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Classroom Strategies to Increase Kindergarten Readiness of Preschool ELL Students

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Classroom Strategies to Increase

Kindergarten Readiness of Preschool ELL Students

A Project Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of

Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

There are more preschool children in the United States who are English Language Learners than any other age group. This research examines the effects of providing modeling, visuals, and music strategies to English Language Learners in a preschool classroom to increase their literacy, language, and communication skills. The study's goal was to determine if the specific classroom strategies would improve the participants English language, literacy and communication skills to be kindergarten ready with their same age English speaking peers. The study used language surveys and an assessment to determine which students were English Language Learners, and if they needed extra support learning English. The strategies were used and observed during small group, circle time, and center time. Observations by the co-investigator as well as K-12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks and letter cards were used to determine the effectiveness of the study. According to the quantitative data, the effects of using interventions using visuals and modeling eight of the participants increase their level of speaking English and three participants increased their level of listening/understanding English. The data also shows the increase of letter and letter sound knowledge by one to four letters and letter sounds.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

General Issue

Language and literacy are intertwined even before children start to speak. By age five children have mastered the sounds of their native language (Woolfolk, 2016). If a child is raised in a family in which Spanish is the spoken language and the child attends an early childhood classroom in which English is spoken, he will be a second language learner, adding English to his home language of Spanish. Children who are learning a second language may take two to three years to pick up conversational skills in their non-native language. English Language Learners "(ELL)" are the fastest growing segment of the United States population, which increased nearly 125% from 1994-2004 (Woolfolk, 2016). Researchers project that by the year 2030 about 40% of pre-kindergarten through high school students will speak limited English (Woolfolk, 2016). This research proves that there needs to be more emphasis on children who are ELL's during their preschool years, so they can be ready for kindergarten with their English-speaking peers.

The foundation for reading is built in early childhood. The most important skills that help literacy emerge are skills related to understanding and codes (letters have names and sounds) and oral language (receptive and expressive language, understanding and telling stories, knowledge of syntax) (Woolfolk, 2016). As bilingual children learn to read, they must map different written forms onto different forms of oral language (Farran, Bingham, & Matthew, 2001). When children learn a new language, they experience cross linguistic transfer of skills, meaning skills from their first language transfer to the second language (Farran, Bingham, & Matthew, 2001).

Second language learners may become socially isolated, because of their inability to communicate using expressive/receptive language in the English language (NEMETH, 2016). Effective preschool teachers develop techniques to help ELL students begin to understand and use their new language (Farran, Bingham, & Matthew, 2001). Being that there are more ELLs that are preschool age, educators need to have the tools and strategies to help ELLs gain the literacy, language, and communication skills to be successful in kindergarten.

Purpose. As a preschool educator, teaching many children who are dual language, I needed to know what strategies worked best to teach English to ELLs. I needed to know the best way to have preschool ELLs catch up with and be kindergarten ready with their same age English speaking peers. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of providing modeling, visuals, and music in a preschool classroom with ELLs to increase their literacy, language, and communication skills.

 Participants and Setting

Research Participants. Participants in this study were selected from the population of preschool students, ages three to five years old at Head Start classrooms in West Fargo, ND. The population is multicultural, reflecting the diverse ethnic groups of Cass County such as Somali, Arabic, West African, Nepali and Caucasian. The population contained 9 preschool age students. All the participants were preschool age English language learners, who lived in single or dual parent families.

Selection Criteria. Students for the study were chosen based on the level of English proficiency that is developmentally appropriate. At the start of the year, the teacher administered a home language survey during initial family visit times. The home language survey told the

teacher what language the child spoke at home and what language the parents spoke to the child. The teacher also administered the Brigance Screener III tool based on child's age to assess the child's developmental domains. The results of the Brigance and the level of English proficiency determined which students needed the interventions used in the study.

Research Ethics

Informed Consent. Permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Minnesota State University – Moorhead by completing the IRB certification process. Permission was also obtained from South Eastern North Dakota Community Action Agency Head Start to perform this study. The Education Coordinator gave permission to complete this study. Participants were informed about the study and confidentiality was assured, using pseudonyms or any identifying information. The parents of the children were given permission forms to sign and had the choice to participate. See Appendix F and G. If there was a need for an interpreter to explain the study in its entirety there would be one. The IRB certificate is in Appendix A. The certificate of Protection of Human Research Participants is in Appendix B. The letter of permission from Head Start is in Appendix C.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Current Research

Recommendations. A Study funded by the U.S. Department of Education identified five recommendations for English Language Learners "(ELLs)": 1)use formative assessment of reading, 2) use small group intervention to focus instruction on the areas of need identified by the assessment, 3) target teaching essential vocabulary for the content in your curriculum as well as common words, phrases and expressions used in class, 4) directly teach academic English – develop students' abilities to read tests, write academic assignments and use formal language and argument, 5)make wide use of peer-assisted learning, particularly working in pairs to complete academic tasks (Woolfolk, 2016). These 5 strategies are broad, but can be specified/defined for individual students. These strategies are already interwoven in curricula around the globe. Breaking down these five recommendations into strategies used within a preschool classroom, such as modeling, use of visuals and music/movement, will help ELL students be ready for kindergarten.

Strategies. Instructional strategies are techniques teachers use to help students become independent, strategic learners. Strategies are what educators live and breathe. What works and what doesn't are the questions educators ask themselves daily.

Modeling. For ELLs to succeed in school, they need to have two types of language, conversational and academic (Brookover & Geoff, 2001). A strategy to use when teaching academic and conversational language is modeling. When modeling how to do something, have clear concise instructions. Modeling is especially important for ELLs learning

language and content simultaneously, these students are bombarded with information all day.

Helping them concentrate on what is important gives them a learning focus and helps them feel

successful (Gonzalez, 2017). Gonzalez (2017) talks about having a gradual release model, show

them, help them, and let them do it themselves (Gonzalez, 2017). During the "help them" stage,

teachers should think aloud about what is taking place and make anchor charts. Anchor charts

highlight strategies students can refer to later. When teachers create anchor charts with their

students the students are more likely to remember the information. The "help them" phase should

be done multiple times, and is done with partners or in groups, this helps students lean on one

another for support. During the "let them do it themselves phase," teachers do just that, let the

students work on things by themselves completing tasks and referring to the anchor charts for

guidance or the teacher if needed. While modeling, model what is expected, helping children

know what is expected. It can help them have a learning focus and helps them feel successful.

Breaking down steps is essential for ELL students to have concrete steps to go by. During this

process, educators should be there to facilitate, formatively assess and offer feedback.

       Visuals. Visuals are another strategy most teachers use. Visuals aid in

comprehension and promote recall (Gonzalez, 2017). When showing a student, a real-life object,

such as an orange, by touching it and making sense of the object according to the word, will

increase comprehension and storing and recalling the word when needed. Making use of visuals

such as word walls, picture walls, or labeled images or objects are an excellent means of helping

to improve student familiarity with those objects and, in the process, helping them make

connections (Campbell & Cuba, 2015). Creating anchor charts with students is another way to

use visuals, involving them in the process of making it will increase the likelihood for the

students to internalize the information. Word walls in many cases consist of the letters of the

alphabet and different words learned or pictures that start with the letters. Word walls help enhance the use of visuals (Gonzalez, 2017) . The way teachers use word walls and display them can transform a student's vocabulary, especially if there are words and pictures. Using visuals as a means of communication is an excellent way to give the student independence to communicate. This can be done by giving objects names or having pictures to stand for phrases or for needs to be met. Using visuals helps improve the student's familiarity with objects and helps them make connections. Visuals strengthen the student's motivation to participate and engage in learning activities. Examples of visuals are books in English and in their home language. The books could also be musical, such as Pete the Cat. Song-based literature is motivational and actively engages students in the reading process (Paquette & Reig, 2008). Being in a multicultural classroom with books of varying vocabulary and languages support the vocabulary/languages and brings about unity.

          Music. Music assists in developing a more language rich environment, which is essential for ELL students to succeed. Plato once said, ''Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything'' (Paquette & Reig, 2008). Music changes a classroom into a pleasant and positive learning environment, which helps children thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. Gardner (1993) noted that musical intelligence is the first intelligence to emerge in young learners. Many young children appear to be naturally inclined to hum or to sing a tune, so it is beneficial to build upon their musical interests and enhance their literacy development simultaneously (Paquette & Reig, 2008). A child's introduction to patterned text often occurs first in songs, chants, and rhymes which are repeated throughout childhood (Paquette & Reig, 2008). Hearing and repeating phrases are natural occurrences in many childhood songs. Music

also improves listening and oral language skill development, improve attention and memory, and enhances abstract thinking (Paquette & Reig, 2008). Songs can be used to teach a variety of language skills, such as vocabulary, rhythm, and intonation. Song picture books also support emergent literacy by building on familiarity and enjoyment, providing repetition, expanding vocabulary, teaching story structures, promoting critical thinking, and fostering creative expression (Paquette & Reig, 2008).

Statement of Hypothesis

Music, modeling and visuals have been proven to increase language skill development. Therefore, it is hypothesized that preschool ELLs will increase their literacy, language, and communication skills using modeling, visuals, and music/movement, to be kindergarten ready with their same age English speaking peers.

CHAPTER THREE

Data Collection

Research Question

As an early educator I needed to find better ways to enhance the English Language Learner "(ELL)" outcomes for being ready for kindergarten. After I reviewed the literature, I came up with two research questions:

1. **What are the effects on preschool English language learner's literacy skills when providing interventions of modeling, visuals, and music in the preschool classroom?**

2. **What are the effects on preschool English language learner's language and communication skills when providing interventions of modeling, visuals, and music in the preschool classroom?**

Methodology

Timeline and frequency. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of providing modeling, visuals, and music in a preschool classroom with English language learners to increase their literacy, language, and communication skills. The timeline was three weeks, due to waiting for the permission forms to be sent back. The frequency was Monday thru Thursday, three different times per day.

Assessment Tools and Instruments. Through this study I hoped to use an assessment instrument to assess student's current language proficiency using the BRIGANCE Screener III and direct observation within the classroom. For assessment and progress monitoring, I used the

K–12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks. This helped supplement the Teaching Strategies Gold Creative Curriculum I was using.

An instrument used was the BRIGANCE Screener III to assess the child within 7 domains. It gave the teacher a place to start and differentiate curriculum in needed areas, such as vocab learning or letters and letter sounds. The screen also gave the teacher a blueprint of understanding where a child is developmentally. BRIGANCE Screens are norm-referenced and have criterion referenced items selected by professional educators (Frances Page Glascoe, 2010). The BRIGANCE screens have a high degree of accuracy and correctly classify 75% of at-risk children and 82% of typically developing children (Frances Page Glascoe, 2010). This screen summarized what domains contain the child's strengths and what needs to be worked on. The BRIGANCE screener was used as an instrument in the study. The Brigance screener can be found in Appendix E.

Language proficiency benchmarks are used to guide the teacher according to student language understanding. The K–12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks provide descriptions of language proficiency organized around seven communicative competencies and four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). Each descriptor identifies the discrete elements of language that the child used when speaking, or understands when listening, at each benchmark proficiency level (Mckitrick, 2017). These bench marks gave the teacher the next steps to work on when the child met the expectation per the benchmark criteria. Using this as a tool assisted in planning for instruction using differentiation, depending on the English proficiency level of the child. The different levels within the benchmarks were beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and extending. The number of words acquired by the end of each level provided the educator with an appreciation of the

amount of vocabulary development from one level to the next (ESL benchmarks kindergarten, 2011). The levels helped the educator see the progression of the proficiency. Language Proficiency Benchmarks can be found in Appendix H.

Before the start of the school year the teacher used a home language survey during initial family visit times. This home language survey let the teacher know what level of English the child knew. The home language survey told the teacher what language the child spoke at home and what language the parents spoke to the child. It also asked what language the child spoke to other children and what language the child will speak to the teacher. This part of getting to know the children and parents was an essential part of the teacher parent collaboration. The Home Language Survey can be found in Appendix D.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Description of Data

The purpose of this study was to find out if using music, modeling and visuals in a preschool classroom would increase English Language Learner "(ELL)" literacy, communication, and language skills, to be kindergarten ready with their same age peers. I observed the use of visuals and music during small group literacy time. I observed the use of visuals and modeling during circle time. I observed modeling by peers and teachers with the students during center time.

During small group time, a letter chart was used as the children and teacher recited a phonics song. During circle time, a high five chart and a Question of the Day Chart were the chosen visuals used to promote understanding of expectations during circle time and conversational skills. During center time, direct observation and the K-12 English as a Second Language Proficiency benchmarks were used to assess the participants level of listening to and speaking English.

Results and Findings

The Brigance III screener indicated that there were 13 students within the class who were English language learners that needed more instruction and more exposure to the English language. Due to parents not returning the permission forms or choosing not to participate in the study, I started my action research with nine participants. Table 4.1 includes the gender, and native languages of the nine participants.

Table 4.1

Participant's information

Participants	Gender	Native Language
A	Male	Arabic
B	Male	Nepali
C	Male	Somali
D	Male	Somali
E	Female	Somali
F	Female	Somali
G	Female	Somali
H	Female	Somali
I	Male	Nepali

Research Question 1: What are the effects on ELL's literacy skills when providing interventions of modeling, visuals, and music in a preschool classroom?

During small group time, an ABC phonics song along with a letter chart were used as the music and visual. The use of modeling was present when the teacher had to help the child point to or stay on task. The children and teacher would use a pointer and point to each letter and sing, A for alligator, a, a alligator and so on. After the song, the teacher would ask the children to

point to the first letter in their name and the letters of the week, and make the sounds for each. If

the child didn't know he/she could ask another child in the small group. Then the child would

name the letter and practice it's sound. This intervention was used 3 times per week for 5 minute

intervals. The children sat at a u shaped table with English speaking and other ELL children.

The Brigance III was used to pre-assess the participants letter and letter sound knowledge. Direct

observation and a letter game were used to assess what letter and sound knowledge had increased

after the study.

Table 4.2 shows what letters and letter sounds the participants could identify prior to the study

and after the study. Two of the participants could identify fifteen to twenty letters and seven

could only identify between one and three letters prior to the study. Seven of the participants

could not identify any letter sounds before the study. Two participants could identify two and

fifteen letter sounds. There was between a one to four letter knowledge increase per participant

after the study. There was a one to four increase in letter sound knowledge per participant after

the study.

Table 4.2

Letter identification and letter sound knowledge pre-assessment and post assessment

Participants	Pre-Assessment		Post assessment	
	Letter identification	Letter sound knowledge	Letter identification	Letter sound knowledge
A	3	0	7	2
B	0	0	2	1
C	1	0	2	2
D	1	0	3	2
E	0	0	3	1
F	15	2	17	5
G	20	15	24	19
H	1	0	2	1
I	0	0	3	1

Research question 2: What are the effects on preschool ELL's language and communication skills when providing interventions of modeling and visuals in the preschool classroom?

During circle time, a visual high five chart that included sit crisscross, hands in lap, eyes on teacher, mouth quiet, and ears listening was utilized to help the students know what the expectations for circle time are. The high five chart was used four days a week for fifteen to twenty minutes per day. A Question of the Day chart, using a question that had a yes or a no answer was implemented each day. Questions included, do you like red?, do you want to paint

today?, do your clothes have pockets? The question was read, and the participant would put their name under either yes or no. The question of the day chart was used four days a week for five to ten minutes each day. Open ended questions and direct item questions were asked during the read aloud to further comprehension of English. Questions included what is she doing?, and pointing to the picture. This was used four days a week during read aloud time. During center time, open ended questions using what and how were asked to understand the receptive and expressive language proficiency of the participants. Questions/statements included, What are you building/making? Tell me about it, What is it used for?, and Why? These interventions were used 4 days a week for twenty to forty minutes per day.

Table 4.3 provides the participants understanding of the expectations, yes/no questions and who, what, and where questions during the beginning of the study and at the end. In the beginning of the study two out of the nine participants did not understand yes/no questions. At the end of the study all nine participants understood yes/no questions. In the beginning of the study six out of nine participants did not understand expectations during circle time. At the end of the study all, but one participant could abide by the expectations during circle time. Seven out of nine participants could not answer who, what and where questions in the beginning of the study. At the end of the study six out of nine participants could answer who, what and where questions.

Table 4.3

Participants understanding of questions and expectations

Participants	Understands yes/no questions		Follows expectations during circle time		Understands questions with "who," "what," "where"	
	Beginning	End	Beginning	End	Beginning	End
A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
B	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
C	yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
F	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
G	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
I	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

To measure the proficiency level children were listening to and speaking English, the K-12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks were used. This instrument was also used for pre-assessment and post assessment to see the increase in proficiency. The levels of proficiency are as follows, level 1 is beginning, level 2 is developing, level 3 is expanding, level 4 is bridging, and level 5 is extending.

ESL Benchmarks Summary

Kindergarten

	Level 1 Beginning	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Expanding	Level 4 Bridging	Level 5 Extending
Listening	Understands basic words in simple phrases, with gestures and visual support. May observe and copy others to follow classroom routines. Understands yes/no questions.	Understands familiar words and phrases, with visual support. Listens for key words and uses visual supports to engage in classroom routines. Understands either/or questions.	Understands describing words in simple sentences, with visual support. Uses context to predict the meaning of new words in order to engage in classroom discussions. Understands questions beginning with "What," "When," "Who" and "Where."	Understands words that compare and classify objects in detailed sentences. Questions and uses visual cues and known expressions to clarify understanding. Understands open-ended questions beginning with "Why" and "How."	Understands words used for explaining, retelling, connecting and sequencing in complex sentences. Uses a variety of strategies to confirm understanding. Understands hypothetical questions, such as: "What if ...?" and "If ... then what ...?"
Speaking	Uses one or two words and gestures to express immediate needs. Speaks using memorized phrases. Uses familiar greetings. Participates in familiar routines, with support.	Uses some words to answer simple questions and participate in classroom routines. Speaks using short phrases. Uses common courtesy phrases and expresses preferences, agreement and disagreement. Repeats words and phrases to participate in familiar routines.	Uses more words to answer questions, share ideas and interact with others. Speaks using simple sentences. Uses common courtesy expressions to compliment, apologize, show appreciation and interact with peers and adults. Uses expressions heard from others to interact with peers and adults.	Uses a range of words to describe, explain and retell. Manipulates word order in positive and negative sentences. Uses phrasal verbs, such as "made up" and "figure out," to explain, describe and compare. Asks and answers questions to participate in conversations with peers and adults.	Uses a variety of words to compare and connect and sequence ideas. Adds detail to positive and negative sentences. Uses appropriate register (formal/informal) to show humour and interact with peers and adults. Communicates effectively in most social and school tasks.

ESL Benchmarks Summary

©Alberta Education, Alberta, Canada

Kindergarten 1/1

2010

The findings shown in table 4.4 indicate at what level of proficiency the participants were at before the study and after the study. The table indicates there was an increase in understanding and speaking English in the classroom, according to the benchmark levels of the K-12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks. There were 9 participants observed and eight of the

participants increased their level of speaking English. Of the nine participants three increased

their listening level of English.

Table 4.4

ESL Benchmark Levels Pre-assessment and Post-assessment

Participants	Speaking Benchmark levels		Listening Benchmark Levels	
	Pre-assessment	Post Assessment	Pre-assessment	Post Assessment
A	2	4	3	3
B	1	2	2	2
C	4	5	4	5
D	4	4	5	5
E	4	5	4	4
F	2	3	3	3
G	4	5	4	5
H	1	3	2	3
I	1	2	2	3

Note. 1= beginning, 2= developing, 3= expanding, 4=bridging, 5= extending

Conclusions

It was impressive that by adding modeling, visuals and music to a preschool classroom there was

an increase in English language learner's literacy, communication and language. As the literature

stated, many young children appear to be naturally inclined to hum or to sing a tune, so it is

beneficial to build upon their musical interests and enhance their literacy development

simultaneously (Paquette & Reig, 2008). This statement turned out to be true to the findings of

this study. The increase in speaking versus listening made complete sense. There were many peer

models and teacher models present constantly speaking English to one another each day, letting

the English language learners experience the back and forth communication between people.

I used the kindergarten benchmarks from K-12 ESL proficiency for the instrument,

because there were not preschool benchmarks to use. I know that most schools do not have

mandatory preschool, but for this instrument it would have been helpful to have preschool

benchmarks, especially since early exposure to another language is best. The K-12 ESL

proficiency benchmarks were beneficial in assessing the participants proficiency in English,

however due to the age of the participants, this instrument only used two of the four language

strands. Within each grade-level division, the Benchmarks were organized according to four

language strands, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Based on age-appropriate language

development expectations, the Kindergarten Benchmarks include only the Listening and

Speaking strands. This instrument was useful but could have used the literacy within the strands

for kindergarten, especially since there are such high expectations when entering kindergarten.

For this study, I felt there just was not enough time to properly conduct this study.

Increasing a student's fluency and knowledge in English is year long not a couple weeks. There

are many aspects of learning a new language that need to be taught. Another issue during the

study was the number of participants. Due to not having all thirteen permission slips turned in on

time there were less participants than I thought there would be. This caused for a smaller number

of participants, which was nine.

This study provides support that when using modeling, visuals and music with English

language learners there will be an increase in their language, literacy, and communication skills.

Each participant increased their letter recognition skills and letter sound knowledge by using an

ABC phonics song accompanied by a letter chart. Their understanding of listening to or understanding English also increased by using modeling and visuals. The participants speaking increased by using open ended questions and modeling. All in all, using modeling, visuals and music with English language learners is essential to expand their knowledge of the English language both academically and conversationally.

CHAPTER FIVE

Action Plan and Plan for Sharing

Action Plan

As a practitioner, I have found through this action research that English Language Learners "(ELL)" are a population that desperately needs knowledgeable teachers to assist in the English learning process. Through this I have found that with the strategies, music, visuals and modeling increase the understanding and enhance the English proficiency of ELLs. Using the strategies together increase preschool ELL literacy, language and communication skills. By using all three strategies practitioners can enhance ELL literacy, language and communication and be kindergarten ready with their same age English speaking peers.

It is important to remember this was in the middle of the school year and that if these strategies would be used year-round, would increase the ELL's English proficiency skills in literacy, communication and language acquisition. I plan to continue using the strategies throughout the rest of the year and in the years to come and continue to read journal articles on this topic and investigate other strategies that enhance ELL's learning.

This study has shown me that as an educator we need to constantly learn different strategies to assist the students we serve. Some say that professional development is the job of the school district, I say it is the educator's job to keep learning and adding strategies to your tool box to be the best educator you can be. There are a few questions I came up with while doing this study:

1. What other strategies would help assist English language learners in the classroom?
2. Why isn't there more articles referring to this topic?

3. How can I implement the strategies each year and build upon already known skills the ELL children have?

4. What other screens are available for English language acquisition?

Plan for Sharing

Finishing this research has brought me to a point of wanting to share the information I found. I will first share the results and finding with my classroom staff, other teachers I team with and the education coordinator. I plan to share how using music, visuals and modeling impact English language learner proficiency. I hope to share my finding with upper management and be part of the beginning of the year professional development. I will make up an ideas sheet for English language learners or share my power point as an email with the Head Start community and the Early Childhood Special Education I work with closely. Partnering with other facets of early childhood will bring about collaboration and strategies that each educator can benefit from.

Lastly, my Action Research will be in the MN State University Moorhead library to share with the students. I have found that although educators do not write papers every time, they try new strategies, they document and refine each strategy used to enhance children's learning each day. This research compelled me to be aware of what I was looking for exactly and refine my thinking and teaching. Making me realize how important it is to individualize for each child and how different each child's abilities are. The strategies used in the study will be used in my future teaching, and I will continue to research different strategies.

Acknowledgements

With the deepest gratitude and appreciation, I humbly give thanks to the people in my life. First, the completion of this study wouldn't have been possible without the support and encouragement from my husband through this journey.

Next, I would like to thank my children for being my inspiration for finishing my master's degree. Also, to both my husband and my boys, thank you for being patient with me during these two years. I hope that I showed my boys that hard work and focus payoff and that education is essential and a valuable piece of being successful.

Lastly, my parents for instilling how important education is and having it will help you succeed. They taught me about how to look at life as a marathon and not a race. Give it time, work hard and be patient and you will succeed.

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Appendix A

From: Karla Wenger
Sent: Wednesday, September 19, 2018 11:05:37 AM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)
To: Courtney LaLonde; Cirissa Afonja
Cc: Lisa Karch; Debra Deminck
Subject: IRB Exempt Approval

Date:	9/19/18
Principle Investigator:	Courtney LaLonde
Co-Investigator(s):	Cirissa Afonja
Title of Study:	Classroom and literacy strategies and supports to increase school readiness of preschool ELL students

Thank you for submitting your IRB Exempt Status Proposal. Your proposal has been reviewed and approved **Exempt** under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1). You may proceed with your study after September 19, 2018.

The IRB will not conduct subsequent reviews of this protocol unless changes to the protocol occur. Any changes to the protocol will require a formal application to, and approval of, the IRB prior to implementation of the change. IRB applications are available on the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB webpage: https://www.mnstate.edu/irb/

Best of Luck to you with your research!

Lisa Karch

Lisa Karch, Ph. D.
Interim Dean
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Appendix B

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Cirissa Afonja** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 11/26/2017.

Certification Number: 2569400.

Appendix C

SOUTHEASTERN NORTH DAKOTA community Action
Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele and Trail Counties
NORTH DAKOTA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK
Helping People. Changing Lives.

September 6, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to grant Cirissa Afonja permission to conduct an action research study at SENDCAA Head Start during the 2018-2019 school year. I understand this study poses no risk to those involved or to SENDCAA Head Start. I also understand all information received will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study.

Sincerely,

Ally Balvik
Education Coordinator, SENDCAA Head Start

Appendix D

Home Language Survey*

☐ Check here if the child's parents or legal guardians decline to provide information for this survey.

A. What language do family members use when speaking to the child in the home?

	1	2	3	4	5
	only English	mostly English but sometimes home language	both equally	mostly home language but some English	only home language (not English)

(write in home language: _____)

B. What language does the child use when speaking to family members in the home?

N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Not applicable	only English	mostly English but sometimes home language	both equally	mostly home language but some English	only home language (not English)

C. What language does the child use when speaking to other children in the classroom?

N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Not applicable	only English	mostly English but sometimes home language	both equally	mostly home language but some English	only home language (not English)

D. What language does the child use when speaking to the teachers?

N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Not applicable	only English	mostly English but sometimes home language	both equally	mostly home language but some English	only home language (not English)

Sum of circled numbers   Number of questions answered

_____ / _____ = _____

If this value is 2 or greater and the child is in a preschool 3, pre-K4, or kindergarten class, use Objectives 37 and 38.

*These research reports helped guide our thinking in the development of the "Home Language Survey":

Aikens, N. L., Caspe, M. S., Sprachman, S., López, M. L., & Atkins-Burnett, S. M. (June 2008). *Paper Symposium: Development of a language routing protocol for determining bilingual Spanish-English speaking children's language of assessment.* Biennial Head Start Research Conference. Washington, DC.

Puma, M., Bell, S., Cook, R., Heid, C., López, M. L., et al. (2005). *Head Start impact study: First year findings.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Gutiérrez-Clellen, V. F., & Kreiter, J. (2003). Understanding child bilingual acquisition using parent and teacher reports. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 24*(2), 267–88.

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Appendix E

BRIGANCE® Screen III Four-Year-Old Child Data Sheet

A. Child's Name Corey Martin

Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) Alex and Anne Martin

Address 982 Haines Street

	Year	Month	Day
Date of Screening	2016	8	15
Birth Date	2012	2	10
Age	4	6	5

School/Program Ballard School

Teacher Emily Chappell

Examiner Bernard Karcher

B. Core Assessments			C. Scoring		
Page	Domain	Directions: Assessments may be administered in any order. For each assessment, start with the first item and proceed in order. Give credit for a skill by circling the item number. ① For a skill not demonstrated (an incorrect response), slash through the item number.	Discontinue	Number Correct × Point Value for Each	Child's Score
19	Academic/ Cognitive	**1B Knows Personal Information** Knows: ① First name ② Last name ③ Age ~~4~~ Street address	Stop after 3 incorrect responses in a row.	3 × 2.5	7.5/10
20	Language Development	**2B Names Colors** Names: ① blue ② green ~~yellow~~ ④ red ~~orange~~ ~~pink~~ ~~black~~ 8. purple 9. white 10. brown	Stop after 3 incorrect responses in a row.	3 × 1	3/10
22	Language Development	**3B Identifies Pictures by Naming** Names: ~~scissors~~ ~~duck~~ ③ snake ④ wagon ~~ladder~~ ⑥ leaf ~~owl~~ ~~8~~	Stop after 3 incorrect responses in a row.	3 × 1	3/8
23	Academic/ Cognitive: Literacy	**4B Visual Discrimination—Forms and Uppercase Letters** ~~1~~ O ② □ ③ O ④ O ~~5~~ ⑥ o ⑦ I ~~8~~ P ~~9~~ ~~10~~	Stop after 5 incorrect responses in a row.	5 × 1	5/10
24	Physical Development	**5B Visual Motor Skills** Draws: ① a circle ② a plus sign ③ an X ~~4~~ a square ~~5~~ a rectangle	Stop after 3 skills not demonstrated in a row.	3 × 2	6/10
26	Physical Development	**6B Gross Motor Skills** ① Walks forward heel-to-toe five steps ② Hops five hops on preferred foot ③ Hops five hops on other foot ④ Stands on one foot for ten seconds ⑤ Stands on other foot for ten seconds	Administer all items.	5 × 1	5/5
28	Language Development	**7B Names Parts of the Body** Names: ① stomach ~~neck~~ ③ back ~~knees~~ ⑤ thumbs ~~fingernails~~	Stop after 3 incorrect responses in a row.	3 × 2	6/12
29	Language Development	**8B Follows Verbal Directions** Follows: ① two-step directions ~~three-step directions~~	Stop after 2 incorrect responses for 1 item.	1 × 4	4/8
31	Academic/ Cognitive: Mathematics	**9B Counts by Rote** Counts to: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ~~6~~ 7 8 9 10	Stop after the first error.	5 × 0.5	2.5/5
32	Academic/ Cognitive: Mathematics	**10B Recognizes Quantities** Recognizes and names quantities of: ~~three~~ ~~five~~ 3. eight	Stop after 2 incorrect responses.	0 × 4	0/12
33	Language Development	**11B Verbal Fluency and Articulation** ① Uses sentences of at least three words ② At least 90% of speech is intelligible	Administer both items.	2 × 5	10/10
				Total Score =	52/100

D. Notes/Observations: Vision and hearing appear normal.

E. Next Steps: Below cutoff of <69. Presence of four risk factors. Academic/Cognitive domain score = 15; below at-risk guidelines of <20. Refer for evaluation.

Appendix F

Consent Form

Participation in Research

Title: Classroom and Literacy Strategies and Supports to Increase School Readiness of Preschool ELL Students

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of providing specific strategies in a preschool classroom with English language learners to increase their literacy, language, and communication skills using modeling, visuals, and movement and assessment. Through this study I will use an assessment instrument to assess student's current language proficiency and for progress monitoring I will be using the K–12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks.

Study information: This study will specific strategies using visuals, modeling, and movement throughout the classroom day. The data will be collected by the instructor who will be observing the participants use of expressive English language. The instructor will be using the K-12 English as a Second Language proficiency Benchmarks as a guide to further the participants English learning skills.

Time: The participants will complete this study during the classroom day. This study will take place during October and beginning of November.

Risks: While the purpose of the study is to increase English language learner's literacy, language and communication skills, the outcome of the study is unknown. Increased skills are not guaranteed.

Benefits: Participation may help improve participant's literacy, language, and communication skills while learning the English language. This study may help students increase school readiness.

Confidentiality: Participant's identity will not be shared with anyone beyond the principal investigator, Dr. Courtney LaLonde, and the co-investigator, Cirissa Afonja. All individual information will be recorded and tracked under an identification number and not the participant's name.

Participation and withdrawal: Participation in this study is optional. Students can choose not to participate or choose to withdraw at any time without any negative effects on grades, relationship with the instructor, or relationship with Head Start.

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APPENDIX G

Contact: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact any of these people:

Cirissa Afonja Co-Investigator ph. 7634821677 Email: afonjaci@mnstate.edu	Courtney LaLonde, Ph. D. Principal Investigator Assistant Professor, School of Teaching and Learning, Lommen 214C College of Education and Human Services Minnesota State University Moorhead ph. 218.477.4278 Email: Courtney.lalonde@mnstate.edu

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Lisa Karch, Ph. D., Chair of the MSUM Institutional Review Board, at 218-477-2699 or by lisa.karch@mnstate.edu. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

"I have been informed of the study details and understand what participating in the study means. I understand that my child's identity will be protected and that he/she can choose to stop participating in the study at any time. By signing this form, I am agreeing to allow my child to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age or older."

_____
Name of Child (Print)

_____   _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

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APPENDIX H

ESL Benchmarks Summary

Kindergarten

	Level 1 Beginning	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Expanding	Level 4 Bridging	Level 5 Extending
Listening	Understands basic words in simple phrases, with gestures and visual support. May observe and copy others to follow classroom routines. Understands yes/no questions.	Understands familiar words and phrases, with visual support. Listens for key words and uses visual supports to engage in classroom routines. Understands either/or questions.	Understands describing words in simple sentences, with visual support. Uses context to predict the meaning of new words in order to engage in classroom discussions. Understands questions beginning with "What," "When," "Who" and "Where."	Understands words that compare and classify objects in detailed sentences. Questions and uses visual cues and known expressions to clarify understanding. Understands open-ended questions beginning with "Why" and "How."	Understands words used for explaining, retelling, connecting and sequencing in complex sentences. Uses a variety of strategies to confirm understanding. Understands hypothetical questions, such as: "What if ...?" and "If ... then what ...?"
Speaking	Uses one or two words and gestures to express immediate needs. Speaks using memorized phrases. Uses familiar greetings. Participates in familiar routines, with support.	Uses some words to answer simple questions and participate in classroom routines. Speaks using short phrases. Uses common courtesy phrases and expresses preferences, agreement and disagreement. Repeats words and phrases to participate in familiar routines.	Uses more words to answer questions, share ideas and interact with others. Speaks using simple sentences. Uses common courtesy expressions to compliment, apologize, show appreciation and interact with peers and adults. Uses expressions heard from others to interact with peers and adults.	Uses a range of words to describe, explain and retell. Manipulates word order in positive and negative sentences. Uses phrasal verbs, such as "made up" and "figure out," to explain, describe and compare. Asks and answers questions to participate in conversations with peers and adults.	Uses a variety of words to compare and connect and sequence ideas. Adds detail to positive and negative sentences. Uses appropriate register (formal/informal) to show humour and interact with peers and adults. Communicates effectively in most social and school tasks.