Supporting Foundational Literacy for Elementary Aged Emergent Bilinguals

by

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August 2022

A capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of
The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

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Abstract

This capstone addresses the problem of the reading achievement gap and subsequent lower graduation rates experienced by emergent bilingual (EB) students. Success in the area of reading is highly correlated to academic success. In order to engage the problem, an analysis of literature related to supporting foundational literacy skills for elementary aged EB students is synthesized to identify themes related to the problem. The literature review presents themes relevant to foundational literacy skills instruction for EB students such as employing an assets-based approach to EB students foundational literacy practices and proactively addressing EB learner differences to improve academic outcomes. The research informs a professional development (PD) product for elementary general education teachers to supplement their understanding of how to leverage students' funds of knowledge and funds of identity to address the diverse needs of elementary aged EB students. The PD product provided in this capstone mitigates the issues faced by EB students in the area of foundational literacy by: (1) providing teachers opportunities to reflect on their perspectives of EB students' behaviors related to literacy development; (2) prompting critical analysis of current instructional approaches for EB students; and (3) providing tools for leveraging EB students' cultural and linguistic knowledge to develop curriculum to improve EB student outcomes. These tools include: a lesson toolkit, rubrics, and an action plan.

Keywords: Emergent Bilingual Learners, Foundational Literacy, Reading Success, Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Chapter One

Over a decade ago, I entered the field of education as a world languages teacher. Nonetheless, I was placed as a lead teacher of a 15:1:1 middle school bilingual class due to teacher shortages in bilingual education. My students faced many barriers to meeting academic expectations due to learning differences and a lack of foundational literacy skills in both Spanish and English. Even though I spoke the home language of my students, I was woefully underprepared to address their learning needs as emergent bilingual learners [EB] in the areas of reading and writing.

My goal for this capstone is to identify ways elementary general education teachers can approach foundational literacy skills to meet the distinct needs of EB students to improve academic outcomes and promote higher graduation rates. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for reading in K-5 identifies foundational reading skills as: print concepts; phonological awareness; phonics and word recognition; and fluency (CCSS). Employing a culturally responsive framework to address foundational skills allows students to leverage all of their knowledge, to engage in challenging content area knowledge while gaining fundamental literacy skills (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Reyes, 2006; Ríos & Castillón, 2018). Non-EB students who develop foundational literacy skills are 70% more likely to reach proficient levels on third grade standardized reading tests, making these skills predictive of academic achievement (Paige et al., 2019). Unfortunately, there is a significant achievement gap between EBs and non-EBs in the area of reading. This achievement gap has persisted over a ten year period (from 2007-2017) based upon data from fourth grade standardized reading assessments (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2022b).

Significance of the Problem

Providing EBs access to foundational skills instruction that leverages their diverse cultural and linguistic knowledge is essential to academic success. As of the beginning of the 2019 school year, students learning English represent 10.5% of all students in the U.S. students (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022). Reading is a skill that is predictive of academic success in the U.S. Foundational literacy skills instruction in elementary school lay the groundwork for reading success. Unfortunately, EBs experience lower graduation rates, 67%, than their non-EB peers, 84% (Paige et al., 2018; Reyes, 2006; USDOE, 2022a). Furthermore, the lack of a high-school diploma has a negative socio-economic effect on EBs, limiting their ability to obtain gainful employment following their schooling experience (USDOE, 2022a).

The discrepancies in graduation rates may be due to access to education programs tailored to meet the needs of EBs. Many EBs lack access to bilingual education programs which prioritize the importance of their home language reading development and strong bilingual educational models, such as two-way dual language programs are not as accessible as they should be. Therefore, this is an issue of educational equity (Gándara, 2021; Noguerón-Liu, 2020; Valdés, 1997). Although elementary general education teachers may not be able to support students in their home language development, teachers can seek to understand EB learner differences and the varied literacy practices of EB students and their families.

Purpose

The purpose of this capstone project is to identify and mitigate problems elementary aged EBs face as they seek to obtain foundational literacy skills. A review of literature related to effective modes of instruction for foundational literacy skills for elementary aged EBs and is used to inform and develop professional development (PD) modules. The PD participants will be

elementary general education teachers and they will engage in activities to gain knowledge of and instructional methods to support the unique needs of bilingual learners as they acquire foundational literacy. The PD will be offered during the summer month as a hybrid course (one virtual session in July, one in-person session in August). Participants will complete a self-paced virtual module in July. The virtual module will require participants to complete readings, watch videos related to supporting foundational literacy skills to meet the distinct needs of EBs. Participants will also identify an existing lesson to bring to the in person session for a collaborate workshop.

For the second, in-person session, participants will interact with a presentation of relevant data from recent research related to the problem. In addition, participants will learn about frameworks which can be applied to their existing teaching practices to improve outcomes for EB learners. Furthermore, participants will gain new knowledge of specific EB learner differences and how they can supplement instruction to improve academic outcomes for their students. As a culminating activity, participants will use an existing lesson that features a culturally responsive text to engage in collaborative workshop with their peers. Participants will be provided with additional resources to further their professional development at the end of the sessions. Acquisition of these skills and knowledge will help general education teachers better support EBs, thereby improving academic outcomes.

Conclusion

General education teachers are stakeholders who are positioned to support foundational literacy skills for all early learners. Nonetheless, many classroom teachers are unfamiliar with the distinct challenges that EBs face developing strong foundational skills in two languages (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Reyes, 2006; Ríos & Castillón, 2018). In addition, many EBs do not

have access to bilingual programs which provide home language literacy support (Gándara, 2021; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). The aim of the PD is to provide learning opportunities for general education teachers to address the unique differences EBs possess and to ultimately improve academic outcomes.

Chapter 2 of this capstone presents a review of the literature related to supporting foundational literacy skills for EBs. Chapter 3 gives a detailed description of PD workshops designed to mitigate the problem of how can elementary general education address foundational literacy skills to promote early literacy and academic success for EB students. Chapter 4 concludes the capstone by providing a summation of relevant issues related to foundational literacy skills development for EBs, implications for students and teachers as well as recommendations. All professional development materials are included in the appendix section.

Chapter 2

This chapter provides a literature review of studies related to the importance of adopting an assets-based framework for elementary aged emergent bilingual (EB) students to support foundational literacy skills. Two major themes emerged within the body of literature dedicated to the distinct challenges that EBs face as they build literacy skills in two languages: the power of identity and EB learner differences. This review highlights the relevant findings presented in the literature and how they can be harnessed to support foundational literacy skills for EBs within the general education setting.

There were some major limitations presented in conducting this review due to the lack of research studies which disaggregate data for EBs specifically (Escamilla, 2009). Furthermore, research shows that EBs are not a monolithic subset of learners since L1 dominance, L2 exposure, and cultural background may differ greatly. Many outside factors affect EB students' academic outcomes. These factors include, but are not limited to, gender, race, SES, home language, and parent education levels (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Ellis, 2019; Escamilla, 2009; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Miller Marsh et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, insights can be gleaned from the research related to the challenges EBs face. More importantly, general education classroom teachers are positioned to address specific considerations and deliver targeted interventions that better support EBs' foundational skills to promote future academic success.

Using Funds of Identity to Support Emergent Biliteracy

The research related to supporting EBs in foundational literacy skills maintains that the role of a students' life experiences must be central to the learning environment and the curriculum (Almaguer, 2018; Araujo, 2002; Cain, 2017; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Miller

Marsh et al., 2022; Morita-Mullaney, 2021). Moll et al. (1992) asserts that each family possesses a unique wealth, or fund, of knowledge and skills which has been accumulated through lived experiences. The Funds of Knowledge (FoK) framework is informed by sociocultural theory and with a sociocultural lens teachers of EBs can appreciate the special cultural and linguistic knowledge that each of their students' families possess. The FoK framework encourages a positive shift in teachers' understanding of the literacy practices of EBs families, moving from a deficit view of EB students' abilities towards an asset-based understanding of diverse literacy practices. Furthermore, teachers benefit from understanding students' home literacy practices that are not easily associated with a Eurocentric, monolingual view of literacy.

Funds of Identity

Funds of Identity (FoI), a framework proposed by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014), address limitations within the FoK framework. "The intention behind the concept of Funds of Identity (FoI) is to overcome certain limitations in the funds of knowledge approach" (p. 77). In other words, the FoI perspective offers deeper insights into the challenges EBs face as they build their own FoK, thereby shaping their identity. FoI are understood as artifacts and/or products, both visible and invisible, that are produced or experienced by an individual which shape identity and build a student's personal funds of knowledge, separate from that of their family, over space and time. Examples of FoI include, but are not limited to, self-portraits, social interactions, texts, games, virtual spaces, and interests/hobbies, essentially, "the box of tools" (p. 74) an individual uses to define self. In fact, Miller Marsh et al. (2022) emphasizes that "discovering and building upon a young child's FoI can help educators establish learning continuities between home and school" (p. 188). How then, can elementary general education teachers support foundational

literacy skills for EBs by creating a curriculum which honors their students' identities and unique learning needs, especially when they do not speak the home language/s of their students?

The Home Language Environment

Outside of the school environment, the home, including the language environment (HLE), is the hub of a child's daily life (van der Pluijm et al., 2022). Many studies have been devoted to understanding how home literacy practices impact students' acquisition of literacy skills within the school environment. Home literacy practices are especially relevant to EBs as the HLE is sometimes the only place where students can build early literacy skills in their home language (van der Pluijm et al.). Morita-Mullaney et al. (2019) identifies four categories of literacies which can be observed in the HLE: "print, media, school, and created" (p. 41). Teachers can support EBs foundational literacy skills by forging an intentional, reciprocal relationship with students' families in order to develop an individualized approach to academic growth within the school environment by supplementing, not supplanting, existing home practices related to literacy (Cain, 2017; Morita-Mullaney, 2021).

Parent Involvement

Miller Marsh et al. (2022) conducted a participatory action research study over two years using the FoI framework to understand how students' FoK and FoI could be identified and integrated into a play-based curriculum for EB preschoolers to improve peer relationships and engagement in school literacy practices. The study followed a preschool teacher and an action research team as they used conversations and observations of the classroom and home environments to develop learning activities that were centered on students' identities to "make visible the knowledge, interests, and queries" (p. 182) of EBs to create an accessible curriculum. The study asserts that all students have the right to see themselves and express themselves within learning activities. The authors argue that students of culturally and linguistically diverse

communities are often denied this right due to the Eurocentric, English-dominant curriculum of American schools. To mitigate the lack of opportunity for students to see themselves in the learning activities within the classroom, the teacher engaged in practices which flip the script, placing students and their families as expert contributors to the curriculum. A novel activity identified in the study that integrated FoI into the curriculum was a self-portrait activity that activated all four domains of language, integrating the visual arts. Partnering with families to "develop a mutual understanding of expectations" (p. 196) for students was no small task considering the language barrier/s and the diverse literacy practices of each. These barriers were mitigated by the use of interpreters and translated home communication (Morita-Mullaney et al., 2021). In addition, the action research study required the teacher to engage in critical reflection on their existing teaching practice, identified as an essential and often uncomfortable step for teachers as they seek to support EBs FoI.

The outcome of the action research study is successful integration of EB students' FoK and FoI within the curriculum, stronger partnerships with families, improved peer relationships, and the adoption of a school-wide commitment to engage parents, "both physically and symbolically" (p. 197) in the development of curriculum. Although this study is qualitative and focuses on one teacher's experience, it is representative of the collective experience of many general education teachers who struggle to understand and engage with EBs families and their literacy traditions. In this way, the study is valuable as it clearly outlines actionable steps that teachers can take to involve parents and the school community to develop curriculum that increases meaning-making (Almaguer, 2018; Noguerón-Liu, 2020) and identity formation opportunities for their EB students. This benefits EB students and their families because it

mitigates the problem of the Euro-centric monolingual view of literacy by validating and leveraging students' cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Another study, by Reyes (2006), on emergent bilingualism in elementary aged EB students solidifies the important role of students' families' FoK and literacy practices. This longitudinal, qualitative case study follows the EB children of three families of Mexican descent living in Arizona to observe and analyze their literacy practices and patterns of language across the home and school environment. The school environment was a "bilingual/bicultural program for Latino children" (p. 274) preschool. The data for the study was collected via observations, student work product, conversations with students and their families, and home interviews over a three year period. The study details narratives and transcripts from home visits with students' families. Within these records, there is evidence of a positive, reciprocal relationship between the school staff and students' families. In addition, the author claims that "learning is mediated through the support offered by family members" (p. 279) who are also developing biliteracy. Reyes asserts that "teachers must understand the strategies that parents use at home to encourage their children's literacy development" (p. 273) so that they may develop learning opportunities to foster foundational literacy skills across languages. Effective strategies for solidifying relationships with EBs' parents include regular home visits, a bilingual parent involvement coordinator, weekly bilingual newsletters, and weekly bilingual worksheets.

The findings of the study maintain that student interest-based foundational literacy activities such as opinion writing journals and oral retelling of life experiences were effective strategies for EB students because they allow students to explore identity and their families' FoK. In addition, the findings indicate that activities which activate metalinguistic awareness, facilitating students' discussion of contrastive grammar and/or analysis of language features of

both Spanish and English, are essential for EBs as they make use of all of their linguistic resources to engage in foundational literacy practices. According to Reyes, students in this study had more opportunities to identify as bilingual within the school and home environments due to the ethnic and cultural makeup of their community. This study presents relevant findings for teachers of EBs related to the importance of student identity and parent involvement by linking the literacy practices of the HLE to those practiced during the school day. Additionally, the study presents practical ways in which teachers can engage parents in the literacy practices of school life while also leveraging parents' FoK to inform instruction.

   In a year-long case study conducted by van der Pluijm et al. (2022), researchers analyzed the effectiveness of a program developed to build a support system and partnership for and with the parents of EB students with lower levels of education in order to improve academic outcomes in the areas of foundational literacy skills, specifically oral language. The school-based program, At Home Language (AHL) was designed to "prepare teachers to tailor their interventions to the needs and resources of [...] families" (p. 677) with lower levels of education. Similar to the other studies presented in this section, the van der Pluijm et al. study recognizes the vital role that the HLE, including parents' FoK, plays in the development of emergent and conventional literacy for EB students. An important contribution of this study is the analysis of how teachers use the AHL program to create formal parent-partnerships to mitigate the issue of a mismatch between the literacy environments presented by EB students' home and school lives. In addition, this partnership is forged in a way that allows parents to engage in ways that are sustainable and equitable for them by modifying interactions to fit their literacy practices and determining ways to allow them to engage in school literacy practices with dignity.

Teaching Implications

The Funds of Identity framework helps teachers address foundational literacy skills for EBs by providing students opportunities to see themselves and their life experiences within the context of the curriculum. This is especially important for EB students as they are historically underrepresented in U.S. schools' Euro-centric, English-dominant curriculum (Miller Marsh et al., 2022). The research presented in this section offers insights into how reciprocal relationships can be built with students' and their families to facilitate identity formation and emerging biliteracy. In addition, the findings illustrate how students can draw upon their FoK, and those of their families, to provide a rich context for literacy learning activities like those outlined in the research: self-portraits, metalinguistic analysis, opinion writing, oral narratives to share experiences, and the utilization of various types of home literacy, "print, media, school, and self-created," to complement and build upon school literacy practices (Morita-Mullaney et al. 2019, p. 41). The studies provide teachers with actionable steps to engage and involve parents in the curriculum and the conventional literacy practices of the school environment including formal systems for maintaining and building parent involvement without supplanting the home literacy practices of EB families. These findings are used to inform the professional development presented in professional development product described in Chapter three of this capstone.

Bilingual Learner Differences

Within the field of linguistics and second language acquisition, the importance of understanding individual learner differences (IDs) and how they affect language acquisition is a major consideration (Ellis, 2019; Gottardo et al., 2021). Learner differences not only have an impact on the validity and reliability of language assessment, but also play an essential role in the development of curriculum development for EBs (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Ellis; Fairbairn &

Jones-Vo, 2019; Gottardo et al., 2021). Although elementary general education teachers may be well versed in the ways in which learner differences affect monolingual English speaking students, thanks to the ubiquitous nature of theories such as Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligences, there are distinct IDs associated with EB students as they seek to build foundational literacy skills in multiple languages (Ellis, 2019; Gottardo et al., 2021). As teachers, and others within the field of linguistics, seek to understand IDs that are unique to EBs, Ellis (2019) asserts that we attempt to answer the following questions: (1) "In what ways do language learners differ?" (2) "What effects to these differences have on learning outcomes?" (3) "How do learner differences affect the process of [language] acquisition?" (4) "How do individual learner factors interact with instruction in determining learning outcomes?" (p. 641). This capstone will focus on the first three questions.

Discussion of Learner Differences of EBs

Most research suggests that EB students' FoI and FoK support meaning-making as students build foundational literacy skills. In much the same way, students' IDs affect the ways in which they make sense of language (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Ellis, 2019; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). In order to differentiate instruction to ensure that EBs acquire a sense of belonging and connection to the content of the school curriculum, they must also be supported in a way that recognizes the distinct challenges they face as the acquire foundational literacy skills. It is important to note that much of the literature devoted to strategies to address IDs of EB students relies heavily on best practices and sameness to their monolingual, English-speaking peers (Escamilla, 2009; Moore & Klinger, 2014). This is problematic because there is a lack of research within the field to support claims that good teaching benefits all students, including EBs (Vaughn et al., 2006). Furthermore, Escamilla (2009) points out that "strategies utilized in

research [...] were not implemented for second language learners in exactly the same way as they were for monolingual English students, thereby raising serious doubts about the purported sameness of instructional strategies," (p. 443) highlighting the importance of modifying instruction for EB students.

This section of the literature review identifies and discuss IDs of EB students as they develop foundational literacy skills, including writing, oracy, vocabulary development, and phonemic awareness. A high level of interconnectedness exists between foundational literacy skills. For example, oral skills and vocabulary acquisition are strongly related to writing (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Ellis, 2019; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Vaughn et al., 2006). Furthermore, listening skills are strongly linked to and reading fluency and comprehension of texts (Beeman & Urow; Ellis; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo; Vaughn et al., 2006). Although each of these studies reveal different elements of IDs and how they relate to foundational literacy skills development of EBs, I tease out specific themes that correlate to a specific skill. In addition, to clarify the focus of this section of the capstone, it has been divided into subsections (i.e. writing, oracy, etc.).

Foundational Writing Practices

A clinical, qualitative research study conducted by Soltero-González and Butvilofsky (2020) that analyzes the biliterate writing progressions of simultaneous EB students over one year (preschool through the end of kindergarten) presents some distinct considerations for elementary teachers addressing fundamental literacy skills. The students in the study were aged between four and seven years old, children of parents born in Central America or Mexico. Of the 16 students in the study, 10 were identified at the Entering Level of overall English language proficiency, four were at the Emergent Level, and one was Expanding. EB students' letter-sound

correspondence was assessed via writing tasks and the subsequent reading aloud of their work using a "holistic bilingual analysis" (p. 355) over the period of the study. Understanding how EB students conceptualize their writing across two languages was central to this study. A unique feature of EB writing progressions that was identified in the study was the absence of the syllabic hypothesis, "the ability to represent each syllable [a child hears] in a word with one letter or character" (p. 361). Instead, EB students in the study understood the letter-sound relationship as representing the first sound of a word, skipping the syllabic stage altogether. Another finding of note from the study was the "application of knowledge from one language to write in another" (p. 362) across all observed stages of writing progression. Furthermore, the writing of EB students in the study remained stable and comparable across languages, making the case that one language does not supplant the other when students are given opportunities to engage in "literacy practices in two languages at the same time" (p. 363). In fact, Soltero-González and Butvilofsky assert that when students are prompted to use all of their emergent language skills, across both languages, to approach writing tasks, "their hesitation dissipated" (p. 363) and they were able to produce more robust written responses. Relevant findings from the study related to teaching practice include the adoption of a "whole-to-part-to-whole approach to literacy from the word level to the smaller units of the word" (p. 363), an appropriate practice developmentally for bilingual learners. In addition the authors maintained that teachers should adopt a holistic perspective to inform their curriculum and assessment development from the very early stages of literacy development. This type of approach frames EB students' literacy practices as normal, aiding students as they conceptualize foundational literacy across two languages. Another implication of the study is that word work should involve isolation "of discrete sounds" (p. 363)

to support EB students as they develop letter sound correspondence and phonemic awareness as they develop foundational biliteracy skills.

Soltero-González and Butvilofsky asserts that writing should be introduced early for EB students and that students should be able to use all of the linguistic resources, across languages, to respond to writing tasks. These findings are valuable for general education teachers of elementary aged EBs because they offer insights into how teachers can support their EB students through bilingual, modified writing tasks and specific word-work to develop conventional orthographic and phonemic concepts.

Another study centered on understanding EB foundational writing practices was completed in partnership with a longitudinal literacy project, Literacy Squared. The study, conducted by Butvilofsky et al. (2021), uses qualitative methods to examine elementary EB student writing to better understand how EBs' writing is assessed using a common reading instrument, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS). The participants of the study attend a district were 83% of children are of Latino descent, half of which are identified as EB. In the school-level program, EB students in the study participated in bilingual learning activities across all modalities of language, including metacognitive analysis of cross-language features. 29 EB student writing samples were analyzed in the study. A holistic lens was employed to assess the participants' writing product. The authors examine the characteristics of early writing in EB children, including how their written product is assessed, via standardized instruments such as DIBELS. Butvilofsky et al. defines the DIBELS as an instrument that uses a deficit perspective to measure student reading progress.

The study highlights the importance of using strength-based writing assessments for EB students in order to promote a strength-based view of all of the knowledge and skills EB students

possess. Butvilofsky et al. maintains that in order to support foundational writing success for EB, teachers must ensure that students have access to "complex and interesting texts [and] greater opportunities to engage in comprehension activities" (p. 67). Furthermore, the authors of the study caution against relying on standardized reading assessments, such as the DIBELS, alone to determine how EB students are developing fundamental literacy skills such as reading and writing due to the complex interplay between languages within their emerging linguistic repertoire.

This study sheds light on ways in which elementary general education teachers can assess and support foundational writing skills for EB students by developing learning activities which reinforce meaning-making and comprehension by using challenging texts and strength-based writing activities and assessments. This approach has the potential to shift attitudes and perceptions of EB students' writing (which most often contains elements and features of two languages) to an assets based-view, valuing their emerging literacy practices as they make meaning of multiple languages (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Butvilofsky et al., 2021; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019).

Foundational Reading and Oracy skills

A study by Vaughn et al. (2006), analyzes the effectiveness of English language interventions for EB students receiving primary language support in Spanish. The findings of the study underline the importance of addressing IDs associated with EB students' development of oral language and reading skills to improve academic outcomes. The study delivered a reading intervention program for EB students in Spanish and English to determine the effect the intervention would make on foundational literacy skills development in each language. The 216 students were selected from 14 different classrooms within four different schools across two

different districts in Texas, a border district and a large urban district. Students of the study were enrolled in kindergarten and first grade and were identified as disadvantaged in beginning reading skills in first grade. At the class level 48% to 99% of the students had a home language of Spanish. The data for the study was collected in stages over the one year period via multiple assessments in both Spanish and English. The rationale for testing in both languages was intended to control for the lack of access that many students had to text in English. Another measure taken to control for individual learner differences was the existence of a control group who did not receive the specific intervention developed for the study.

Vaughn et al. present a detailed analysis of how EB students acquire and progress through foundational literacy. This study is especially valuable because it illuminates, through student work product across domains of language, EB students' unique ability to transfer knowledge of one language to conceptualize that of another, helping students acquire conventional literacy skills over time. Oral language and reading outcomes indicate that EB students made appreciable gains in the areas of reading comprehension and phonological awareness. The gains in phonological awareness are significant because of the link between phonological awareness and reading comprehension, since this is "the ultimate goal of reading instruction" (p. 173). Implications for instructional decisions to benefit EB students of elementary general education teachers include the need to implement interventions centered on improving foundational skills such as letter-sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, and "decodable text practice" (p. 177) to improve students' comprehension and oracy. In addition, using a retell strategy to engage students in listening activities and class discussions about a text support oracy, receptive language, and comprehension. Finally, interventions and assessments should be provided in students' home languages whenever possible so that unnecessary

interventions can be avoided. This study is relevant to improving academic outcomes for EB

students in elementary general education settings because it identifies EB learner differences that

can be addressed to support foundational literacy skills in the areas of oracy and reading

comprehension.

An additional study dedicated to understanding EB learner differences within the

foundational literacy skills related to oracy was conducted by Yesil-Dagli (2011). Participants in

the study were first grade EB children, 82% of which were of Latino descent, from 291 schools

in Florida, totaling 2,481 participants in all. Nonetheless, the home languages of students were

unknown in this study. Students were assessed using multiple standardized tests at the onset of

the study, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Letter Naming Fluency test,

DIBELS, and the Initial Sound Fluency Test. After analyzing the baseline data the study then

used multilevel quadratic growth models to assess students' reading fluency at the end of first

grade to examine the relationship between the successful acquisition of foundational literacy

skills and subsequent oral reading fluency. In other words, the study seeks to understand how

foundational literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and

vocabulary impact reading fluency.

The study found that EB students differed from their monolingual English-speaking peers

in some interesting ways. For example, although letter naming is the strongest predictor of

subsequent oral reading fluency for all students, vocabulary is the second best predictor for EB

students whereas phonemic awareness is the second strongest predictor for monolingual students.

Furthermore, EB learner differences related to demographics played a role in the language

progression of the participants.

This study offers important implications for elementary classroom teachers of EB students. First, this study underscores the importance of vocabulary development for EB students. Second, the study reveals that, aside from letter naming skills, phonemic awareness is the second strongest predictor of oral reading fluency for EB students. In addition, this study offers insight into effective strategies for addressing these foundational literacy skills. The authors recommend "[...] explicit and systematic code-focused instruction" (p. 26) and instruction dedicated to building vocabulary skills that may not be addressed within the curriculum for EB students.

Vocabulary and Conventional Reading Success

Oral reading fluency and comprehension are strongly related to vocabulary acquisition (Yesil-Dagli, 2011). To that end, the next two studies focus on issues relevant to vocabulary acquisition for EB students. The first, a qualitative study by Erdemir and Brutt-Griffler (2022), explores peer interactions that support English vocabulary development for elementary-aged EB students, an area that is historically under researched. The study uses a discourse analytic approach to document the oral vocabulary gains an EB preschooler over one year. The ways in which the student acquired the vocabulary are documented and analyzed via videotaped classroom interactions. The study uses a sociocultural lens to inform the research approach, seeking to identify factors that encouraged or inhibited vocabulary acquisition during peer interactions, including socio-pragmatic and discursive skills. Furthermore, the authors of the study acknowledge the impact that peer relationships have on identity formation and creating context for language (Washington-Nortey, 2020). Although students that are motivated by social interaction can benefit from incidental vocabulary acquisition from peers, students who suffer from social anxiety or pragmatic speech issues may need scaffolding to appreciate the benefits of

peer language support. Within the study, two beneficial interaction patterns are evident: "repetition/imitation [and] commenting/expanding" (p. 847). In addition, the class of vocabulary terms that the subject was able to acquire through peer interaction was dependent upon the type of activity they were engaged in, such as seated activities – nouns acquired, free play activities – verbs. Vocabulary acquisition and usage was further supported via thematic units of study and "theme-related materials/artifacts" (p. 851). Overall, the subject was able to acquire 106 vocabulary words over the course of the study. The authors conclude that peer interactions are an important factor in the enrichment of students' vocabularies in addition to the improvement of "their discursive competence and socio-pragmatic skills" (p. 860).

Implications for elementary teachers of EB students include the need to create a contextualized, language-rich environment in which EB students can build their vocabularies and their social skills through scaffolded peer interaction. EB reading success can be predicted by early vocabulary skills, therefore, dedicating time to supporting meaningful peer interactions can have a positive impact on reading and oracy skills over time.

Another study that examines the effect that EB students' expressive and receptive vocabulary development has on the acquisition of was conducted by Monsrud et al. (2022). The A cross-sectional study follows 542 EB students with six different home languages in Norway, using instruments in both the societal and home language. Some interesting findings are present in the study, including but not limited to: (1) expressive vocabulary is more difficult for students to acquire but it is easier to assess; (2) conceptual (semantic) vocabulary is easily transferred from one language to another; (3) a one size fits all approach is detrimental to EB students as they acquire vocabulary; (4) conceptual vocabulary was "distributed across two languages" (p. 44).

The authors also present implications for teacher preparation programs and professional development for teachers who work with elementary EB students. Monsrud et al. asserts that teachers who work with EB students should attempt to involve students in rigorous content area instruction that integrates purposeful and contextualized language goals to maximize students' ability to interact with content area vocabulary. Furthermore, teachers should not rely on single-language assessments as the study demonstrates that assessment in the home language has the potential to identify conceptual vocabulary across languages. This assessment approach will foster an assets-based view of EB students' vocabulary knowledge in addition to identifying areas in need of remediation.

Synthesis, Discussion, and Conclusion

The body of research presented in this literature review seeks to define ways in which elementary general education teachers can support EB students in foundational literacy skills by using a FoI framework and identified learner differences among emergent biliteracy. Due to the qualitative nature of this field of study, many of the studies have smaller pools of participants. Nonetheless, each study presents important insights into the language progressions of EB students and the sociolinguistic and developmental features they possess. Elementary general education teachers have the potential to mobilize strategies which address the distinct differences that EB students present during the critical period of emergent biliteracy. The next chapter of this capstone presents a PD to introduce the learner differences associated with elementary EB students and foundational literacy skills development. If elementary general education teachers have access to quality PD on strategies to address these learner differences and the often overlooked FoK that are central to identity formation and meaning-making, they can assist in mitigating the academic and economic challenges that EB students face.

The studies analyzed in this literature review underscore the importance of harnessing students FoI when preparing curriculum for foundational literacy skills (Miller Marsh et al., 2022; Reyes, 2006; van der Pluijm et al., 2022). There are many practical ways to engage students in foundational literacy tasks which value and draw upon their FoI, such as self-portraits and engaging students and their families in the creation of curricular activities (Miller Marsh et al., 2022). The study by Reyes (2006) found that student interest-based literacy activities, like opinion writing journals and retellings, are also effective strategies for EB students, prioritizing meaning making and the exploration of self. While each study in the section dedicated to FoI emphasized the importance of the HLE and parents' FoK, the study by van der Pluijm et al. (2022) provides a systematic and reciprocal approach to building relationships with families to supplement literacy activities in students' home languages and English. Each study offers a different perspective on the importance of and the leveraging of students' FoI through foundational literacy skills activities.

Additional studies within the review explore EB learner differences and how they relate to the acquisition of foundational literacy. From a holistic perspective, all foundational literacy skills are interconnected, making a balanced approach to early language skills instruction developmentally appropriate (Butvilofsky et al., 2021; Soltero-González & Butvilofsky, 2020). Nonetheless, learner differences among EB students require general education classroom teachers to prioritize specific interventions to support EB students. Significant findings from the studies related to EB learner differences highlight the importance of peer support, contextualized vocabulary activities, and narrative writing tasks for EB students (Butvilofsky et al., 2021; Monsrud et al., 2022; Soltero-González & Butvilofsky, 2020; Vaughn et al., 2006; Yesil-Dagli, 2011). Furthermore, the implementation of vocabulary instruction should be integrated with

content area learning. Teachers must also assess students' conceptual vocabulary across

languages whenever possible to avoid unnecessary interventions (Monsrud et al., 2022).

In sum, this literature review illuminates ways that FoK and FoI frameworks can be

utilized to create relatable and relevant contexts for EBs within foundational literacy skills

curriculum. In addition, the literature identifies ways that EB learners differ from their

monolingual English-speaking peers. General education teachers should draw upon this research

to inform their teaching practices of foundational literacy skills so that they can better support

EB students within their classes. The next chapter presents a PD product designed for elementary

general education teachers to increase participants' knowledge of the FoK and FoI frameworks

and provide recommendations for supplementing foundational literacy skills development for EB

students.

Chapter 3

Purpose of the PD Product

The intended outcome of the professional development (PD) product presented in this

chapter is to mitigate the problem of the achievement gap and subsequent lower graduation rate

that EB students experience by providing elementary general education teachers access to

research-based ways to support EB students' foundational literacy development. The PD

activities focus on ways general education teachers can leverage students FoI and FoK to

develop culturally responsive and meaningful learning activities for foundational literacy skills

development. In addition, participants will be presented with ways to address specific learner

differences that EB students may face and use that knowledge to create supplemental

foundational literacy skills instruction which are beneficial to students' academic success.

Research on best practices for addressing foundational literacy skills development in EB students

maintains that elementary general education teachers must leverage EB students' FoI and address

learning differences to promote academic success (Escamilla, 2009; Miller Marsh et al., 2022;

Monsrud, 2022; Morita-Mullaney, 2021; Noguerón-Liu, 2020; Reyes, 2006; Ríos & Castillón,

2018; Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsky, 2020; van der Pluijm et al., 2022).

Overview of the PD

The PD product consists of two sessions. The audience for the PD is elementary general

education teachers. The PD occurs during the summer months. The first session is an

asynchronous self-paced module for teachers to learn about the FoI and FoK frameworks and the

importance of identity development, including culturally responsive practices, when supporting

EB students' foundational literacy skills. In addition, participants will gain knowledge of EB

learner differences related to foundational literacy skills acquisition. As a culminating activity,

participants engage in a cooperative learning workshop to modify and supplement an existing

lesson to meet the needs of EB students. The PD activities supplement elementary education

teachers' knowledge of the specific challenges and learning differences among EB students,

improving their ability to create equitable foundational literacy skills instruction for EBs. All

handouts and tools for the PD product described in this chapter are labeled as Figures and can be

found in the Appendix.

Session One

The first session will be delivered via a pre-recorded seminar. Participants will access

course materials via a cloud-sharing website. Participants will be given a Preparedness Checklist

(Figure 1) to help them stay on track as they complete the session. Research findings indicate

that many teachers lack the cultural competency to support EB students (Escamilla, 2009; Miller

Marsh et al., 2022; Morita-Mullaney, 2021; Ríos & Castillón, 2018). To mitigate this issue,

participants will complete readings on the FoI framework to increase their knowledge of current

research related to supporting linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Participants will

complete Guided Reading Questions (Figure 2 & 4) and Reflection Prompts (Figure 3 & 5) in

order to synthesize and connect new learning to existing teaching practices. Miller-Marsh et al.

(2022) and Morita-Mullaney (2021) state that teachers must reflect critically on their teaching

practices to identify opportunities to better integrate EB students' FoI into the curriculum.

Finally, participants will use the Lesson Selection Guidelines planning sheet (Figure 6) to choose

an existing lesson featuring a culturally responsive text. The lesson/text will be used for

collaborative learning activities during Session Two.

Many researchers have found that teachers of EBs must use literature to provide context

and meaning making opportunities within foundational literacy skills curriculum to promote

academic success (Almaguer, 2018; Araujo, 2002; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). Session One learning

activities are designed to present knowledge on the FoI and FoK frameworks and EB learner

differences related to the acquisition of foundational literacy skills. In addition, the readings and

related response activities will facilitate participants' integration of new learning, thus creating a

context for collaborative learning activities during Session Two. Learning activities encourage

participants to reflect on their current teaching practices related to integrating EB students' FoK

and FoI into the curriculum. In addition, the activities increase participants' knowledge of EB

learner differences, equipping teachers with strategies to better support EB students in

foundational literacy skills development. These activities help elementary general education

teachers implement new, research-based ways to support EBs in foundational literacy skills

development, thus improving EB learner outcomes.

Session Two

During Session Two of the PD, participants begin by interacting with a presentation of

the problem identified within the capstone and findings from the literature review of Chapter

Two. The initial series of slides provide data on the number of EBs in U.S. schools, including the

four most common home languages of EBs to provide context to address the overarching

question. Next, participants will complete a virtual poll using Menti.com (see sample of poll in

Figure 7). This poll is used to assess participants' experiences related to supporting EB students

of different home languages. Following the poll, data on linguistic difference will be presented in

order for teachers to reflect on the difficulty that EB students of various home languages face in

acquiring foundational literacy skills. Research states that teachers of EBs must understand

language differences in order to provide appropriate support for foundational literacy skills

development (Cain, 2018; Gottardo, 2021). Participants will then complete a Reflection and

Partner Share Activity (Figure 8) to examine their teaching experiences working with EBs and subsequent learning outcomes. This activity helps teachers identify existing opportunities within their foundational skills development curriculum to better meet the needs of EB learners. Furthermore, the reflection and partner share activity integrate participants prior knowledge and opportunities to integrate new learning.

The next series of slides presents data on the FoK and FoI frameworks and how they are related to foundational literacy skills development for EB learners. Participants will interact with a Funds of Knowledge Toolkit from the Washing State Department of Education (2022). Research states that teachers may hold deficit perspectives of the culturally and linguistically diverse home literacy practices of EBs (Butvilofsky et al., 2020; Escamilla, 2009; Morita-Mullaney, 2021; Yuan, 2017). The toolkit provides actionable ways teachers can identify, gather, and integrate students' FoK into their curriculum. Next, participants will compare and contrast elements of the FoK and FoI frameworks to identify ways to integrate EB students' diverse identities into foundational literacy instruction. In addition, participants will examine their own FoI via a collaborative Funds of Identity Sticky-Note Share Activity (Figure 9). Research on EB learner identity formation asserts that students must be able to see themselves represented within the curriculum to facilitate motivation and meaning-making (Cain, 2017; Miller Marsh et al., 2022). These activities expand teachers' understanding of FoK and FoI frameworks and how they can be utilized to support EB students' foundational literacy skills development. Participants will then take a 30-45 minute lunch break.

Upon returning from the lunch break, participants will interact with a series of slides that address specific EB learner differences related to foundational literacy skills. Participants will review a Components of Foundational Literacy Skills Matrix (Figure 10) from Student

Achievement Partners (2022) that defines each skill in detail. Participants will then break into small groups of two to three. Each group will complete a brainstorming activity to examine their existing knowledge of EB learner differences and how they affect foundational literacy skills development. Group responses from the brainstorm are shared to the whole group and discussed. Next, participants will receive information from the research presented in Chapter 2 related to specific EB learner differences. This data will increase participants' awareness of specific strengths and challenges that EB students face when acquiring foundational literacy skills.

As a culminating activity, participants will engage in a collaborative lesson workshop activity. Participants will be presented with a description of the workshop goals and guidelines. The goals of the workshop are to identify ways teachers can create entry points within foundational literacy skills curriculum to better meet the needs of EB students. The guidelines are laid out in detail in the Collaborative Learning Activity Planning Sheet (Figure 11); all participants will receive a copy. The presenter also gives participants copies of: The Lesson Toolkit (Figure 12), and Lesson Rubric (Figure 13). Each group will choose one participant-generated lesson to assess and select for the workshop. Next, participants will identify potential challenges the lesson or text may present for an EB student, such as cultural bias and/or language related bias, using the Lesson Toolkit and Lesson Rubric. Finally, participants will modify the lesson and develop additional activities to specifically address FoI considerations and learner differences, including how these factors impact foundational literacy skills development for EB students.

To end the PD session, participants will complete two closure activities. The first is an action plan. Participants will use the Action Plan Template (Figure 14) to identify changes they can make in their current teaching practices related to integrating EB students' FoK and FoI into

the curriculum and addressing EB learner differences in foundational literacy skills instruction. This activity helps teachers commit to actionable steps they can take right away to better meet the needs of their EB students.

WIDA (2014) maintains that high-quality PD for teachers of EB students, "guides educators in supporting ELLs not by teaching them instructional strategies (though these can be useful) but primarily by increasing their awareness of why ELLs perform the way they do" (p. 2). The PD product in this capstone provides research-based data that helps teachers integrate knowledge on how to best support EB learners. Teachers will leave with a lesson that is more suited to the needs of EBs which they can use right away in their classrooms. In addition, participants will plan next steps to addressing curriculum for EBs. Furthermore, all participants will receive a compendium of additional resources that can be used to continue their professional development related to working with literacy skills development of elementary aged EB students. To end the workshop, participants will provide feedback to the presenter via a Course Survey (Figure 15).

Conclusion

In sum, the PD product provides elementary general education teachers with research-based frameworks and methods that can be applied to their current teaching practice to improve academic outcomes for EB students. Many teacher preparation programs do not provide sufficient learning opportunities for teachers to understand their culturally and linguistically diverse students (Escamilla, 2009; Miller Marsh et al., 2022; Morita-Mullaney, 2021; Ríos & Castillón, 2018). The research, tools, and collaborative learning activities in this PD product allow teachers to engage activities which promote critical reflection and expand participants' understanding of how to create lessons which leverage EB students' FoK and FoI to support

foundational literacy skills development. In addition, the PD will result in the creation of an

action plan to address modifications of the curriculum to meet the needs of EBs in the areas of

literacy skills development. Furthermore, the action plan will require participants to define steps

to improve parent partnerships to foster reciprocity. The information, tools, and learning

activities presented in the PD are designed to mitigate the problem of the achievement gap and

subsequent lower graduation rate, allowing EB students to experience increased academic

success by receiving research-based foundational literacy skills support. In addition, chapter four

of this capstone will provide a summation of relevant issues related to foundational literacy skills

development for EBs, implications for students and teachers as well as recommendations.

Chapter 4

The goal of this capstone is to identify ways elementary general education teachers can approach foundational literacy skills to meet the distinct needs of EB students to improve academic outcomes, thus promote higher graduation rates for these students. EB students experience lower graduation rates, 67%, than their non-EB peers, 84% (Paige et al., 2018; Reyes, 2006; USDOE, 2022a). Furthermore, the lack of a high-school diploma has a negative socio-economic effect on EBs, limiting their ability to obtain gainful employment following their schooling experience (USDOE, 2022a). Foundational literacy skills instruction in elementary school lay the groundwork for reading success, a skill that is predictive of positive academic outcomes in the U.S. Therefore, addressing foundational literacy skills instruction for EB students has the potential to improve academic outcomes for EB students. Although elementary general education teachers may not be able to support students in their home language development, this capstone sought to identify methods and strategies that teachers can use to better understand EB learner differences and the varied literacy practices of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Conclusions

In order to gain an understanding of the factors related to the reading achievement gap and lower graduation rates experienced by emergent bilingual students, I completed a review and synthesis of studies and literature dedicated to addressing foundational literacy skills for EB students. The overarching question for the research was: how can elementary general education teachers support EB students in acquiring foundational literacy skills? Themes were identified within the literature that were related to the research question. Two distinct themes emerged which offer answers to why EB students continue to experience an achievement gap and lower

graduation rates: (1) there is a lack of research dedicated to identifying effective strategies for supporting foundational literacy skills for EB students; (2) many teachers are underprepared to support linguistically and culturally diverse students; (3) EB students are underrepresented in the Euro-centric, English-dominant curriculum of U.S. schools (Escamilla, 2009; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Miller-Marsh et al., 2022). The implications of these findings are discussed in the following subsections.

Implications for EB Students

Research on foundational literacy skills instruction for EB elementary aged students supports the use of a FoK and FoI frameworks (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Moll et al., 1992). When teachers use these frameworks to leverage EB students' cultural and linguistic knowledge, students are able to see themselves represented within the curriculum. Representation within the curriculum allows EB students to access and interact with content within a context that is meaningful and relevant to their unique experiences (Miller-Marsh et al., 2022; Morita Mullaney et al., 2021; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). In addition, research states that teachers of EB students need to develop systems to promote and sustain intentional, reciprocal relationships between teachers and students' families to effectively support foundational literacy skills development (Morita-Mullaney et al., 2019; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). Furthermore, research maintains that EB students benefit from partnerships between teachers and EB students' families that provide opportunities are given the opportunity to partner with teachers to develop curriculum and engage in classroom learning activities.

Implications for Elementary General Education Teachers

Elementary general education teachers must be able to meet the needs of EB students in order to improve academic outcomes, especially important in the area of foundational literacy

skills development. The acquisition of strong foundational literacy skills is correlated with

academic success, including graduating on time (USDOE, 2022a). Therefore, strong

foundational literacy skills can set EB students up for academic success and future employment

opportunities (USDOE, 2022b).

Elementary general education teachers can benefit from the concepts and knowledge

presented in this capstone by reflecting on their current practice and integrating new knowledge

via the PD product presented in Chapter 3. Research on teacher attitudes towards EB students

maintains that teacher candidates and professional teachers need additional learning

opportunities in order to adopt an assets-based perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse

students (Esteban-Guitart, & Moll, 2014; Miller-Marsh et al., 2022; Yuan, 2017). When teachers

apply a FoK and FoI framework to develop curriculum for foundational literacy skills

development, EB students are more likely to connect to learning activities (Esteban-Guitart, &

Moll, 2014; Miller-Marsh et al., 2022). The PD provided in this capstone delivers explicit

instruction on the elements of the FoK and FoI frameworks in order to supplement teachers'

understanding and knowledge of how to create entry points within the foundational literacy skills

curriculum for EB students.

Teachers can also benefit from an increased understanding of the distinct learner

differences that EB students present when acquiring foundational literacy skills. Specific

foundational literacy skills present a greater challenge for EB students, including phonological

awareness, comprehension, and vocabulary, which need to be addressed within the curriculum.

When teachers have knowledge of these challenges and are better prepared to proactively

address them, EB students will have an increased chance to achieve academic success.

Furthermore, elementary general education teachers should employ culturally responsive

frameworks to address these skills, thereby contextualizing foundational literacy in a way that honors and highlights all of the linguistic and cultural knowledge EB students possess. Teachers will benefit from an improved attitude toward normal bilingual learning behaviors and their students will have a greater opportunity to identify as successful in the area of foundational literacy.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the persistent achievement gap between EB students and their monolingual English-speaking peers, there is a lack of research dedicated to identifying ways to mitigate this issue (Butvilofsky et al., 2020; Escamilla, 2009). Therefore, data obtained from research featuring monolingual English-speaking study participants is often used to justify best practices for EB students (Escamilla, 2009; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). In order to mitigate the reading achievement gap, additional research must use data obtained from studies conducted with EB students.

Areas of focus should include foundational literacy skills development and alternative ways to assess bilingual students to normalize the biliterate behaviors of EB students (Butvilofsky et al., 2020; Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsky, 2018; Monsrud et al., 2019; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). This research would be valuable in addressing the achievement gap experienced by EB students because it would provide valid data on this group of students that could be used to inform instructional decisions and teacher preparation programs. In addition, teaching candidates need additional coursework and professional development dedicated to supporting EB students in order to gain the knowledge necessary to adopt an assets-based perspective of the cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge that EB students bring to the classroom (Almaguer, 2018; Araujo, 2002; Cain, 2017).

Final Thoughts

Foundational literacy skills set students up for success from the very first days of formal schooling. These skills are highly correlated with academic success and have the potential to improve academic and economic outcomes for EBs. EB students deserve to see themselves represented in the curriculum and literacy activities of the general education classroom. Research maintains that the Euro-centric, English dominated curriculum of U.S. schools presents a barrier to learning for EB students (Escamilla, 2009; Miller-Marsh et al., 2022). In addition, many teachers lack the cultural competence required to support EB students in their classrooms (Escamilla, 2009; Miller Marsh et al., 2022; Morita-Mullaney, 2021; Ríos & Castillón, 2018).

Vespa et al. (2020) estimate that by 2030, immigration will become the primary source of population growth in the U.S. This data identifies a clear need for adequate programs and skilled teachers to support school-aged EBs, as more diverse individuals and groups continue to immigrate to the U.S. When considering the specific cohorts of EBs, the need is greatest for students in Kindergarten through grade three (McFarland et al., 2019). EB students possess a wealth of cultural and linguistic knowledge that is often overlooked by teachers (Escamilla, 2009; Miller-Marsh et al., 2022). This capstone addresses and mitigates the reading achievement gap between EB students and their monolingual English-speaking peers via a PD product that provides participants with research-based data on EB learner differences and ways to validate and integrate students' FoK and FoI into the curriculum.

Teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities benefit from a focus on helping teachers and teacher candidates develop cultural competence and a deeper understanding of the unique challenges EB students face in acquiring foundational literacy skills. In addition, future research need to include EB students as research participants in the areas of

foundational literacy skills development. This focus allows the body of research to identify and

mitigate barriers to success for EB students in order to close the reading achievement gap, thus

improving academic and economic outcomes for EB students. Given the urgent need to support

children with economic and language challenges, all teachers need the tools to address this

critical achievement gap.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Preparedness Checklist, Session One

Directions

Use the checklist below to ensure you have completed all learning activities for session

one. Please bring copies of completed activities to session two.

❑ Reading one complete.

❑ Guided reading one questions and reflections complete.

❑ Reading two complete.

❑ Guided reading two questions and reflections complete.

❑ Lesson selection complete.

❑ All lesson materials (including a lesson plan, a text, and any student handouts) are in

hardcopy and ready to bring to session two.

❑ Copies of guided reading questions and reflections are in hardcopy and ready to bring to

session two.

Figure 2

Guided Reading Questions, Reading One

Directions

Use the following questions and reflection prompt to respond to reading one. Please save

a copy of your responses to bring to session two. Record your answer on the line.

1. _____ Phonemic awareness is:

    A. a strong predictor of future reading success.
    B. a sub skill of phonological awareness.
    C. a foundational reading skill.
    D. all of the above.

2. _____ Which statement below is false?

    A. There is sufficient research to determine best practices for EB students.
    B. Literacy in the native language is an advantage to EBs.
    C. It is helpful to use cognate words in the home language as synonyms when teaching vocabulary.
    D. Teachers may need to provide additional work on English phonemes that are not present in the students' home language.

3. _____ Which of the following statements about phonemic awareness skills for emergent bilingual students is false?

    A. Before explicit instruction children need experiences with fun and appealing songs, poems, read-alouds to allow them to hear and reproduce sound patterns.
    B. Even though phonological awareness has developed in any language, students will still need extra instruction to develop this skill in English.
    C. Teachers need to become familiar with which sounds of English will need practice, depending on the background of their students.
    D. Phonemic awareness is difficult for EBs because they are not able to distinguish sounds that differ from their native language.

Figure 2 (con't)

4. _____ Systemic phonics instruction is needed for EBs because...

      A. it helps with reading comprehension.
      B. it helps students decode words.
      C. it allows students extra practice to learn and hear sounds in English is
      necessary.
      D. all of the above

5. _____ Reading comprehension in English is more difficult for EBs. Therefore, which of
      the following is not a consideration for teachers?

      A. Prior reading experience may have been disrupted, therefore assuming
      students have prior knowledge may be difficult.
      B. EBs lack many of the basic words that English speakers know, so teaching the
      vocabulary words that are suggested in the reading materials is sufficient.
      C. Students need support to understand a passage for assessment so they can show
      what they have understood in ways not dependent on oral skills.
      D. Include planning that includes interactive activities around reading and
      interpreting texts.

Answers: D, A, B, D, A

Figure 3

Reflection Prompts: Reading One

- Share a takeaway from the reading.

[   ]
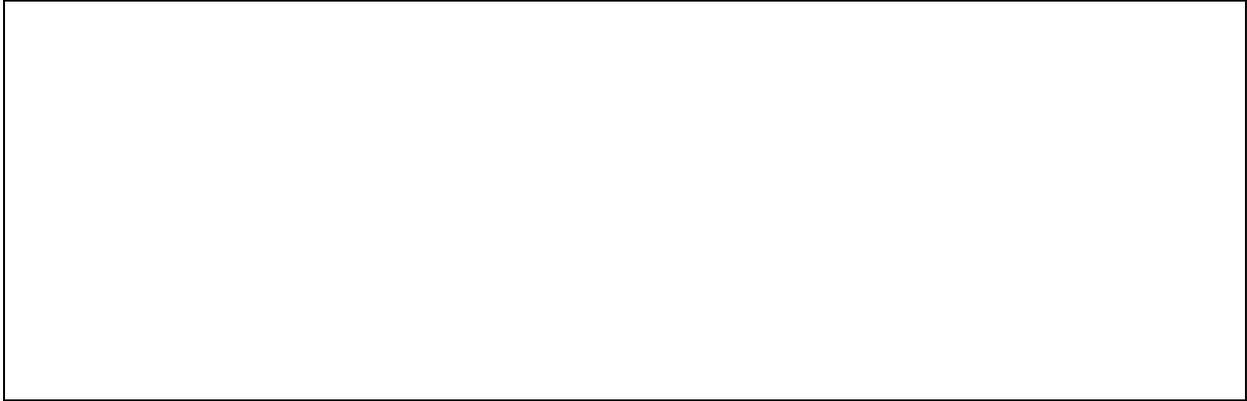
- How could you use this new knowledge to improve your teaching practice?

[   ]

Figure 4

Guided Reading Questions, Reading Two

Directions

Use the following questions and reflection prompt to respond to reading one. Please save a copy of your responses to bring to session two. Record your answer on the line.

In the reading, the author asserts: "Research indicates that cultural context influences comprehension, and that this phenomenon occurs regardless of an individual's background" (Robertson, 2022, n.p.).

1. _____ Based on this statement, which of the following is not an implication of this idea for teachers who must help a emergent bilingual (EB) students retain valuable information about a variety of subjects?

> A. Link concepts to students' personal, cultural, or academic experience
> B. Choose strategies that match your students' language and literacy levels.
> C. It's important to think of background knowledge in terms of "gaps" or "deficits," and to address these.
> D. Look for ways to connect the content to things that are familiar and students' experiences.

2. _____ Which of these is not advisable when looking for ways to tap into your students' background knowledge if it's very different from your own?

> A. Find ways for EB students to contribute their own cultural experience, funds of knowledge, talents, and interests in the classroom.
> B. Ask EB students to interview their family members in order to learn more about their memories and experience.
> C. Position EB students as experts.
> D. Be patient with your EB students, and look for ways to increase their confidence in the classroom as you get to know each other.

Figure 4 (con't)

3. _____ Which of these is not a helpful reminder when looking beyond a textbook?
   A. Invite students to share artwork and traditions from their own cultures and look for ways to connect what they share with the curriculum.
   B. Be careful not to allow students to hide their indigenous identity.
   C. Using concrete objects, often called "realia," is a great way to build background knowledge and tap into students' existing background knowledge.
   D. It is critical for teachers to be sensitive to what students have been through and not to ask a lot of direct questions about personal stories, especially in front of others; training in trauma-informed instruction is essential in order to lead conversations about students' experiences safely.

4. _____ It's important not to make assumptions about experiences EB students may, or may not, have had. Therefore, which is an appropriate way to offer support?
   A. Connecting with family liaison personnel
   B. Looking for ways to connect similar stories across cultures.
   C. Using books, stories, and poems where students can see themselves, also called "mirror books," is a powerful way to tap into their experiences.
   D. all of the above

5. _____ Which of the following is the key reason to build a "culturally relevant" classroom?
   A. It aids student comprehension.
   B. It helps information to be more accessible.
   C. Background knowledge is a foundation for all learning.
   D. Students feel more connected to the class.

Answers: C, B, B, D, A

Figure 5

Reflection Prompts: Reading Two

- Share a takeaway from the reading.

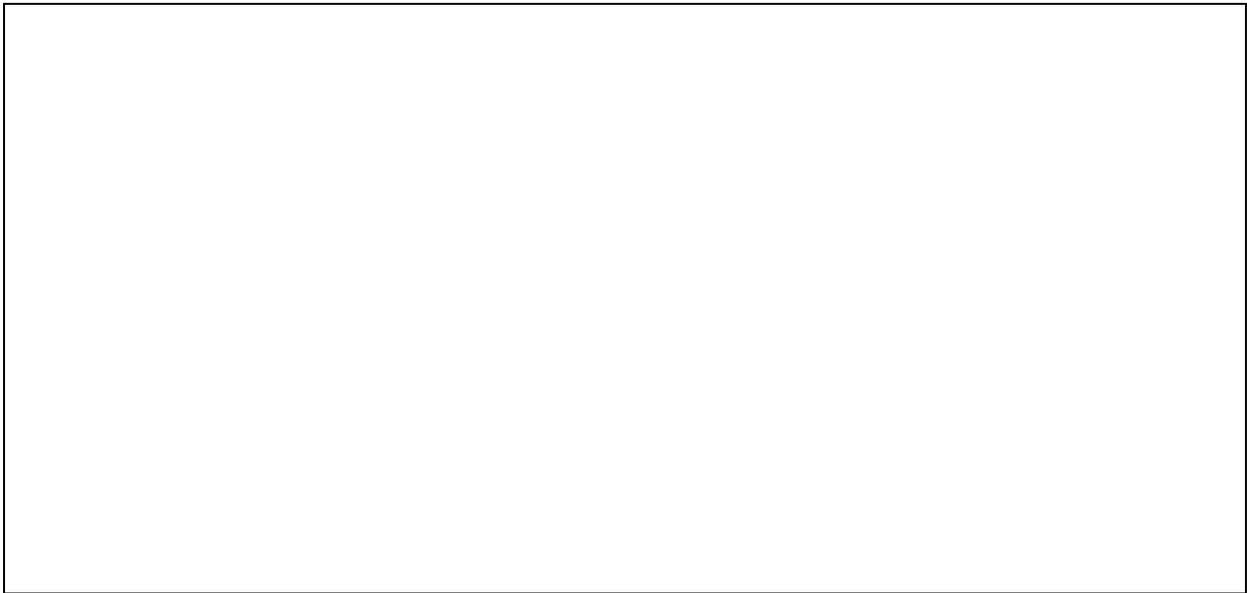- How could you use this new knowledge to improve your teaching practice?

Figure 6

Lesson Selection Guidelines

Directions

Choose a preexisting lesson to bring to session two. You will work with other workshop participants to assess, modify, and supplement this lesson to better meet the needs of EB learners. The lesson must meet all of the requirements below.

Lesson Requirements

1. The lesson must be in written form, in hard copy.

2. The lesson must contain learning objectives related foundational literacy skills development.

   - Phonological awareness

   - Phonics and word recognition

   - Print concepts

   - Fluency

3. The lesson must feature a text that can be viewed/assessed during session two.

   - Picture book

   - Written text

   - Multimedia format

4. All materials related to the lesson must be accessible during session two.

   - Hard copies of student handouts

   - Manipulatives

   - Student reference materials

Figure 7

Example of Menti Poll Activity

Please note: codes on Menti.com only remain active for seven days.

Figure 8

Reflection and Partner Share Activity

Directions

First, use the prompts below to independently reflect on your experiences working with emergent bilinguals. Next, you will share and discuss your responses with your group.

Reflect

1. How have you integrated EBs' Funds of Identity or home languages in the past?

2. What worked? What didn't?

Figure 9

Funds of Identity Sticky-Note Share Activity

Figure 10

Components of Foundational Skills

1. Print Concepts

2. Phonological Awareness

3. Phonics & Word Recognition

4. Fluency

(Student Achievement Partners, 2018a, p. 1)

Figure 11

Cooperative Learning Activity

Lesson Review Workshop

Directions

1. Choose one lesson from your group to assess.

2. Use the rubric to assess the lesson, each group member should independently score.

3. Share your assessment scores with one another.

4. Agree upon a final score for the lesson.

5. As a group, develop lesson modifications and supplemental activities better meet the needs of emergent bilingual (EB) students using the Lesson Toolkit.

6. Be prepared to share how you expect these changes to improve learning outcomes for EBs.

Lesson Expectations

Lessons for EB students should:

- Leverage EBs' Funds of Knowledge (FoK) by integrating aspects of students cultural and linguistic identities in the lesson (Moll et al., 1992).

- Leverage EBs' Funds of Identity (FoI) by providing opportunities for EBs to see themselves in the context of the lesson (Esteban-Guitart, & Moll, 2014).

- Address foundational literacy skills development needs specific to EBs.

Figure 12

Lesson Toolkit: Foundational Literacy Skills for Emergent Bilingual (EB) Students
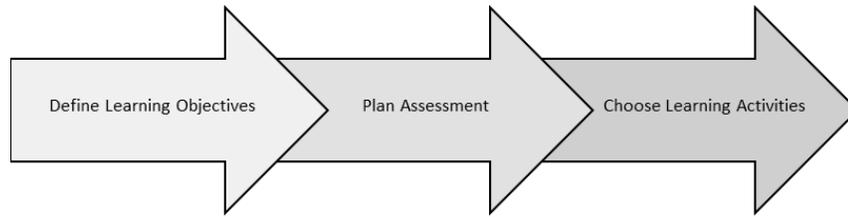

Image adapted from Model Teaching (2019).

Step 1: Define Learning Objectives

Signs of a well-developed learning objective for EBs	
1. The objective is clearly **linked to a state standard**.	
2. The objective describes an **observable** and measurable learning behavior. • Use a verb.	Students will <u>retell</u> a story.
3. The objective sets **parameters**. • How? • With what resources? • How do the expectations and/or resources create entry points for EB students to access the curriculum?	Students will retell a story • <u>orally</u> • <u>visually (drawing</u> • using <u>picture cards and sentence prompts</u>.
4. The objective **defines** success. • How will they show acquisition of skills/knowledge? • How do the expectations and/or resources create entry points for EB students to access the curriculum?	Students will retell a story orally by using pictures cards and sentence prompts. Students will <u>correctly sequence</u> the story with a <u>defined beginning, middle, and end</u> (BME). • Graphic organizer for BME. • Sort cards in order of: BME.

Figure 12 (con't)

Step 2: Plan Assessment

Ask yourself...

- How is the assessment linked to the learning objective?
- How can I provide valuable feedback to students and stakeholders?

Assessment Considerations for EBs	
1. Use a **holistic**, **assets-based** approach.	- Focus on meaning. - Use constructed response questions. - Get creative!
2. Plan **varied ways** students can show what they know.	- Formative assessments. - Performance-based assessments. - Portfolios artifacts.
3. How do the **expectations** and **test items** create entry points for EB students to show what they know?	Use a holistic approach to scoring. - Rubrics - Self-assessment - Allow retakes Use UDL principles to make tests accessible for all learners. See checklist by Rehabilitation Design & Disability Center (2009)
4. The assessment provides detailed, relevant **feedback**. - How well? - What defines success?	- Rubrics provide details on what is needed to reach learning targets. - Rubrics frame feedback positively. - Rubrics and scoring are presented in students' home languages.

Figure 12 (con't)

Step 3: Choose Learning Activities
Ask yourself...

- How can I address the specific learner differences of EB students?
- How will learning materials and activities leverage students' interests, background knowledge, and identity?

Addressing EB Learner Differences	
1. Home Language Support	• Consider **linguistic distance** and how a students' home language shapes their understanding of foundational literacy, especially oral language and orthography. • **Supplement classroom activities** with home language resources whenever possible – this can be as simple as e-books, library books, or picture cards for caregivers to use as they speak with their child (Vaughn et al., 2006).
2. Phonological Awareness	• Lots of **comprehensible input** (Vaughn et al., 2006). • Additional opportunities to isolate discrete sounds (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020). • Multiple language **modalities** (novelty and variety are key!). • "Systematic code focused instruction" (Yesli-Dagli, 2011). • Home language support (Vaughn et al., 2006).
3. Print Concepts	• How might students' **linguistic distance & home literacy** practice influence their concept of print - genres, structure, direction, etc.? • Early access to **writing activities** (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020).
4. Phonics & Word Recognition	• Additional activities to segment words into syllables (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020). • Vocabulary is the second greatest predictor of reading success for EB students (Yesli-Dagli, 2011). • Semantic vocabulary is easily transferred from home language (Erdemir & Brutt-Griffler, 2022).
5. Fluency	• **Peer support** activities (Erdemir & Brutt-Griffler, 2022). • **Multimodal** exposure for context (Erdemir & Brutt-Griffler, 2022). • Vocabulary again! • Retelling strategies are highly effective for fluency & comprehension (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020).
* Comprehension	• Retelling strategies are highly effective for fluency & comprehension (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020). • Phonological awareness is highly linked to comprehension (Soltero-Gonzalez & Butvilofsy, 2020).

Figure 12 (con't)

Integrating Funds of Knowledge & Identity	
6. What **cultural norms** are represented in the lesson resources?	**Laws**: illegal. **Folkways**: expectations of social interactions. **Mores**: immoral. **Taboo**: negative norm for social interactions. Consider both formal (laws & mores) and informal (folkways & taboos) cultural norms (Crossman, 2019).
7. What **cultural or ethnic groups** are represented in the lesson resources?	Can your students see people who look, believe, behave, or dress like them?
8. What **funds of knowledge** are represented in the lesson resources (Moll et al., 1992)?	**Examples:** • "Academic and personal background knowledge. • Accumulated life experiences. • Skills and knowledge used to navigate everyday social contexts. • World views structured by broader historically and politically influenced social forces." (Washington State Department of Education (2022, p. 1).
9. What **funds of identity** are represented in the lesson resources (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014)?	**Examples include, but are not limited to:** self-portraits, social interactions, texts, games, virtual spaces, and interests/hobbies - essentially, "the box of tools" (p. 74) an individual uses to define self (Miller Marsh et al., 2022).

Figure 13

Lesson Rubric

(1) Does not meet expectations (2) Approaching expectations (3) Meets expectations (4) Exceptional

	Lesson Traits	Score	Next Steps
Learning Objectives	❑ Linked to state standards. ❑ Observable and measurable. ❑ Expectations and/or resources create entry points for EBs. ❑ Defines success.	____ ____ ____ ____	
Assessment	❑ Holistic, assets-based approach. ❑ Varied opportunities to show knowledge & skills. ❑ Expectations and test items create entry points for EBs. ❑ Provision of relevant, detailed feedback.	____ ____ ____ ____	
Learning Activities	❑ Home language support. ❑ Addresses a defined EB learner difference. ❑ Provides entry points for EB students.	____ ____ ____	
Funds of Knowledge & Identity	❑ Integrates students' cultural and/or linguistic knowledge to create context. ❑ Integrates students' cultural and/or linguistic identity to create context.	____ ____	

Figure 14

Action Plan

Can you choose <u>one</u> area to focus on that you have the power to change?

Parent Partnerships *(FoK & FoI)*	Supplementing Phonemic Awareness	Promoting Oral Language	Assets-Based Approach

Why is this change important to you?

How do you think it will impact your students success?

Describe the first step/s required to make this change.

Figure 15

Course Survey

Directions

Please write your answer on the line to rate each question.

Scale

(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree

1. _____ I would recommend this course to a colleague.

2. _____ The course materials were easy to access.

3. _____ The presentation was easy to follow.

4. _____ The slides were easy to read.

5. _____ The audio was easy to understand.

6. _____ The course activities were well planned and facilitated learning.

7. Comments (optional):