percentage score for the category of Total Words resulted 27% accuracy ($M = 26.78$, $SD = 16.07$, range: 56) and scores ranged from a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 57% accuracy. The average expressive percentage score for the category of Nouns resulted in 32% accuracy ($M = 32.17$, $SD = 19.01$, range: 65) and scores ranged from a minimum of 2% to a maximum of 67% accuracy. The average expressive percentage score for the category of Verbs resulted in 19% accuracy ($M = 18.78$, $SD = 14.46$, range: 43) and scores ranged from a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 43% accuracy (see Table 14).
Table 14
Percentage Scores for Tier Two Expressive (n = 23) and Receptive Vocabulary Assessment (n = 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Total Words</td>
<td>62.42</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Nouns</td>
<td>61.85</td>
<td>22.74</td>
<td>73.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Verbs</td>
<td>63.35</td>
<td>25.01</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Total Words</td>
<td>26.78</td>
<td>16.07</td>
<td>56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Nouns</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>19.01</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Verbs</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>14.46</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study were presented. Research question one explored the natural storybook reading techniques exhibited by four early childhood educators, which characterized their typical interactive responsiveness to their children while engaging in routine story-time activities. Results from the data collected described the interactions between the adult readers (educators) and the children in terms of the frequency for the types of prompts that were utilized in the context of Dialogic Reading (i.e., CROWD) as well as a description of the educators’ response patterns, also in the context of Dialogic Reading (i.e., PEER). Results revealed open-ended prompts, which are directed at facilitating children’s use of elaborated language forms, were utilized least compared to Wh-question prompts, which were frequently utilized. With regards to the educators’ response patterns toward the children’s replies to the prompts, the use of language expansions following a child’s reply was variable among the educators. However, the educators consistently provided corrective feedback to children’s replies.

Research question two explored the educators’ concerns, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about Dialogic Reading strategy use or potential use as an instructional practice to facilitate language and emergent literacy growth in their young students. The educators (n = 2) displayed relatively less intense concern for the universal benefits of using Dialogic Reading as an instructional approach to storybook reading and relatively more intense concern regarding their involvement with the Dialogic Reading method.

Lastly, research question three explored the children’s current oral language abilities. Across the four inclusive preschool classes, which routinely utilize story-time as an instructional
literacy activity, the children as a whole displayed below average oral (receptive) language in vocabulary development, understanding of grammatical structures, and understanding of phrase and sentence structures. The following chapter discusses the possible implications from the results of this descriptive study and offers recommendations for future directions aimed at high quality professional learning for early childhood educators
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to describe the characteristics of the natural context of routine storybook reading in an inclusive early learning environment by exploring educator variables and child oral language status. The existing literature has identified story-time as a routine, daily instructional practice occurring in nearly all early learning and childcare settings (Damber, 2015; van Kleeck, 2003). Young children’s exposure to books provides the basis for learning to read. Children who have opportunities to share storybooks with an adult reading partner are exposed to both code-related language skills, like phonological awareness and alphabet awareness, and oral language skills, like vocabulary and conceptual knowledge. Young children’s development of oral language, including vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and the morpho-syntactic structures of words, has been linked to achievement with reading comprehension and later academic success (Glazer, 1989; Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010). Gough and Tunmer (1986) have identified both decoding and comprehension as essential components of conventional reading; therefore, it is critical for early childhood educators to strategically and intentionally promote the development of oral language in all children, including typically developing children, children who have language impairment or delay, children who are English learners, and children who may be at-risk for developing reading difficulty (Cabell et al., 2008; DEC, 2014; NAEYC, 2005). Early childhood educators can promote the acquisition of young children’s oral language skills by interacting with them through conversations centered on the story during routine storybook reading activities. These activities facilitate opportunities to extend and expand on children’s language at a level that surpasses their individual capabilities (Cabell et al., 2011; Girolametto, Weitzman, & Grenberg, 2004; Justice &
Ezell, 2002; Towson et al., 2017; Vander Woude & Hammett, 2006; van Kleeck, 2003, 2004; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst et al., 1988). At the heart of educators developing teaching practices that effectively promote language learning in young children is high quality professional learning that accesses the educator’s capacity to utilize natural supports for sensitive and responsive instruction, like the context of routine storybook reading (Ramey & Ramey, 2008).

Despite the necessity for high quality professional learning in early childhood, Guskey (2014) has asserted there is a lack of evidence for professional learning programs implemented in diverse contexts that have resulted in better instructional practice and improved child learning. Tout and colleagues (2006) have added that most of the professional learning outcomes in early childhood are anecdotal and highly variable. They have gone on to recommend that professionals pinpoint the features that are thought to be effective for instructional quality so that they may be systematically and explicitly included in the design and implementation of early childhood high quality professional learning. Therefore, for the purpose of future design and implementation of high quality professional learning of instructional practices and interventions aimed at impacting young children’s language and literacy growth, this descriptive study explored the distinct features and variables related to the facilitation of language development by means of routine storybook reading practices. These features included educators’ reading techniques and behaviors exhibited during reading activities, educators’ concerns, attitudes, and perceptions toward learning a new evidence-based instructional storybook reading strategy, specifically Dialogic Reading, and the current status of young children’s oral language abilities in an early learning setting inclusive to all learners.
Discussion of the Findings

This chapter presents a discussion around the interpretation of the findings of the research questions explored in this study focused on educator storybook reading behaviors linked to Dialogic Reading strategies, educator concerns about adopting a new storybook reading practice, and the oral language status of the children in their instructional care. The study’s practical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Research Question One

What are the natural storybook reading behaviors used by four early childhood educators during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?

This question was explored through video-recorded observations of early childhood educators reading a storybook to their children as part of their routine instructional day in a learning environment inclusive to all learners. The educators’ storybook reading behaviors were categorized and counted as behaviors within the context of interactive storybook reading strategies of the Dialogic Reading method, which included the categories displaying the educators’ use of prompts to initiate interactions with the children (i.e., CROWD) and their systematic and explicit responsiveness to the children’s replies (i.e., PEER), with the aim of encouraging dialogue between themselves (educators) and the children. Other categorical behaviors observed centered on the educators’ evidence of promoting active listening and child engagement. These characteristics were identified on the Interactive Storybook Reading using Dialogic Reading Strategies Innovation Configuration (IC) Map as major components for effective interactive storybook reading practices. The components include characteristics
describing the educators’ affect while reading, use of a dramatic and well-modulated voice, and the elicitation of participation from all of the children in the reading group.

In this study, the Dialogic Reading (CROWD) strategies were used as the criteria for interaction-promoting behaviors during the observations (i.e. Completion / fill in the blank, Recall of what has happened in the story, Open-ended / attention to details, Wh- prompts / usually questions framed with Wh words, Distancing for relating the story to child’s own life). Results from this study indicated interaction-promoting behaviors (i.e., prompts) related to the Dialogic Reading set of prompts were varied in frequency of occurrence among the four educators, with 38 total prompts used during one natural story-time session as the highest frequency of occurrence and three total prompts used as the lowest frequency of occurrence during a natural story-time session. More specifically, data collected revealed Open-ended, story Recall, and Distancing type prompts, which require children to generate expanded language, were implemented the least by all of the educators across four natural story-time sessions, with 50% of the educators not displaying evidence of initiating an interaction with an Open-ended type prompt. The most frequently occurring type of prompt utilized by the educators was the Wh-prompt, resulting in a total of 24 wh-question type prompts initiated by the educators across the four natural (i.e., routine) story-time sessions ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 7.43$). Generally, the educators used the Wh-questions to prompt the children to respond with more literal forms of language. Examples of Wh-question prompts utilized include, “What is here?”, “What kind of bird is here?”, and “What is the dinosaur eating?”.

Early childhood researchers and scholars agree that the conversations adults embed while reading a storybook with children using interactions that stimulate thinking and understanding of abstract language provides essential opportunities for children to practice their decontextualized
language skills (Cabell et al., 2008; Girolametto & Weitzman, 2002; van Kleeck, 2006). These opportunities for practicing decontextualized language skills are essential because they are critical skills required for listening comprehension, which is a critical component of reading instruction (NELP, 2008). Adults can facilitate these critical skills by going beyond the text of a storybook and interact with children using conversational strategies that prompt children to practice their language beyond the literal level. These strategies involve the adult asking open-ended questions, following the child’s interest and expanding on their comments, recasting what the child said using more sophisticated syntax structures, and reinforcing learning by having the child repeat expanded utterances (Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002). These strategies are exemplified in the intentional interaction-promoting and language-modeling behaviors used in the Dialogic Reading method (Whitehurst et al., 1988). The set of prompts (i.e., CROWD) utilized in the Dialogic Reading method of interactive storybook reading provide children with opportunities to interact with the adult reader and facilitate children’s essential thinking and understanding skills. By utilizing the CROWD set of prompts, adult readers, like early childhood educators, can stimulate children’s language using open-ended, recall, and distancing type questions and comments, which have been identified in the research literature as essential oral language promoting behaviors (Burchinal et al., 2010; Cabell et al., 2008; Girolametto & Weitzman, 2002; van Kleeck, 2006). Additionally, an adult’s response to children’s attempts to practice their language through prompted interactions are also critical for language learning. Expanding on children’s utterances have been identified in the research literature as a key way to facilitate children’s growth in oral language (Fey et al., 2003). The Dialogic Reading set of responses (i.e., PEER) used to extend, expand, and reinforce children’s utterances provides key opportunities to build on children’s understanding and learning (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998).
The results from the present descriptive study illuminate which interaction-promoting and language-modeling behaviors are being utilized by the educators during routine storybook reading and also provide valuable insight into which essential reading behaviors the educators could embed into their reading strategies that would benefit children’s oral language growth in an inclusive early learning setting. A high quality professional learning program aimed at supporting this study’s educator participants with learning and effectively using strategies such as open-ended, recall, and distancing type prompts along with expanding and reinforcing response strategies could help their children build language skills that have been identified as directly related to conventional reading comprehension (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; NELP, 2008; van Kleeck, 2006).

The research and theoretical literature provide a rationale for the importance of early childhood educators’ facilitation of oral language skills. Grounded in the nature-inspired language development theories, much of children’s language emerges through social interaction with peers and adults (Vygotsky, 1978). Many researchers and scholars view adult-child interactive storybook reading as one of the most potent contexts for language and emergent literacy acquisition. Adults can provide natural opportunities for conversational interactions while reading by using techniques to support children’s language and help them achieve success at a level much higher than they would on their own. The supports, or scaffolds, are behaviors used by adults to engage children at higher levels of language performance and foster acquisition of skills, like word knowledge and narrative knowledge (Justice & Pence, 2005). The adult dynamic interaction behaviors, or scaffolds, identified in the research literature as the most impactful for fostering children’s language include the behaviors for prompting elaborated utterances and providing opportunities for language modeling.
The language prompting behaviors that researchers agree are the most impactful for children’s oral language acquisition are those that require the child to formulate utterances with the help of their adult reading partner. The interaction-promoting behaviors include open-ended, recall, and distancing prompts and the responsive behaviors providing opportunities for language modeling involve expanding and extending the child’s utterance. Many researchers agree these interaction-promoting behaviors facilitate the acquisition of children’s oral language (Burchinal et al., 2010; Dickinson et al., 2006; Guo et al., 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008; Snow, 1983; van Kleeck, 2004; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In their findings from a meta-analysis investigating the effects of interactive storybook reading on children’s oral language, Mol and colleagues (2009) reported that about 6% of children’s oral language could be explained by the benefits of an educator’s interaction-promoting behaviors during storybook reading in a natural classroom setting. They also reported that children who received the interactive reading intervention outperformed the children from the comparison group by 28% as measured on oral language composites. However, there are some gaps in the research literature regarding the effects the Dialogic Reading method has on oral language as a whole process although there is evidence to support the positive effects Dialogic Reading has on children’s vocabulary acquisition (Wasik & Bond, 2001).

Integral to the interaction-promoting behaviors for eliciting successive conversational turns (i.e., prompts) are the child-oriented and language-modeling behaviors inherent in the responsive behaviors utilized by the adult reader. In this study, the Dialogic Reading (PEER) strategies were used as the criteria for the educators’ child-oriented responsiveness and language-modeling behaviors during the observations of story-time activities (i.e., Prompts the child to say something about the story, Evaluates the child’s response / corrective feedback, Expands the
child’s response by rephrasing and adding more information / modeling language structures, 
Repeats the prompt allowing the child to practice their expressive language). Findings indicated nearly every prompt initiated by the educators across the four natural storybook reading sessions was followed with corrective feedback (i.e., Evaluate response). However, findings suggest most of the corrective feedback responses were not followed in succession by language-modeling opportunities, with expansions on children’s utterances (i.e., Expand) occurring in twenty-five percent or less of the interactions. Repetitions of the prompt using an appropriate language structure (i.e., Repeat) occurred in nearly none of the interactions.

Since there was variance in the frequency of interaction-promoting behaviors (i.e., Prompts), results were considered on the basis of how the responsiveness behaviors related to the prompting behaviors. Although one of the educators initiated a relatively small number of prompts throughout the story, which included two Wh-questions and a pointing-type prompt (i.e., not CROWD), the educator contingently responded to each reply with corrective feedback (i.e., Evaluate), which was then followed with a language-modeling expansion (i.e., Expand). Another educator utilized a total of 38 prompts during one natural story-time session encompassing all CROWD type prompts, with Wh-questions accounting for nearly one-half of the total prompt interactions; however, children’s utterances were expanded upon (i.e., Expand) in only about 30%of the interactions. About half of those expansions were then followed by repeated utterances (i.e., Repeat), providing some opportunities for children to practice their language.

Data from this study suggest less variation among the educators’ child-oriented behaviors for promoting some of the characteristics identified with active listening. As a whole, the educators displayed an average of about 54% frequency of occurrences for characteristics
promoting children’s engagement ($M = .537, SD = .157$) during the natural story-time sessions. All four educators displayed evidence for drawing the children into the story by pointing to words and illustrations while reading aloud. The educators also displayed evidence of providing opportunities for all of the children in the reading group to participate, minimizing the dominance of only a few children participating; however, this characteristic was related to the frequency of interaction-prompting behaviors. Additionally, the whole-group context for reading during routine story-time was utilized by all of the educators. A characteristic not observed frequently across all of the storybook reading sessions was the educators’ use of positive statements and praise throughout the reading session. However, two educators’ were observed commenting on children’s behavior throughout the storybook reading session (e.g., “Sit down”; “Quiet hands”; “Shhh”). Although the researcher did not aggregate management-like talk with prompting behaviors, it might be assumed that less dialogue centered on the story promotes the need to manage children’s inattentive behaviors. Lastly, data did not support evidence of the educators promoting opportunities for clarifying challenging or new words that may have been encountered throughout the story.

Some possible explanations for the variance in interaction-promoting behaviors (i.e., CROWD prompts) exhibited by the early childhood educators might include teacher education, years of teaching experience, and limited professional learning opportunities for interventions promoting children’s language growth (Tout et al., 2005). Although all of the educators indicated they had Bachelor’s degrees, there was wide variability in their teaching credentials, including having a standard teaching certificate and a degree in early childhood education, having a provisional teaching certificate and a degree but not in education, and having a graduate degree but credentialed as a CDA. The number of years of teaching experience may have been a
factor for the educators exhibiting less interaction-promoting, language-modeling, and child-oriented responsiveness behaviors. Inexperience with interacting with young children may have had an influence on three of the educators with regard to their skills and competencies with sensitive and responsive teaching methods, differentiated instruction, and scaffolding children’s learning. In contrast, the educator with 34 years of experience teaching young children exhibited an abundance of interaction-promoting behavior, with prompting interactions on 38 occasions during a storybook reading session. Furthermore, the general insufficiency or absence of professional learning opportunities for effective instructional methods for facilitating language using interactive storybook reading strategies, such as Dialogic Reading, was a possible factor in the variability of types of prompts used to initiate adult-child interactions as well as follow-up language modeling behaviors. All of the educators had indicated they had not had previous professional learning experience or were unsure as to their experiences with learning interactive storybook reading or Dialogic Reading strategies specifically.

There is general agreement among early childhood educators that the quality of classroom interactions between educators and children contributes largely to a child’s language learning growth and that the quality of these interactions is determined by the effectiveness of the educators’ behaviors (Burchinal et al., 2008). These early childhood educator characteristics and behaviors have been associated with educators’ educational qualifications (Burchinal et al., 2010). Available research literature on early childhood educator credentials and education are consistent with the research findings in the present study regarding the variability in educator credentialing. A similar wide variability among educational requirements and credentialing among the early childhood educator community has been documented in the literature (Howes et al., 1995; Odom, et al., 2011; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006). Barnett and colleagues (2004)
report that there is an association between the implementation of a professional learning program aimed at facilitating children’s development and an educators’ educational level. They conclude that educators with higher levels of education and credentials were more sensitive and responsive to children. This appears to be evidenced in the present study as all of the early childhood educator participants held a four-year college degree and demonstrated behaviors consistent with adult sensitivity by displaying a high frequency of corrective feedback (i.e., *Evaluate* response) during their interactions with children during routine storybook reading. Though some of the educators did not have formal education or professional learning experience in early childhood education, there seems to be great potential for the educators to effectively learn strategies associated with facilitating children’s oral language growth using Dialogic Reading through a high quality professional learning experience.

Additionally, Cabell and colleagues (2011) found evidence of variation among early childhood educators promoting interactions with the occasional use of open-ended questions during typical storybook-reading activities while infrequently engaging the children in successive turn-taking dialogue thus missing opportunities for children to practice their language in expressing ideas as actively engaged storytellers. Although interactions are promoted with the use of prompts, asking too many questions during a storybook reading can result in children being unable to attend to the meaning of the story. Dickinson and Smith (1994) found children had better comprehension when teachers utilized only three to five open-ended prompts during a story. There is unequivocal agreement among researchers that children’s interactions with adults during storybook reading promote children’s development with language and emergent literacy (Burchinal et al., 2010; Dickinson & Brady, 2006; Guo et al., 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008; Snow, 1983; van Kleeck, 2004; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Therefore, opportunities for high-
quality professional learning are necessary to support educators’ implementation of interactive reading methods to facilitate language acquisition, like the Dialogic Reading method.

There have been questions still raised in the research literature regarding the levels of educational attainment and how these levels affect the quality of instruction among early childhood educators. These questions often leave researchers and professional learning facilitators in a quandary as to the necessary skills that early childhood educators need to work with both typically and atypically developing children. There are two major aspects of education that have been described in the literature, which are levels of education and content of education. Odom and colleagues (2004) report that educators in preschools generally have less college education attainment and more content – type education that are in the form of workshops or child development associate programs. There appears to be a wide range of levels of education present in educators working with young children. Maxwell and colleagues (2006) suggest that this variability may be due to the manner in which researchers collect and report data on educational attainment in the research literature. There is not a standard education requirement for early childhood educators in the United States with the exception of the public-school system. In terms of relating educational levels with quality instruction in early childhood education, Howes and colleagues (1995) reported a strong association between the implementation of skills obtained from a professional learning program and increases in children’s intellectual and emotional development. Further, it was found that educators with higher credentials were more sensitive and responsive to young children (Howes et al., 1995).
Research Question Two

What are the concerns, attitudes, and perceptions of four early childhood educators regarding the use or potential use of evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies during routine story-time activities in an inclusive early learning environment?

To explore educators’ thinking about the possible adoption of interactive storybook reading using evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies, the CBAM diagnostic dimension for SoC was used (Hall & Hord, 2019). This portion of the CBAM framework was designed to measure implementation change in educational settings and was originally developed by Hall and Hord in the 1970’s. The SoC tool has been validated by research over time and remains current (Hall & Hord, 2019).

The educator’s thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions (i.e., concerns) about using or potentially using interactive storybook reading by employing Dialogic Reading strategies as a method for facilitating language development in young children are indicators toward successful adoption of a new instructional practice (Hall & Hord, 2019). Data collected from two educator respondents revealed the educators’ concerns were Unrelated to the use of Dialogic Reading strategies. The educators expressed concerns with high relative intensities about feeling Unconcerned on the SoCQ. This trend was to be expected since the educators had reported not having previous professional learning experience in the areas of interactive storybook reading or Dialogic Reading on their demographic questionnaires. Since the researcher’s aim was to inform future professional learning objectives by identifying characteristic storybook reading behavior, the educators were not in the process of adopting new instructional practices. Interpretations of specific categories for concern stages are presented below.
There was consensus among the educators as to their highest relative intensity of concern at Stage 0 *Unconcerned*. According to Hall & Hord (2019), this is expected with non-users of an innovation. The educators demonstrated little concern about their involvement with Dialogic Reading and were likely concerned about other things related to their instructional day. The educators also demonstrated high relative intensity for Stage 1 *Informational* and Stage 2 *Personal* concerns based on the SoCQ. Both educators demonstrated a general awareness about Dialogic Reading and displayed interest in the desire to know more about the instructional practice. One educator demonstrated a slightly higher relative intensity for Stage 2 *Personal* concerns, indicating she is concerned about how the use or potential use would directly affect her.

An interesting finding was the higher relative intensity for Stage 3 *Management* concerns by the same educator. The educator concerned about how the use of Dialogic Reading would affect her personally also demonstrated concern related to the demands that may be involved with task management. Contrary, the other educator demonstrated relative low intensity for Stage 3 *Management* concerns, showing her focus was not on issues related to time demands or organizing tasks involved with using Dialogic Reading.

Regarding Stage 4 *Consequence*, Stage 5 *Collaboration*, and Stage 6 *Refocusing* concerns, there was consensus among the educators for displaying low relative intensity for the stage of concern related to the *Impact* with Dialogic Reading as a possible instructional practice. Both educators demonstrated little concern regarding how the use of Dialogic Reading would impact the young children in their classes (i.e., *Consequence*). Similarly, both educators demonstrated low relative intensity for concerns related to how they would coordinate the use of
Dialogic Reading with other co-educators (i.e., Collaboration) or whether they had ideas about an instructional storybook reading practice that might be better (i.e., Refocusing).

The educators’ relative intensity profiles related to their thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions (i.e., concerns) regarding the adoption or possible adoption of an interactive storybook reading innovation using evidence-based Dialogic Reading strategies were commensurate with the characteristics or patterns of Hall & Hord’s (2019) non-user profile. At this point in time, the educators’ concerns for Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice are stationary, as they are not involved with implementing a new innovative teaching practice. It is difficult to predict what the results from measuring the educators’ concerns could reveal about future implementation of high quality professional learning for adopting interactive storybook reading using the Dialogic Reading method. By examining Hall & Hord’s (2019) “classic” non-user profiles for peaks and valleys of the relative intensities for concern stages, an individualized frame of reference for learning and adoption can be established. The educator who demonstrated Stage 0 Unconcerned as very intense (97%) and Stage 2 Personal as intense (83%) may present some resistance to adopting a new reading practice as there may be feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt about expectations. The professional learning facilitator would want to take extra care in building trust and self-confidence during the beginning phases of implementation.

Considering the concerns profile of the other educator who demonstrated slightly lower intensities for self-concerns (i.e., Unconcerned and Personal), a more positive attitude toward learning more information and adopting a new practice may be exhibited at the beginning phase of implementation.

As stated in the research literature, high quality professional learning in early childhood education not only involves advancing educators’ knowledge and skills but also advancing the
motivations for applying new skills in an impactful manner (Sheridan et al., 2009). The
information learned about the educators’ concerns for adopting Dialogic Reading is valuable
baseline material. As a professional learning program for Dialogic Reading proceeds, the
information learned about the educators’ concerns for adoption helps the professional learning
facilitator differentiate learning experiences for the educators depending on their individual
concern stage category. Applying the diagnostic dimensions utilized in Hall & Hord’s (2019)
CBAM will provide an evidence-based structure for facilitating the educators’ growth through
Self, Task, and Impact stages of concern, promoting attitudes and perceptions favoring the
successful and effective adoption of the Dialogic Reading method for interactive storybook
reading. One challenge identified by Towson and colleagues (2016) was the variability in early
childhood practitioners’ fidelity of implementation of the strategies used in Dialogic Reading.
Planning, implementing, and measuring professional learning programs utilizing SoC
interventions for adopting Dialogic Reading interactive storybook reading strategies into practice
can provide the foundation for early childhood educators to build their knowledge, skills, and
attitudes toward the ultimate goal, which are gains in child language-learning outcomes (Guskey,
2014; Hall & Hord, 2019).

**Research Question Three**

What are the oral language abilities of the young children populated across four inclusive
early learning classrooms?

**Receptive Language Measure.** A standardized oral language assessment measure was
administered to the individual children populated in the 4 educators’ preschool and
prekindergarten inclusive learning classrooms. The TACL-4 was administered to the child participants to describe the overall status of the children’s oral language abilities as a population of learners in each educator’s classroom. Three oral language subtests were administered, which included Vocabulary, Grammatical Morphemes, and Elaborated Phrases and Sentences. The TACL-4 is a norm-referenced assessment of receptive oral language abilities in children, which has been researched as a valid and reliable measure (Carrow-Woolfolk, 2014). Results based on the population of children in each of the four participating classrooms were reported as Summed Scaled Scores (i.e., a sum of the three subtests), Receptive Language Index, and a descriptive term correlating to the abilities defined from the Receptive Language Index. A descriptive analysis of the results demonstrated children’s overall receptive oral language abilities in all three preschool-age classrooms were either below average, borderline impaired / delayed, or impaired / delayed compared to other children of their same ages. The overall receptive oral language abilities of the prekindergarten children resulted in an average performance compared to other children of their same ages. An interpretation of the results for based on each classroom population’s performance is presented below.

The children populated in the prekindergarten classroom (n = 9) were an average age of 5- years, 6 months (5:6 years). The average Receptive Language Index score was 95 (M = 95.00, SD = 7.98, range: 22) suggesting the children’s oral language abilities were within typically developing limits compared to other children of their same ages in the linguistic areas for understanding vocabulary, grammatical morphemes, and elaborated phrases and sentence structures. The children’s classroom learning environment was inclusive of learners of all abilities, including children who are typically developing, who are at risk for developing language impairment, or who have language impairment or delay. The children’s
prekindergarten educator is credentialed as a CDA and reported having 34 years of educator experience, 24 of which have been at that particular charter school site. It was unknown to the researcher how many years of her experience have been with early childhood learners. The results might suggest that the children’s average oral language abilities were due in part to the class being populated with only typically developing children; however, classroom demographics revealed a diverse learning environment, including children who are typically developing, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and children with Developmental Delay.

The children populated in one of the preschool classrooms (n = 10) ranged in age from 3-years through 4-years. The average Receptive Language Index score was 75 (M = 75.50; SD = 19.80, range: 55) suggesting individual variance although the children’s overall receptive oral language abilities as a group were 1.5 standard deviations below the mean compared to other children of their same ages. According to the children’s averaged scaled scores and Receptive Language Index, the class as a whole unit was described as borderline-impaired or delayed in receptive language for the linguistic areas of understanding vocabulary, grammatical morphemes, and elaborated phrase and sentence structures. However, given the range of variability among the children’s individual Receptive Language Index scores, the average class score may be misleading and should be taken under consideration when designing and implementing a professional learning program. This classroom environment was also inclusive of all learner abilities, including children who are typically developing, children with language impairment including ASD, and children with Developmental Delay. The demographic composite distribution for children having inherent language difficulty due to their special education eligibility criteria revealed interesting results. As described by the classroom
population six of the ten (60%) child participants met the eligibility criteria for either Developmentally Delayed (30%) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (30%). It may be assumed that the proportion of this classroom’s sample of children requiring intensive and systematic instruction in receptive oral language was greater than the needs of another early childhood class populated with more children who were typically developing.

Interestingly, the preschool educator for this population of children reported not having specialized instruction in educating early learners or children with disabilities although she had attained a Bachelor’s degree in an unrelated profession. In addition, she reported this year to be her first year of teaching experience. It would be the expectation of the researcher that young children with disabilities be educated by a teacher with experience in educating diverse learners; however, the research literature contradicts this assumption. Odom (2011) reports early childhood educators working in preschool settings, including inclusive settings, generally have less pre-service education attainment and more preparation from content-programs, like community college programs or child development associate programs. Further, the discrepancy in receptive language performance cannot be assumed to be related the educator’s education attainment or her amount of experience with teaching young children, but rather a consequence of the language status of the 3- and 4- year-old children who are attending the school at that particular time and the child participants who were populated in that classroom. The language needs of this particular sample of children support the necessity to implement instructional methods that are intensive and systematic, like the Dialogic Reading method. Hence, high quality professional learning experiences aimed at supporting the educator’s growth in knowledge, skills, and attitudes regrading oral language facilitation and the adoption of Dialogic Reading interactive storybook reading strategies would promote child language-learning goals.
and provide all of the children populated in this class with opportunities for language and emergent literacy growth.

Another preschool classroom populated with children \((n = 5)\) ranging in age from 3-years through 4-years displayed similar results in their overall receptive language abilities. The average Receptive Language Index score was 68 \((M = 68.20; SD = 4.39, \text{ range: } 12)\) suggesting the children’s overall receptive oral language abilities are 2.0 standard deviations below the mean compared to other children of the same ages. According to the children’s averaged scaled scores and Receptive Language Index, the class as a whole unit is described as impaired or delayed in receptive language for the linguistic areas of understanding vocabulary, grammatical morphemes, and elaborated phrase and sentence structures. However, given the range of variability among the children’s individual Receptive Language Index scores, the average score may be misleading and should be taken under consideration when designing and implementing a professional learning program. Similar to the other preschool classroom, the learning environment is inclusive of all learners, including children who are typically developing, children with ASD, and children with Developmental Delay. In line with the previous preschool classroom discussed, this present educator reported not having specialized instruction in early childhood education along with limited teaching experience (i.e., one year).

The final preschool classroom of children \((n = 9)\) also had an age range from 3-years through 4-years. Results of the TACL-4 assessment revealed an average Receptive Language Index score of 85 \((M = 84.89; SD = 20.94, \text{ range: } 63)\) suggesting the children’s receptive oral language abilities were one standard deviation below the mean compared to other children of their same ages. Results were similar to the second preschool class of children discussed in that there were individual variabilities although as a whole class unit, the children’s receptive oral
language abilities were described as below average. Similarly, given the wide range of variability among the children’s individual Receptive Language Index scores, the average class score may be misleading and should be taken under consideration when designing and implementing a professional learning program. More in line with the researcher’s expectations for teacher qualifications for inclusive learning environments, this educator reported to have a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education and a standard Florida teaching certificate. Differing from the other preschool-age educators, she reported having four years of teaching experience with young children.

**Tier-Two Vocabulary Measure.** A researcher-developed tier-two vocabulary measure was administered to individual children populated in the four educators’ preschool and prekindergarten inclusive learning classrooms \( n = 26 \). The purpose for administering the measure was to describe the children’s receptive and expressive vocabulary abilities for tier-two words commonly found in children’s literature. A similar measure was used in a recent investigation for assessing children’s near transfer of comparable vocabulary following participation with a Dialogic Reading intervention (Towson et al., 2019).

The results indicate the children’s \( n = 26 \) average receptive vocabulary score for common storybook words was 62% out of a possible 30 words, with a minimum score of 23% and a maximum score of 93% \( (M = 62.42, SD = 21.87, \text{ range: } 70.00) \) across all four early learning classes. Practitioners typically consider a child’s lexicon not only by its volume, but also by the individual lexical items it contains. Results were disaggregated to describe children’s understanding of specific and general nominal words (i.e., nouns) and action words (i.e., verbs). The children’s average receptive score for specific and general nominal words was 62% out of a
possible 18 nouns, with a minimum score of 22% and a maximum score of 95% \((M = 61.85, SD = 22.74, \text{range: 73.00})\). The average receptive score for action words was 63% out of a possible 11 verbs, with a minimum score of 8% and a maximum score of 100% \((M = 63.35, SD = 25.01, \text{range: 92.00})\). These results suggest there were wide variances among the individual children’s recognition of typical storybook tier-two vocabulary. Although there are limitations to how these results are interpreted since the scores are not based on a normative sample of children of the same age, they might suggest that the children have not had exposure to home literacy activities, like storybook reading. Therefore, the results would suggest the need for robust vocabulary instruction as part of the children’s instructional day. As might be expected in young children’s vocabulary development, expressive vocabulary scores averaged lower than receptive scores. The children’s \((n = 23)\) average expressive vocabulary score across all four classrooms was 27% out of a possible 30 words, with a minimum score of 1% and a maximum score of 57% \((M = 26.78, SD = 16.07, \text{range: 56.00})\). The children’s expressive score for specific and general nominal words was 32% out of a possible 18 nouns, with a minimum score of 2% and a maximum score of 67% \((M = 32.17, SD = 19.01, \text{range: 65.00})\). The average expressive score for action words was 19% out of a possible 11 verbs, with a minimum score of 0% and a maximum score of 43% \((M = 18.78, SD = 14.46, \text{range: 43.00})\). These results also suggested a wide variance among individual children’s expression of typical tier-two storybook words. Additionally, expression of nominal items appeared higher in accuracy than action words. The results suggest the children may benefit from evidence based instructional practices that promote vocabulary acquisition, like the Dialogic Reading method (Wasik & Bond, 2001). Therefore, these results support the necessity for differentiated high quality professional learning opportunities aimed at promoting educators’ individual growth in knowledge, skills, and
attitudes toward adopting Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice to facilitate their children’s oral language growth, including expressive and receptive vocabulary acquisition that is critical for future reading comprehension success (Cabell et al., 2008; van Kleeck, 2006).

Taken together, the observations made from reviewing the data from the children’s oral language assessments have implications regarding children’s acquisition of language and emergent literacy. By understanding the children’s current abilities to listen and respond with understanding, educators can differentiate their oral language comprehension needs and promote growth through instructional practices found to be effective in supporting language acquisition. Interactive storybook reading practices, like the Dialogic Reading method, have been identified in the research literature as an exceptional context for children to have opportunities to develop their oral language by practicing expanded language structures (Justice & Ezell, 2002; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst, 2005; Whitehurst et al., 1988). Educators can promote children’s individualized acquisition of oral language abilities by reading to them, asking them interesting questions, providing clear explanations, and encouraging them to express their thoughts and ideas. High quality professional learning opportunities would promote adoption of quality instructional practices and strengthen the educators’ skill in strategic storybook reading. The successful adoption of the Dialogic Reading method would provide opportunities for supportive conversational interactions using the prompting (i.e., CROWD) and responsive (i.e., PEER) frameworks. As stated previously, the research literature maintains the importance of early childhood educators facilitating spontaneous discussions and conversations centered around a story but extending beyond the explicitly stated and literal text. Utilizing open-ended questions and comments to prompt children to think about concepts and understand the world around them, along with providing opportunities for children to expand their use of morpho-syntactic structures
and vocabulary, are critical behaviors required by early childhood educators for promoting oral language acquisition in an inclusive early learning environment (Cabell et al., 2008; Dickinson et al., 2008; Girolametto et al., 2004; Guo et al., 2010; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Massey et al., 2008; NELP, 2008; van Kleeck, 2006; Whitehurst et al., 1988).

The research literature is also rich with evidence supporting the importance of vocabulary acquisition early in a child’s life (Hindman et al., 2012). Importantly, vocabulary development excels during the preschool years at a remarkable pace laying the foundation for later success in reading (Nagy & Herman, 1987; Pence Turnbull & Justice, 2012). Though preschoolers have the potential to learn many new words each day, learning is not guaranteed for all young children. Research has identified gaps in vocabulary acquisition between children from high- and low-income environments (Hart & Risley, 1995). Opportunities for acquiring a rich and robust vocabulary are critical for young children with all abilities in order to accomplish success with later reading comprehension (Beck et al., 2002). Researchers and scholars have concurred routine story-time is one of the most valuable contexts for vocabulary learning during the preschool years (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Hindman et al., 2012; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Educators who are supported with high quality professional learning for adopting interactive storybook reading strategies that have displayed evidence for promoting vocabulary acquisition with young children like the Dialogic Reading method can facilitate children’s future success with reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Towson et al., 2016; van Kleeck, 2006; Wasik & Bond, 2001).
Practical Implications

High Quality Professional Learning in Inclusive Early Learning Environments

The objectives, review of the research literature, methods, and findings of this study have important practical implications for promoting enhanced teaching practices in inclusive early learning environments. To begin with, characterizing the educators’ reading behaviors, exploring their attitudes toward adopting a new instructional reading practice, and identifying the oral language abilities of the children in their instructional care has informed the researcher on the variables that need to be considered when designing, implementing, and measuring a high quality professional learning program. Markussen-Brown and colleagues (2017) have outlined general guidelines that change facilitators need to consider when designing high quality professional learning programs in early learning environments. These guidelines can be applied to professional learning programs aimed at changing current practices in diverse and inclusive learning contexts by replacing them with enhanced instructional practices that will result in improved learning outcomes for the young children.

First, professional learning facilitators must define high quality professional learning. This study’s review of the professional learning literature informed the researcher on the process of effective change in an educational setting. The premise of high quality professional learning efforts is to change educators’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions toward the adoption of an effective instructional practice by first changing their practice. Guskey’s (2014) model for affecting change in an educator’s routine instructional practice involves affecting change in the learners’ outcomes, which results in changes with educators’ attitudes and beliefs for successful adoption of that new practice. The methods and results of this study provide practical
implications for describing early childhood educators’ attitudes, perceptions, and concerns about adopting Dialogic Reading as an effective interactive storybook reading method. Utilizing Hall and Hord’s (2019) CBAM SoC diagnostic dimension as a tool to explore the educators’ concerns for adopting Dialogic Reading as an instructional practice was an informative element in laying the foundation for future professional learning design.

Results from this study confirmed that the educators’ attitudes and perceptions (i.e., concerns) for being unconcerned (i.e., Stage 0: Unconcerned) about their involvement with Dialogic Reading were commensurate with individuals who are non-users of the innovation (i.e., Dialogic Reading). The researcher gained insight into the educators’ attitudes toward adoption in terms of their resistance or more positive thoughts of using the Dialogic Reading approach to interactive storybook reading. Differentiating professional learning by addressing an educator’s individual concerns may strengthen the success of the program and impact children’s learning in a positive way.

Considering the guidelines for implementing a high quality professional learning program, change facilitators need to identify the features evidenced to be effective for improving instructional quality. A review of the literature related to effective practices for promoting language acquisition in all young children (i.e., typically and atypically developing) in early learning settings overwhelmingly supports the use of interactive storybook reading as an approach to optimize the language and emergent literacy learning of young children. Specifically, the Dialogic Reading method (Whitehurst, 2005) has been shown to positively impact children’s oral language outcomes, particularly in the area of vocabulary acquisition, for typically developing children, children with language impairment, and children who are at-risk for developing language and literacy difficulties (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 19989; Milburn et al.,
The Dialogic Reading method is a strategic approach to interactive storybook reading aimed at facilitating children’s expression of ideas through interactions with an adult reader. The adult (i.e., educator) scaffolds children’s language by using child-oriented behaviors, interaction-promoting behaviors, and language modeling behaviors (Girolametto & Weitzman, 2002). Though the Dialogic Reading method has been recommended as a feasible approach to implement in early learning settings, Towson and colleagues (2017) found practitioner’s adherence to the protocol was variable, which may impact the effectiveness for the desired language-learning outcomes of young children.

Practically speaking, to support early childhood educators’ successful adoption of Dialogic Reading with the fidelity of implementation required to impact children’s oral language acquisition, the next guideline is critical for consideration. A professional learning facilitator must identify the components that are necessary to evoke change in an educator’s knowledge and skill in language acquisition. This study’s methods and findings were important toward characterizing the natural context of routine storybook reading in an inclusive early learning environment by exploring educator variables and child language abilities. The methods for data collection for characterizing the educators’ current skill with interaction-promoting behaviors and language-modeling behaviors can be utilized to make informative decisions about a differentiated professional learning program. These methods include observing the educators’ behaviors used during a storybook reading session and systematically coding the behaviors associated with the new interactive reading method, such as the behaviors central to the Dialogic Reading method (i.e., CROWD, PEER). Additionally, pinpointing the children’s current oral
language status informs the change facilitator as to the challenges an educator confronts in facilitating language acquisition during routine story-time.

By employing a backward design for planning a professional learning program for the adoption of Dialogic Reading, the study results on the children’s language abilities provides a launching point from which to focus learning objectives with the goal of positively impacting their language growth. Characterizing the educators’ skill with child interactions centered on the story’s text also provides a platform for providing implementation support and practice techniques for reliable adherence to the Dialogic Reading protocol. Examining the results from this study inform a professional learning facilitator that children in the preschool-age classrooms faced numerous challenges with oral language comprehension, expressive verbal skills, and vocabulary acquisition. Consequently, the educators’ skill with language modeling techniques would be one area to focus attention on when planning professional learning activities.

Professional learning can be differentiated by providing supportive learning on implementing specific prompts that elicit elaborated language forms, like open-ended and story recall prompts. Similarly, response techniques can be tailored to learning that promote language modeling, like expanding on children’s utterances. The learning objectives in an inclusive early learning environment are unique as young children with diverse learning abilities learn and socialize together. It is essential for instruction to be designed to encourage individualized and child-oriented learning for the accomplishment of children’s learning goals established by parents and the specialized care team of professionals (Odom et al., 2004). High quality professional learning for educators facilitating language acquisition must be structured to meet the dynamic needs of both the early childhood educators and the children with diverse learning needs that are populated in their learning environments. The new brand of high quality professional learning as
outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 calls for professional learning approaches that are intensive, comprehensive, and sustainable. Given the variability in early childhood educator formal education and content education, designing and implementing high quality professional learning programs that are differentiated, intensive, and sustainable (e.g., supportive through coaching) is all the more important. By individualizing professional learning to early childhood educators’ instructional behaviors, attitudes toward adopting evidence-based language-learning approaches, and current language needs of the young children populated in their classrooms, the opportunities for adopting and sustaining effective implementation of instructional practices like Dialogic Reading are likely to increase. Individualized professional learning approaches move away from short-term workshop models toward intensive, comprehensive, and sustainable learning that promote the recommended features for being participative, classroom-focused, aligned with content standards, scientifically research-based, evaluated for impact, designed for diverse populations, including children with limited English proficiency and special needs, and data-focused (Snyder et al, 2011).

A final implication regarding this study’s influence toward implementing high quality professional learning in inclusive early learning settings is Markussen-Brown and colleague’s (2017) guideline for conducting experimental investigations that support or refute the evidence surrounding Dialogic Reading as an effective instructional practice for promoting oral language acquisition. The review of research literature on the effects of Dialogic Reading as a language-learning intervention for all children (typically and atypically developing) along with the results from this study suggest the need to investigate the intervention’s impact on children’s listening comprehension and verbal expression along with vocabulary acquisition. Further, high quality professional learning experimental investigations are critical for informing early childhood
administrators and policy makers on the resources and critical components of professional learning required for successful adoption of evidence based instructional methods that result in enhanced teaching practices and improved child learning.

The Role of a Speech-Language Pathologist in Facilitating Language Acquisition

The objectives, methods, and results of this study have implications for speech-language pathologists serving children in inclusive early learning environments. A Speech-Language Pathologist’s (SLP) roles and responsibilities include prevention, screening, and assessment; planning, implementing, and monitoring intervention; consultation with other team professionals; advocacy; and the advancement of the knowledge base in speech and language across the age span (ASHA, 2010). According to Gabas and colleagues (2019), SLPs are encouraged to collaborate with early childhood educators, parents, and other service providers to integrate effective emergent literacy strategies into various instructional activities to optimize young children’s language acquisition and learning. The methods and results of this study help to inform high quality professional learning for the adoption of evidence-based strategies for implementing the Dialogic Reading interactive storybook reading practice to promote oral language learning in young children. SLPs can play a key role in the implementation of professional learning programs designed for early childhood educators. Their specialized knowledge about typical and atypical early development in language and emergent literacy can support the coordinated, team-based approach to service delivery in natural and authentic learning environments. Although a SLP’s role varies according to the needs of an individual child, an appropriate team model for advancing the language acquisition knowledge of early
childhood educators may be through consultation, high quality professional learning opportunities, or coaching of evidence based Dialogic Reading strategies.

**Study Limitations**

A number of potential limitations need to be considered. Explanations of the limitations are listed below.

1. The most important limitation of this study rests in the fact that the findings are characteristic of the routine environment in one early learning environment. The observations that informed the researcher about the educator’s storybook reading behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, and concerns for the use or potential use of Dialogic Reading strategies, and the children’s oral language status were limited to the normative practice of that particular setting and the findings cannot be generalized to other early learning environments. The educator’s behaviors and attitudes are individualized and may not be standard across all early learning environments. The oral language status of the children was also individualized and cannot be transferred as the language standard in other children, classrooms, or learning centers.

2. This study was not designed to test, analyze, and verify the research questions statistically. Findings were limited to the descriptive nature of the type of data that were collected.

3. Given the small sample size of adult participants (i.e., educators) and child participants, both populations of participants were underrepresented and findings cannot be extrapolated to other groups of early childhood educators or young children.
4. The findings of this study may reflect the bias of the researcher. The study’s design and methods may have influenced prejudiced opinions regarding typical instructional practices experienced by the researcher in other settings. The study may have also been limited by selection bias since a sample of convenience was recruited and randomization of participants did not occur. Although the participants originated from the same general population of educators from the charter school, 2 of the 4 participants were new employees of the school. Additionally, the study had minimal selection criteria for both populations of participants (i.e., educators and children). Observer bias may also have been a potential limitation. The researcher conducted the video-recordings of the storybook reading sessions as a non-participant; however, the fact that the educators were aware they were being observed may have influenced their behaviors while reading the stories. Bias may have occurred through observation by categorizing static behaviors in a dynamic learning environment. Data collection instrumentation for documenting and coding the educators’ reading behaviors may have been influenced by the researcher’s past experience with variations in implementation of interaction-promoting behaviors and the Dialogic Reading strategies. Although the researcher did not participate with the observation coding process, there may have been the potential for observer bias based on the non-standardization of the observation measurement tool, allowing for the data sources to reflect subjectivity. Furthermore, statistical tests validating the findings could not be performed on the data collected due to the study’s descriptive methodology.

5. The study is limited due to its low reproducibility. The study may not be repeatable on the basis of its observational nature. Since data collection was on the educators’ observable reading behaviors, their mental contentions, and the children’s current
language abilities at one moment in time, the study cannot be replicated in its authentic entirety.

6. The study’s findings are limited to the general description of characteristics observed about teacher practices and attitudes toward learning a new way of instruction as well as characteristics of children’s language abilities. The findings identified the characteristics for interpretation but were not able to identify the cause for any observable behavior or phenomenon related to the conditions of the educator or child participants.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendations for future research were informed by the review of the literature, findings of the study, and the limitations of the study. The first recommendation is to expand the current study so that study results can reflect a more representative sample of both educator and child participants. The second recommendation is related to the measurement of Dialogic Reading effects on children’s oral language acquisition. Another recommendation is related to the features of high quality professional learning needed for early childhood educators to adopt the Dialogic Reading approach to interactive storybook reading. A final recommendation relates to the key components of high-quality inclusion practices that are essential for reaching the desired learning outcomes for children.

Regarding the first recommendation, the limitations of this study regarding very small samplings of educators and young children mitigate generalization to the general population of early childhood educators and children learning in inclusive environments. By expanding the sampling to include a more representative sample of adults, including educators that have less
formal education like four-year college degrees, and children as well as altering the methodological design to include comparison groups, a statistical analysis could be applied to strengthen the validity and reliability of the results.

The next recommended area for future research involves investigating the effects Dialogic Reading has on children’s oral language. In its inception, Dialogic Reading was a program for encouraging parents to read more frequently and with better quality for enhancing children’s language development, particularly for children who had limited exposure to vocabulary learning opportunities. Dialogic Reading has been on the research agenda of many early childhood experts due to the positive effects on children’s vocabulary acquisition demonstrated in studies involving parent-child reading partners (Mol et al., 2009; Wasik & Bond, 2001). Several studies have investigated the effects of Dialogic Reading on vocabulary acquisition, which is an important component of children’s language development related to reading comprehension success (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Towson et al., 2016; Wasik & Bond, 2001). More experimental studies are needed to investigate the effects Dialogic Reading has on children’s oral language as a whole, including their listening comprehension, verbal expression of ideas using expanded language structures, and vocabulary acquisition. As instructional methods are being considered for use in early learning settings to impact children’s language and literacy learning for future academic success, empirical evidence is needed to explain the benefits of Dialogic Reading up and beyond what can be explained through typical storybook reading, including dosage and reading group size factors.

Additionally, a research agenda is needed that includes empirical investigations of the effects of high quality professional learning with early childhood educators for adopting the evidence based Dialogic Reading method for facilitating language acquisition in young children.
This study shed light on the key characteristics involved with early educators’ potential use of a strategic reading intervention, which included the educators’ current behaviors for language interactions during storybook reading, their thinking with regard to a change in their reading practices, and the status of their children’s language abilities. The findings are stepping stones for informing a professional learning facilitator on the design, implementation, and measurement of a high quality professional learning program for Dialogic Reading with educators in that inclusive early learning setting. More studies are needed that empirically investigate the process of educators’ changing from their current routine practice of storybook reading to the adoption of a strategic instructional method for promoting language learning for children in their instructional care. As the new brand of high quality professional learning incorporates the tenets for being intensive, comprehensive, and sustainable, professional learning facilitators and researchers need to investigate the components of a program that can result in the desired learning outcomes of young children. Suggested considerations for designing professional learning research in inclusive early learning environments include determining the content of the learning, including educators’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes, exploring the process of learning and adopting a new instructional practice, including sustained follow-up experiences like coaching, and evaluating the impact the professional learning had on young children’s language and emergent literacy acquisition. Other suggested considerations for designing the method for high quality professional learning investigations include (a) recruitment of a larger and more representative sample of early childhood educators, (b) randomization of educators for intervention and comparison groups, (c) recruitment of multiple early childhood learning settings, and (d) implementation of comprehensive assessment measures relevant for educator outcomes and measures relevant to desired child language outcomes. Future high quality
professional learning research should also explore the effects of supportive learning for educators like Hall & Hord’s (2019) CBAM interventions and coaching to facilitate the reliable adoption of Dialogic Reading strategies.

The final recommendation for future research relates to the key components of high quality inclusion practices that are essential for reaching the desired learning outcomes for typically and atypically developing children. Empirical studies are needed to identify systematic instructional practices that can be embedded in multiple natural contexts to facilitate child language learning and reduce the risk for developing later academic difficulty. More information is needed to inform how effective instructional methods like interactive storybook reading can be layered in an inclusive early learning environment to meet the learning needs of all children.

Summary

The findings of this study revealed early childhood educators’ characteristic storybook reading behaviors and their attitudes, concerns, and perceptions for using or potentially using the Dialogic Reading method in an inclusive learning environment. In addition, their children’s oral language abilities were described to illuminate the challenges educators face in trying to meet their individual learning needs. The characteristics for interaction-promoting behaviors during routine storybook reading were found to be variable. The use of prompts to encourage child verbal interactions varied among frequency of use as well as type of prompt, which were characteristically linked to the CROWD prompts used in the Dialogic Reading method. Findings revealing the infrequent use of open-ended and story recall prompts, which encourage children to practice their verbal formulation of expanded language structures, were consistent with the
research literature (Cabell et al., 2011). Similarly, the frequency and types of language-modeling behaviors used during routine storybook reading was also variable among the educators. These behaviors were linked to the PEER response framework central to the Dialogic Reading method. Educators displayed characteristics for providing corrective feedback (i.e., Evaluate) consistently to children’s responses to prompts. The study’s findings on the educators’ infrequent use of language-modeling behaviors (i.e., Expand and Repeat) were also commensurate with the previous interactive storybook reading literature (Justice, 2006; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000).

The study also explored the educators’ attitudes, concerns, and perceptions regarding their adoption or potential adoption of Dialogic Reading strategies as an instructional approach to interactive storybook reading using CBAM diagnostic tools. The findings revealed the educators’ attitudes and perceptions (i.e., concerns) for being unconcerned about their involvement with Dialogic Reading were commensurate with individuals who have not adopted the use of the teaching method.

An additional finding of this research study was the current oral language status of the children populated in the educators’ classrooms. Results of oral language assessment measures revealed the young children as a whole group displayed below average skills in understanding conceptual and perceptual vocabulary, grammatical word structures, and phrase and sentence structures, thereby providing a strong rationale for early childhood educators to learn Dialogic Reading as a way to facilitate language growth.

The study’s combined findings are important factors toward informing a change facilitator regarding the planning, implementing, and measuring of a high quality professional learning program for supporting educators with increasing their knowledge about language acquisition and facilitation of oral language growth in their typically and atypically developing
children by adopting an evidence based instructional practice for interactive storybook reading (i.e., Dialogic Reading). By characterizing the educators’ reading behaviors, understanding their attitudes and perceptions as they move toward adopting a new teaching practice, and establishing their children’s current abilities for language acquisition, the stage is set for evoking supportive change in storybook reading practices and increasing intervention quality.

This study’s findings have the potential to contribute to the existing knowledge base on planning, applying, and measuring differentiated high quality professional learning for programs implemented in diverse contexts that can result in better instructional practice and improved child learning outcomes. It is critical for early childhood educators to adopt and use instructional practices with fidelity that are responsive and sensitive to the language learning needs critical to all children’s academic and social success. A research agenda is needed to investigate the impact Dialogic Reading has on children’s oral language comprehension as well as other systematic instructional strategies that can be embedded across multiple routine learning contexts to facilitate the communication and language development in young children in inclusive learning environments.
September 18, 2019

Dear Ruth Gorlin:

On 9/18/2019, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

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<tr>
<th>Type of Review</th>
<th>Modification and Continuing Review</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Impact of Preschool Classroom Educator Professional Learning of Interactive Reading on Preschoolers' Oral Language Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>Ruth Gorlin</td>
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<td>• Consent for Adult Participants, Category: Consent Form;</td>
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The IRB approved the protocol from 9/18/2019 to 9/17/2020.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer
APPENDIX B: ADULT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Adult Demographic Information Questionnaire

Participant #. ____________________________________ Classroom #. ________________

Age (in years): _______________________________ Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

Ethnicity (Please check all that apply):
____ White ____ Asian or Pacific Islander
____ African American ____ American Indian or Native Alaskan
____ Hispanic or Latino ____ Mixed / Other

Classroom Type: ____Preschool ____ Prekindergarten

Education:
____ High school graduation or below ______ Bachelor’s degree
____ Vocational training or some college ______ Graduate degree
____ Associate’s degree ______ Other __________________

Training in Early Childhood Education or Child Development (Please check all that apply)
____ No specialized training ______ AA (Associate’s degree)
____ Workshops ______ Working on Bachelor’s
____ Some college courses but no degree ______ BA / BS (Bachelor’s degree)
____ CDA (Child Development Associate) ______ Advanced degree

Total Number of Years Teaching: __________ Number of Years in Current Position: __________

Number of hours you usually work at this school each week:
____ Fewer than 20 hours per week
____ Between 20 – 40 hours per week
____ 40 hours per week
____ More than 40 hours per week

Primary Language You Speak: ________________ Second Language: ________________

Professional development and / or experience in using dialogic reading:
____ Yes ______ No ______ Not Sure

Professional development and / or experience in using shared interactive reading
____ Yes ______ No ______ Not Sure
APPENDIX C: STAGES OF CONCERN QUESTIONNAIRE (SoCQ)
Stages of Concern Questionnaire

Participant Number: _____________________________________________________________

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what people who are using or thinking about using various programs are concerned about at various times during the adoption process.

The items were developed from typical responses of school and college teachers who ranged from no knowledge at all about various programs to many years’ experience using them. Therefore, many of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time. For the completely irrelevant items, please circle “0” on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you do have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale.

For example:

This statement is very true of me at this time. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
This statement is somewhat true of me now. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
This statement is not at all true of me at this time. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
This statement seems somewhat irrelevant to me. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please respond to the items of your present concerns, or how you feel about your involvement with Dialogic Reading. We do not hold to any one definition of Dialogic Reading so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Phrases such as “this approach” and “the new system” all refer to Dialogic Reading. Remember to respond to each item in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with Dialogic Reading.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this task.
### Stages of Concern Questionnaire

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<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>Not true of me now</td>
<td>Somewhat true of me now</td>
<td>Very true of me now</td>
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Circle One Number For Each Item

1. I am concerned about students’ attitudes toward Dialogic Reading.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I now know of some other approaches that might work better.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I am more concerned about another new program.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I would like to help other faculty in their use of Dialogic Reading.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I have a very limited knowledge of Dialogic Reading.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I would like to know the effect of reorganization on my professional status.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I am concerned about revising my use of Dialogic Reading.  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I would like to develop working relationships with both our faculty and outside faculty using Dialogic Reading.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I am concerned about how Dialogic Reading affects students.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I am not concerned about Dialogic Reading at this time.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I would like to know who will make the decisions in the new system.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I would like to discuss the possibility of using Dialogic Reading.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I would like to know what resources are available if we decide to adopt Dialogic Reading.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I am concerned about my inability to manage all that Dialogic Reading requires.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change.  
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Participant #: ____________________

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<td>I would like to familiarize other departments or persons with the</td>
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<td>I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.</td>
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<td>I would like to revise the Dialogic Reading approach.</td>
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<td>I am preoccupied with things other than Dialogic Reading.</td>
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<td>I would like to modify our use of Dialogic Reading based on the</td>
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<td>experiences of our students.</td>
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<td>I spend little time thinking about Dialogic Reading.</td>
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<td>I would like to excite my students about their part in this</td>
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<td>I am concerned about time spent working with nonacademic problems</td>
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<td>I would like to coordinate my efforts with others to maximize</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to have more information on time and energy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>commitments required by Dialogic Reading.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>on Dialogic Reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogic Reading.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to use feedback from students to change the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to know how my role will change when I am using</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic Reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to know how Dialogic Reading is better than what we</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have now.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Hall and Hord (2015)
APPENDIX D: STAGES OF CONCERN (SoC) QUICK SCORING DEVICE
## Stages of Concern Quick Scoring Device

### Raw Score Totals

**Percentile Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Scale Score Total</th>
<th>Stage 0</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stages of Concern:

- Stage 0: Uncerncern
- Stage 1: Information
- Stage 2: Personal
- Stage 3: Management
- Stage 4: Consequence
- Stage 5: Collaboration
- Stage 6: Refocusing

### Concerns Based Systems International
APPENDIX E: INTERACTIVE STORYBOOK READING INNOVATION CONFIGURATION MAP
Facilitating Oral Language Development Through Interactive Storybook Reading Using Dialogic Reading (DR) Strategies
Innovation Configuration (IC) Map

Preschool educators can support language and emergent literacy development by reading stories in a more enriching and enjoyable way that provides opportunities for children to talk about facts, ideas, observations, experiences, and feelings (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). Listening and responding to stories is an essential step for children to become good learners and readers (Whitehurst, 206).

A. Preschool educator applies Dialogic Reading (DR) strategies while reading a story with small groups of preschool children in an energetic environment in which opportunities are provided for expressing ideas, experiences, and opinions as well as opportunities for learning new vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Element</th>
<th>Ideal Implementation (4)</th>
<th>In Process (3)</th>
<th>In Process (2)</th>
<th>In Process (1)</th>
<th>No Implementation (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educator follows four steps (PEER Sequence) in asking questions and responding to a child during a storybook reading session.</td>
<td>While reading the story, educator: ( P = \text{prompts} ) a child by asking a question related to the text or inviting the child to talk about something pictured on the page; ( E = \text{evaluates} ) what a child says by determining if the answer / comment is correct or incorrect; ( E = \text{expands} ) on a child’s response by adding a few words related to the child’s original response and/or gently providing the correct response;</td>
<td>While reading the story, educator: ( P = \text{prompts} ) a child by asking a question related to the text or inviting the child to talk about something pictured on the page; ( Then, ) ( f \text{ollows 2 of the 3 remaining PEER Sequence steps} ).</td>
<td>While reading the story, educator: ( P = \text{prompts} ) a child by asking a question or inviting the child to talk about something pictured on the page; ( But ) ( d \text{oes not f} \text{ollow any of the remaining PEER Sequence steps} ).</td>
<td>While reading the story, educator makes no attempt at prompting questions or responding to a child.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
child to repeat the expanded or corrected response. It must be preceded by **evaluate, expand**, or both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Element</th>
<th>Ideal Implementation (4)</th>
<th>In Process (3)</th>
<th>In Process (2)</th>
<th>In Process (1)</th>
<th>No Implementation (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> = completion (Asking a child to complete a word or phrase.)</td>
<td>While reading a story, educator invites a child to participate by prompting most of the question types. Educator demonstrates use of 3 of the 4 question prompts from the <strong>CROWD Sequence</strong>. Educator poses Distancing question prompts within a preschoolers’ decontextualized language capabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Completion</strong> question prompts from the <strong>CROWD Sequence</strong> or asking a child to routinely label items / characters on a page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> = recall ( Asking a child specific details about what happens in the story related to the text.)</td>
<td>While reading a story, educator invites a child to participate by prompting some of the question types. Educator demonstrates use of 2 of the 4 question prompts from the <strong>CROWD Sequence</strong>. Educator poses Distancing question prompts with all preschoolers, not considering an individual child’s verbal language skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Educator does not invite a child to participate while reading a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong> = open-ended (Asking a child to describe what is happening in the story that does not seek one specific response.)</td>
<td>While reading a story, educator invites a child to participate by prompting mostly <strong>Completion</strong> question prompts from the <strong>CROWD Sequence</strong> or asking a child to routinely label items / characters on a page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W</strong> = <strong>Wh-Question</strong> (Asking a child a question using <strong>Wh</strong> format [i.e., Who, What, Where, When,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Distancing Question Prompts

**D = distancing**

(Asking a child to relate something in the story to child’s life.)

Educator poses Distancing question prompts within preschoolers’ decontextualized language capabilities.

### 3. Educator promotes a climate of energetic, active listening during a storybook reading session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses near equal amounts of management-type talk and question prompts to engage children while reading the book.</th>
<th>Uses mostly management-type talk by quieting children.</th>
<th>Uses only management-type talk by quieting children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points to words in the text while reading.</td>
<td>Permits one opportunity for child(ren) to respond to a prompt or share a personal experience.</td>
<td>Demonstrates no attempts at encouraging children to participate while reading the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points to words in the text while reading.</td>
<td>Allows the children time to look at some of the illustrations.</td>
<td>Demonstrates no attempts to respond to children’s questions or comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates the use of positive statements when speaking and responding to the children.</td>
<td>Permits one opportunity for child(ren) to share a personal experience.</td>
<td>Uses mostly management-type talk by quieting children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides opportunities for <strong>ALL</strong> children in the group to engage.</td>
<td>Demonstrates no attempts at encouraging children to participate while reading the book.</td>
<td>Demonstrates no attempts to respond to children’s questions or comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Engages children by focusing their attention to the story through the use of prompts while reading the book.**
- **Points to words in the text while reading.**
- **Directs children’s attention to details in the illustrations.**
- **Allows the children enough time to look at each illustration.**
- **Permits three or more opportunities for children to share a related personal experience.**
- **Encourages children to listen to**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peers as they share /answer/ comment.</th>
<th>Verbal / nonverbal participation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates the use of positive statements when speaking and responding to the children.</td>
<td>• Permits at least two opportunities for children to share a related personal experience although topics are not always related to the book theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides opportunities for ALL children in the group to engage verbal / nonverbal participation.</td>
<td>• Provides responsiveness to child(ren)’s misunderstandings by responding to a child’s question and helping to distinguish between two confusing labels or concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Educator “adds value” to the reading experience by clarifying novel vocabulary that is encountered throughout the book.</td>
<td>4. Educator “adds value” to the reading experience by clarifying novel vocabulary that is encountered throughout the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defines challenging or new words encountered or pictured in the story using brief, child-friendly terms.</td>
<td>• Defines challenging or new words encountered or pictured in the story using brief, child-friendly terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides three or more opportunities for children to experience a newly defined challenging or new word.</td>
<td>• Provides one opportunity for children to experience a newly defined challenging or new word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not provide any attention to challenging or new words encountered or pictured in the story.</td>
<td>• Does not provide any attention to challenging or new words encountered or pictured in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. General reading environment promotes children’s participation with a Tier 2 experience (small group of 3 – 5 children) (Cabell, Justice, Vukelich, Buell, &amp; Han, 2008).</td>
<td><strong>Educator has book available at the start of the reading session.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F: INTERACTIVE STORYBOOK READING USING DIALOGIC READING STRATEGIES: BASELINE CODING CHECKLIST
## Interactive Storybook Reading Using Dialogic Reading Strategies: Baseline Coding Checklist

### Educator Observed:  
Date:

### Rater #1:  
Rater #2 (Inter-Observer Agreement):

### Title of Book:  
Date of Book Reading:

### Session: Baseline

### Key Elements Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt / Question Type</th>
<th>YES (Y)</th>
<th>NO (N)</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educator asks an oral language prompt (CROWD) and implements PEER sequence of responses.</td>
<td>Time Stamp:</td>
<td>Page Number(s):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt / Question:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a modification of a previous prompt?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait Time (&gt; 3 seconds)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child responds</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator models correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Educator repeat the prompt without modification?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally Mark: how many direct repetitions of the prompt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evaluates: Educator determines if child’s answer / comment is correct / incorrect</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expands: Educator adds a few words related to child’s response or gently provides correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Repeats: Educator repeats original prompt or a related version that elicits child to repeat expanded or corrected response</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1. Educator asks an oral language prompt (CROWD) and implements PEER sequence of responses.

#### Prompt / Question Type
- Completion
- Recall
- Open-ended
- Wh?
- Distancing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Stamp:</th>
<th>Page Number(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this a modification of a previous prompt?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait Time (&gt; 3 seconds)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child responds</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator models correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Educator repeat the prompt without modification?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally Mark: how many direct repetitions of the prompt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evaluates: Educator determines if child’s answer / comment is correct / incorrect</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expands: Educator adds a few words related to child’s response or gently provides correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Repeats: Educator repeats original prompt or a related version that elicits child to repeat expanded or corrected response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1. Educator asks an oral language prompt (CROWD) and implements PEER sequence of responses.

#### Prompt / Question Type
- Completion
- Recall
- Open-ended
- Wh?
- Distancing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time stamp:</th>
<th>Page number(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this a modification of a previous prompt?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait Time (&gt; 3 seconds)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child responds</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator models correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Educator repeat the prompt without modification?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally Mark: how many direct repetitions of the prompt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evaluates: Educator determines if child’s answer / comment is correct / incorrect</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expands: Educator adds a few words related to child’s response or gently provides correct response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Repeats: Educator repeats original prompt or a related version that elicits child to repeat expanded or corrected response</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1. Educator asks an oral language prompt (CROWD) and implements PEER sequence of responses.

#### Prompt / Question Type:
- [ ] Completion
- [ ] Recall
- [ ] Open-ended
- [ ] Wh?  [ ] Distancing

#### Prompt / Question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time stamp:</th>
<th>Page number(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tally Mark:**
- [ ] How many direct repetitions of the prompt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt?</th>
<th>Time (sec)</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Evaluates:
- Educator determines if child’s answer/comment is correct/incorrect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt?</th>
<th>Time (sec)</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. Expands:
- Educator adds a few words related to child’s response or gently provides correct response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt?</th>
<th>Time (sec)</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4. Repeats:
- Educator repeats original prompt or a related version that elicits child to repeat expanded or corrected response

#### B. Educator promotes a climate of energetic, active listening during the book reading session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (Y)</th>
<th>Sometimes (S)</th>
<th>No (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed (80% - 100% of opportunities)</td>
<td>Inconsistently observed (50% - 79% of opportunities)</td>
<td>Infrequent or not observed (49% or less of opportunities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. Educator engages children in the story visually by pointing to words while reading, directing children’s attention to details in illustrations, allowing time for children to look at illustrations, and/or allowing children to turn pages. |
| Y | S | N |

| 2. Educator uses energetic, well-modulated, dramatic voice and / or silly behaviors and sounds. |
| Y | S | N |

| 3. Educator presents with positive affect by demonstrating use of positive statements, appropriate praise, smiles, and uses minimal management-type talk and/or reprimands. (Manager talk) |
| Y | S | N |
examples: sit down, be quiet, raise your hand, stop talking, don’t do that)

4. Educator provides opportunities for ALL children in the group to engage with verbal participation by delivering prompts/questions to all children and providing opportunities for each child to verbally participate. Educator demonstrates minimization for dominance of one child in the group.

5. Educator provides opportunities for vocabulary learning by clarifying new / challenging words encountered in the text / pictures by defining new or novel words in brief, child-friendly terms and provides opportunities for children to use them during the book reading session.

Tally Mark: number of different words defined

6. Educator provides responsiveness to child’s misunderstanding by responding to a child’s question and helping him/her to distinguish between two confusing labels or concepts from the story (i.e., educator limits use of “I don’t know” when child asks a question). Example of Responsiveness: Child: “That’s a duck!” Educator: “That’s called a goose. A goose is different because…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. General Aspects of the Reading Environment</th>
<th>Yes (Y) Observed (90%-100% of opportunities)</th>
<th>Sometimes (S) Inconsistently observed (50% - 79% of opportunities)</th>
<th>No (N) Infrequent or not observed (0% or less of opportunities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educator has book available at the start of the reading session.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Children are seated close to the educator (within arms-reach).</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Children are able to view the pages of the book.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Educator speaks clearly and uses grammatically correct sentences.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D.R. adapted from Towson, 2019; IC Map, Gorlin, 2019)

Complete the following chart with the total number of CROWD prompt types for book reading session:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prompt</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion Prompts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Ended Statements / Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wh - Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distancing Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the following chart with the totals for book reading session:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEER Component</th>
<th>Total Number YES (Observed)</th>
<th>Total Number NO (Not Observed)</th>
<th>Total Number Possible (Total # of Y + Total # of N = Total # Possible)</th>
<th>Percentage (Total # of Y / Total # Possible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pause 3-5 seconds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat Prompt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicits Child to Repeat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the following chart with totals for Parts B and C for the book reading session:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part B: Active Listening</th>
<th>Part C: Reading Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number YES (Y)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number Sometimes (S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number NO (N)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G: CHILD DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Child Demographic Information Questionnaire

Participant #. ___________________ Classroom#. ___________________  

Age (in years):____________________ Chronologic Age (months)____________________  

Gender: _____Male      _____Female  

Ethnicity:  
____ White    _____ Asian or Pacific Islander  
____ African American    _____ American Indian or Native Alaskan  
____ Hispanic or Latino   _____ Mixed / Other: ___________________  

Primary Eligibility:_________________________________________________________  

Secondary Eligibility:_________________________________________________________  

Language Score Upon School Entry:  
Test:_________________________________________________________  
Date:__________________________  
Receptive:___________    Expressive:___________    Total:______________  

Home Language(s):_____________________________________________________________  

Medical Diagnosis (if any):____________________________________________________  

Special Education Services (please check all that apply):  
_____ Speech-Language Therapy / Frequency:_______________________________  
_____Occupational Therapy / Frequency:_______________________________  
_____Physical Therapy / Frequency:_______________________________  
_____Other: ______________________________________________________ / Frequency:_________________________  

IEP Goals (Please check all areas in which child has goals / objectives):  
_____Communication / Language    _____Articulation  
_____Social / Emotional    _____Adaptive / Self Help  

185
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fine Motor</th>
<th>Gross Motor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Other: ____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Communicative Function in the Classroom:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX H: TIER TWO RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY ASSESSMENT
SCORE SHEET
Receptive
Tier Two Vocabulary Assessment Scoring Sheet

Student ID #: ___________________
Test Date: _____________________
Chronological Age (in months): ______________________

Script: “I am going to show you some pictures, and I will ask you to point to a picture that I name.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>Expressive Response</th>
<th>Correct / Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1. Bus</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2. Frog</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Chicks</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grain</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ram</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Waved</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Flying</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Turtle</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nest</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lizard</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dig</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Dive</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sandals</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Goose</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mud</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Chase</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Flap</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Oatmeal</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Broom</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Train</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Shout</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sings</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Raindrops</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Butterfly</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Grasshopper</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Watch</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Hops</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Button</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Lamp</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Overalls</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Climbed</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Sew</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Verbs Correct: _________________________________/11 = _________%

Total Nouns Correct: _________________________________/19 = _________%

Total Correct: _________________________________/30 = _________%
APPENDIX I: TIER TWO EXPRESSIVE VOCABULARY ASSESSMENT
SCORE SHEET
**Expressive**
Tier Two Vocabulary Assessment Scoring Sheet

Student ID#: ____________________

Test Date: ____________________

Chronological Age (in months): ______________________

Script: “I am going to show you some pictures. You are going to tell me what is in the picture.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>Expressive Response</th>
<th>Correct / Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>C I</td>
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<td>1. Chicks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ram</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Waved</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Flying</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Turtle</td>
<td></td>
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<td>C I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
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<td>C I</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Oatmeal</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Broom</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
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<td>18. Train</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Shout</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
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<td>C I</td>
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<td>28. Overalls</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Sew</td>
<td></td>
<td>C I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Verbs Correct: __________________________/11 = _________%

Total Nouns Correct: __________________________/19 = _________%

Total Correct: __________________________/30 = _________%
REFERENCES


Lonigan, C. (1994). Reading to preschoolers exposed: Is the emperor really naked?


for acquisition and instruction. In M. G. McKeown & M. E. Curtis (Eds.), *The Nature of Vocabulary Acquisition* (pp. 19 – 35), Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.


