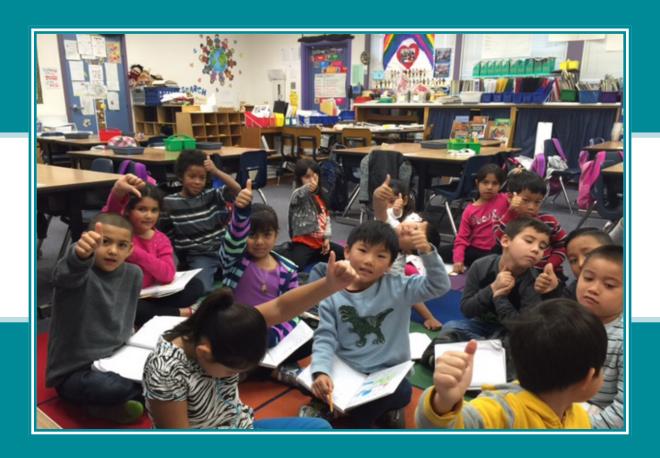# SUPPORTING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER SUCCESS IN SUPERDIVERSE PREK-3 CLASSROOMS

The Sobrato Early Academic Language Model

By Anya Hurwitz and Laurie Olsen

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March 2018

Acknowledgments

Suggested citation: Hurwitz, Anya and Laurie Olsen. 2018. *Supporting Dual Language Learner Success in Superdiverse PreK-3 Classrooms: The Sobrato Early Academic Language Model.* Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

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Executive Summary

The Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) PreK-3 model was designed to provide young Dual Language Learners (DLLs) and English Learners (ELs)—children growing up exposed to more than one language at home and in the classroom—with language-intensive support integrated throughout the curriculum.[1] Based on research on effective DLL/EL pedagogy, the model was initially piloted and then evaluated, showing strong results, in preschools and elementary schools in linguistically isolated[2] Spanish-English communities that implemented English-only, bilingual, and dual-language instructional programs.[3] The model is now being replicated in more than 100 programs and schools in California, including many that are superdiverse (that is, the DLL/EL population includes students from a variety of language backgrounds) and where instruction is English-only.

Classroom superdiversity holds unique opportunities to foster cross-cultural and metalinguistic awareness.

This report focuses on the replication of the SEAL model and its adaptations to linguistically diverse communities, specifically those of Oak Grove and San Lorenzo in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Initial findings from an external evaluation, based on surveys of teachers who had received SEAL training, indicate an increase in teachers' confidence in meeting the needs of DLLs and ELs, and a significant increase in the use of research-based instructional strategies throughout the day and across the curriculum. This exploratory study also analyzes qualitative data from observations, interviews, and focus groups to probe the challenges facing teachers who support DLLs/ELs when there are multiple language groups in the classroom, such as a need for strategies that allow teachers to leverage students' skills in their home languages even without speaking them and the difficulties of searching for classroom materials that reflect a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It also finds that classroom superdiversity holds unique opportunities to foster cross-cultural and metalinguistic awareness, and that SEAL language support and scaffolding strategies are relevant and adaptable to superdiverse settings. The report concludes with a discussion of policy implications and suggestions for designing instruction and curriculum to more effectively serve DLLs and ELs in superdiverse classrooms.

I.   Introduction and Framing

In 1974, the United States Supreme Court decided in *Lau v. Nichols* that a class of students was being denied access to equal educational opportunity because they lacked the English skills to understand and participate in educational programs. Schools were directed to take affirmative steps to overcome the language barrier facing these students.[4] In the decades since, a field of English Learner (EL) education

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1   This report refers to children who speak a language other than English at home and are learning English at school as Dual Language Learners (DLLs)/English Learners (ELs), two of the several terms used most widely in relevant literature and policy.
2   In the United States, "linguistically isolated" schools are those where more than 90 percent of students are of Latino/Hispanic ethnicity, the home/heritage language is Spanish, and the vast majority of the EL population are Spanish speakers (more than 95 percent).
3   Bilingual education is an umbrella term that includes transitional bilingual programs, maintenance or heritage language programs, and dual-language programs. Not all DLLs are enrolled in dual-language programs. Many are enrolled in structured English immersion programs.
4   *Lau v. Nichols*, No. 72-6520, U.S. 563 (U.S. Supreme Court, 1974), http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/414/563.html. At the federal level, these students were referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) until a more general term was introduced in federal law in the 2015 *Every Student Succeeds Act*—that is, English Learner (EL).

has been built into the K-12 public school system. It was shaped at first by the application of linguistic theory and later through evaluations of trial-and-error pilot efforts, eventually coalescing into a body of research-based practice.[5] At the same time, research continues to amass on effective instructional practices and program models, with a particular focus on the needs of specific subgroups of ELs and Dual Language Learners (DLLs)—young children exposed to more than one language at home and in the classroom, some of whom may later be classified as ELs. Some such subgroups include newcomers, long-term ELs, and students with interrupted prior education. Research on program models has primarily centered on the language of instruction, comparing the efficacy of bilingual (native language plus English) or English-only instruction. These efforts have resulted in a body of research-based practices applicable to both types of program settings and for students of varying English language proficiency levels. But far less attention has been focused on the varied instructional approaches necessary to respond to the heterogeneity of students in English-only settings, including in terms of language and cultural backgrounds, reasons for immigration, and socioeconomic status.

Much work has gone into defining overall good practice and quality conditions ... but with little focus on the unique needs of children whose families do not speak English at home.

The early childhood education and care (ECEC) field has developed along a particular trajectory as well. Much work has gone into defining overall good practice and quality conditions—as well as focusing on the needs of children in poverty[6]—but with little focus on the unique needs of children whose families do not speak English at home. Research and policy initiatives such as the development of program standards and certification criteria have established principles for monitoring the quality of educational programs for young children. For example, criteria may include positive relationships and interactions in the classroom, play-based learning, curriculum that integrates language development with other content areas, partnerships between families and schools, safe environments, and certain classroom ratios of adults to children. Additional research has emphasized the importance of increasing access to ECEC programs and illuminated a number of methods for effectively encouraging enrollment, especially in underserved communities. In the absence of the kind of legal requirements found in the K-12 education system that trigger language assessments and identification of EL status, and without requirements that early childhood programs address language barriers, the ECEC field has been a relative latecomer to recognizing and responding to diverse linguistic needs.

In 1995, the National Association for the Education of Young Children issued a position paper entitled "Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education." The paper called for support and affirmation of children's home languages and cultures, increased recruitment of an early childhood workforce with bilingual proficiency, and professional preparation and development for ECEC workers related to culture, language, and diversity. A decade later, California began to issue what would become a series of publications focusing on principles and practices to promote language, literature, and learning for DLLs in preschool settings. These publications culminated in the adoption of a set of Preschool Learning Foundations that include an English Language Development (ELD) component. However, the process of preparing and certifying the early childhood workforce, particularly in California, pays little attention to how to support DLLs. The limited research

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5   Diane August and Timothy Shanahan, eds., *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006). This was followed by the publication of California Department of Education (CDE), *Improving Education for English Learners: Research Based Approaches* (Sacramento, CA: CDE Press, 2010).
6   Head Start was a central initiative of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, as it provided support specifically to low-income children. California modeled its state preschools after Head Start.

available centers on the consensus that simultaneous development of English and the home language is preferable,[7] and that a general affirmation of culture and language is an important component of early education practices. For teachers in English-only settings, and especially for those with students from multiple language and cultural groups, there is still little guidance on supportive instructional approaches.

This report begins by exploring whether and how approaches to instruction in PreK-3 should differ in a setting where students have multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It takes as its starting point the notion that teaching strategies tailored to students' English proficiency level—paired with scaffolds[8] that support comprehension, participation, and access to the curriculum—are essential for DLLs/ELs in English-taught programs. It also argues that recognizing and building on home-language skills and knowledge is a powerful means of bolstering language learning and academic achievement. While research has demonstrated the importance of students' home language in their overall language/literacy development and eventual academic outcomes, bilingual support strategies have not yet found their way into most English-taught classrooms.

This study was conducted in California, a state in which public battles over language policy and immigration have deeply affected curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation. The 1998 passing of Proposition 227 in California virtually eliminated bilingual education and led to two decades of English-only policies. And while the 2016 passage of Proposition 58 effectively repealed the English-only requirements of Proposition 227—potentially transforming the landscape of EL education in California—two decades of English-only education have taken a toll, particularly on California's teaching force. English-only policies combined with a decade of implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), whose Program Improvement/Corrective Action mandates imposed a one-size-fits-all approach to literacy instruction, form the backdrop for teachers' current struggles to address the needs of DLLs/ELs.

Meanwhile, many teachers have not received adequate preservice and in-service preparation to support DLLs/ELs. Rumberger and Gándara (2004) also find that DLL/ELs are more likely to be taught by teachers who are not fully credentialed and who have received little to no in-service training.[9] Even teachers who hold basic teaching credentials in California—the Cross-Cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD),[10] which includes a specialization in DLL/EL instruction—have not been adequately prepared for the diverse needs of DLL/EL students. This is especially true as new and more rigorous standards in the core content areas of English language arts, math, science, and social studies have been enacted.[11] Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) find that of teachers of DLLs/ELs in California, those with a Bilingual Cross-Cultural, Language, and Academic Development Credential (BCLAD) feel more confident and efficacious in their ability to meet their students' needs than those with just the CLAD. There is reason to take teacher confidence seriously. As Rumberger and Gándara note, a large body of research shows that teachers with strong professional preparation make a difference in student lives.

The lack of adequate teacher preparation and in-service professional development means that many students lack access to best practices in DLL/EL instruction. Rumberger and Gándara assert that DLLs/

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7   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.17226/24677.
8   The term "scaffold" refers to support given by a teacher to help a student master a task—or grasp a concept—just beyond the student's independent capability.
9   Russell W. Rumberger and Patricia Gándara, "Seeking Equity in the Education of California's English Learners," *Teachers College Record* 106, no. 10 (2004): 2032–56.
10 The Cross-Cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) credential was initially designed in 1992 as an authorization enabling teachers with multiple subject credentials to also teach English Language Development (ELD), but has since been revised multiple times. In 2000, it became the default teaching credential for all teachers in California and was deemed sufficient to meet the "highly qualified" criteria for teaching ELs under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB).
11 Rumberger and Gándara, "Seeking Equity in the Education of California's English Learners"; Patricia Gándara, Julie Maxwell-Jolly, and Anne Driscoll, *Listening to Teachers of English Language Learners: A Survey of California Teachers' Challenges, Experiences, and Professional Development Needs* (Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for Teaching and Learning at WestEd, 2005), www.wested.org/resources/listening-to-teachers-of-english-language-learners-a-survey-of-california-teachers-challenges-experiences-and-professional-development-needs/.

ELs benefit from a three-pronged approach: specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE), access to a primary language, and ELD. Without these scaffolds, DLLs' and ELs' comprehension of the curriculum is compromised. Active learning is hampered because it is difficult to access knowledge learned in their home language and bring it to bear on new material. In this context, loss of the home language is widespread and occurs quickly.[12] Further, the cultural/linguistic context of an English-only setting can negatively affect children's emerging identities as well as their language skills.

Even in an English-instructed classroom, students can benefit from interaction with peers, teachers, and other adults in their native language. Having a critical mass of speakers of a single language makes the use of that language easier for social and instructional purposes. However, where teachers and students are navigating multiple languages within one classroom, the dynamics of language development, language engagement, and the cultural/linguistic context for emerging identities is different. This is its own context: the superdiverse classroom. And while formal bilingual instruction is not possible in this context, teachers can be trained to scaffold student comprehension in English while simultaneously supporting students' native language development.

II. The Sobrato Early Academic Language Model

In 2008, even with efforts under the NCLB to hold schools accountable for EL development and the intention of Proposition 227 to accelerate English language acquisition, it had become apparent that ELs were not being adequately served. That year, the Sobrato Family Foundation invested in the development of a research-based early education model for DLLs/ELs. Grounded in teachers' professional development, the SEAL model is an approach to teaching that centralizes the needs of DLLs/ELs by focusing on language development throughout the school curriculum, in and through academic content. It is not a curriculum or a program, but rather a model of comprehensive teacher development and school change that incorporates curriculum redesign (thematic units[13] that integrate language development into science and social studies content); instructional change (implementation of high-leverage language and literacy development strategies); systems change (systems leadership development and alignment across preschool through grade 3 to set a coherent language development pathway); and school-family engagement.

A. The Aims of the SEAL Model

The goals of the SEAL model are grade-level mastery of the full curriculum, English proficiency with support for bilingualism in English-only settings, and commitment to full biliteracy in bilingual/dual-language settings. It also strives to nurture students' active participation and confidence, love of language, and ownership of literacy.[14] The intention is to demonstrate what teaching and learning can look like when the needs of DLLs/ELs are central to the implementation of Common Core and Next Generation academic content standards.[15] The model was piloted in bilingual/dual-language and English-instructed settings.

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12 Lily Wong Fillmore, "When Learning a Second Language Means Losing the First," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1991): 323–46.

13 Integrated thematic units form a curriculum in which four to six weeks of instruction is organized around a core theme or concept, integrating disciplines like reading, math, and science with the exploration of a broad subject, such as communities, force and motion, or ocean habitats. In this interdisciplinary curriculum, language development and literacy are intentionally integrated with other academic subjects.

14 Laurie Olsen and Jennifer Analla, *SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language PreK-3 Model): Powerful, Joyful, Rigorous Language and Literacy Learning* (Cupertino, CA: Sobrato Family Foundation, 2013).

15 The Common Core is a set of standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA), adopted by 42 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, California has adopted history/social science standards, as well as Next Generation Science Standards.

While the model was designed as a PreK-3 approach with a focus on DLLs/ELs in Spanish-speaking Hispanic communities, its whole-classroom model serves all children. Even in an English-only context, the model bolsters and supports children's multiple linguistic and cultural identities. This exploratory research suggests that the SEAL model is already well positioned to serve DLL/EL students and teachers in superdiverse contexts. This report also considers which aspects of the model need to be enhanced and highlighted to address the specific challenges and opportunities presented by classroom superdiversity.

Based on initial evaluation results from the SEAL pilot, the model is now being replicated in more than 100 schools across 20 districts in California. The growing range of settings provides a compelling opportunity to more closely examine the impact of the model's approach in superdiverse English-instructed settings. It also provides an opportunity to better understand the challenges and realities of superdiverse contexts for DLL/EL participation and outcomes, including the formation of identity.

This exploratory research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the challenges and opportunities related to meeting the needs of DLLs/ELs (in preschool to grade 3) in a superdiverse setting?

- In what ways does the SEAL curricular and instructional model address the needs of DLLs/ELs in superdiverse classrooms?

- What specific teacher learning and support is needed to implement the SEAL model's research-based practices in superdiverse settings?

B.   Design of the SEAL Model and Its Relationship to the Superdiverse Context

The SEAL model rests on four pillars: (1) a focus on the development of powerful, precise, academic language; (2) the creation of content- and language-rich and affirming environments; (3) articulation across grades and alignment of the preschool and K-3 systems; and (4) strong partnerships between families and schools. Each one of these pillars can be adapted for the superdiverse classroom.

The first pillar, a focus on developing powerful, precise, academic language, is grounded in the notion that children's ability to understand and communicate relates directly to the amount of vocabulary and the complexity of the linguistic structures that they know, and that the development of oral language is the foundation for literacy. In SEAL classrooms, teachers model and stimulate talk that allows language learners to explore and clarify concepts, name their world, describe what they see, and express their ideas. The SEAL classroom is rarely quiet. Strategies provide students time and support to practice new vocabulary and concepts through purposeful interactions with peers and structured discourse. Songs and chants are used to teach content and practice new vocabulary in a low-risk environment. Visual elements, such as tables, timelines, web diagrams, flow charts, and Venn diagrams teach children to organize information, clarify concepts, compare and contrast information, conceptualize, sequence, categorize, and classify. In SEAL classrooms, high-level informational and literary books, posters, and other printed materials are available in English and in the home languages of students. These supplement teacher-created materials that integrate language development with science and social studies content. Within superdiverse contexts, teachers work collaboratively to gather written resources in multiple languages. The availability of materials in certain languages is a limiting factor, as is the availability of additional funds, but translation support from SEAL coaches/facilitators and district translators enables teachers to provide at least some material in most languages. In the youngest grades, dramatic play centers provide opportunities for children to use content-relevant language authentically as they imagine themselves in various roles and dramatize stories. SEAL classrooms have writing centers (with paper, pencils, notebooks, envelopes, mailboxes, etc.) to encourage children to write. Academic notebooks, daily journals, and collaborative writing projects offer opportunities to use writing for authentic purposes. Student writing is laminated and bound, and placed in the classroom library, often accompanied by photos from the classroom, so children literally see themselves in books and as writers.

The second pillar of the model is the creation of an affirming and enriched environment. In SEAL classrooms, teachers recognize that how children relate to one another is a primary aspect of social learning and development. Teachers use multiple strategies to invite children to talk about their lives and to bring their experiences, cultures, and languages into the classroom as part of developing an understanding of the world. Children's cultures and identities have a place in the curriculum and in the physical environment of the classroom. Teachers support strong identity development and promote the skills and capacities of children to live respectfully in a diverse society. Within each thematic unit, teachers plan ways to include real-world connections so students see the value in their new knowledge and its relationship to past experiences. The classroom environment is filled with pictures, posters, books, and realia that reflect the cultures and languages of students and their families. Students are engaged in facilitated discussions that focus on children's concerns, address social dynamics, and create forums for talking about their lives, including their identities as bilingual learners.

Through their SEAL training, teachers are exposed to a variety of strategies specifically designed to welcome home languages into the classroom. These strategies include student language biographies, language portfolios, multilingual resources, community language studies, multilingual team names, labels for items around the classroom, a choice of the language they use during writing time, multilingual chants and home-school connections, multilingual celebrations, language diversity activities that teach all children basic phrases in many languages, and specific help for teachers in recognizing key transfer issues from the languages students speak at home to English.

Teachers use multiple strategies to invite children to talk about their lives and to bring their experiences, cultures, and languages into the classroom.

The third pillar, articulation across grades and alignment of the preschool and K–3 systems, recognizes that birth to age 8 is a crucial period in a child's development of language and cognition. A high-quality preschool helps improve children's social and cognitive skills, and has the potential to reduce disparities and long-standing achievement gaps between student populations. But gains can dissipate as children advance beyond kindergarten. A growing body of research underlines the importance of a coherent PreK–3 program that aligns standards and curriculum with a shared vision of early language development.[16] Rather than view preschool as simply preparing children for K–12, the SEAL PreK–3 model views preschool as an articulated and connected schooling experience, and the entire developmental phase from age 3 to age 8 as a coherent pathway of language development. The process of alignment and articulation continues up through the grades as teachers work together to develop a common vision of schooling and continuity of strategies from preschool through grade 3.

Pillar four, strong partnerships between families and schools, recognizes that for DLLs and ELs, a school's language and cultural environment may differ from that of their home. Particularly in a superdiverse context, where students may have little to no access to peers who share their home language, teachers need to understand the cultures and communities of their students and create an environment that integrates the home and school contexts. This ensures that children and parents feel accepted and included. In a SEAL school, parents are encouraged and supported to foster their child's academic and language development, to involve themselves with the school, and to develop their own literacy. Teachers create classroom environments and activities that incorporate the cultures and community experiences of their students, and that allow students to connect their life at home to their life at school, and design activities that engage families in the teaching and learning related to the themes.

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16   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English*.

Across these four pillars, the SEAL model centralizes language development and also scaffolds language, comprehension, and participation for DLLs/ELs. Though designed within the context of schools that serve homogenous DLL/EL populations, the pillars are deeply relevant to superdiverse settings. Of particular importance, given the challenges and opportunities of superdiverse settings, are: (1) hands-on activities, visuals, and graphic organizers that create a common experience and build comprehension for all children across language backgrounds; (2) the teacher as an intentional language model; (3) focus on how English works in both integrated and designated ELD;[17] (4) an emphasis on cultural responsiveness and bringing the world into the classroom; (5) strategies for strengthening the home-school connection; and (6) attention to the environment as a language and comprehension resource. In these ways, SEAL classrooms can capitalize on the particular strengths of superdiverse settings and counterbalance their challenges.

All of these elements build on what the SEAL model's developers consider the bedrock for instructional improvement and the implementation of the model—teacher intentionality and responsiveness. Through an extensive series of professional development modules, teachers come to understand how language develops, the needs of ELs and DLLs, and the optimal schooling conditions that foster learning. SEAL teachers learn strategies in the context of the broader research on literacy development and discussion of why particular strategies are effective and when and for whom. The SEAL model of professional development follows the components of high-quality staff development (as per national standards),[18] including sustained professional development supported by job-embedded coaching and facilitation, coupled with leadership development and the building of a collaborative culture. The model provides a toolkit of research-based instructional strategies that fit into the larger pedagogical context of integrated language and content instruction and cross-content thematic units. Purposely, the SEAL model does not define a specific sequence or pacing of mandatory instructional activities, nor does it provide a set curriculum.

The model provides a toolkit of research-based instructional strategies that fit into the larger pedagogical context of integrated language and content instruction.

Rather, the SEAL model facilitates a process of teachers working collaboratively to design thematic units based on basic principles of backwards design and standards-based planning. Teachers get guidance from SEAL trainers and coaches to incorporate all of the standards and strategies that must be addressed to create a strong thematic unit. Teachers come to know and understand the standards they are teaching, and why. They learn how to construct lessons and select from an array of strategies that address their students' language needs. Teachers learn to be intentional about language development in a way that ensures the participation, comprehension, and access of their DLL/EL students. Teachers bring their knowledge, wisdom, and creativity to the task of designing powerful, exciting, and rigorous thematic units with their colleagues.

Further, the SEAL model recognizes that mastering a complex set of new instructional strategies and curricular approaches takes time, resources, and support for teachers. Professional development modules and workshops are important venues for reading and discussing research and learning new strategies. However, they are not sufficient in themselves to support actual implementation in classrooms. Instead, the SEAL model employs a comprehensive approach to implementation. Teachers need collaborative

17 "Integrated ELD" is instruction based on both ELD standards and academic content standards to support language development in the context of the academic curriculum throughout the day. "Designated ELD" involves a separate time of the day when DLL/ELs are grouped by language proficiency levels to focus on second language development and the structures of English.
18 National Staff Development Council, *Standards for Staff Development* (Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2001).

planning time to consider how to incorporate the strategies into their instruction. They also need opportunities to see the practices being modeled in their own classrooms, encouragement to try new strategies, and constructive feedback from a knowledgeable and supportive coach and from colleagues.

The SEAL professional development series for teachers comprises 25 to 35 days across two years; these include seven two-day training sessions and eight to ten days of collaborative planning. Many teachers also participate in a ten-day summer institute that involves team teaching in the morning and reflection and planning in the afternoon. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) with each participating school district outlines all the components of implementation, including job-embedded coaching. This MoU requires districts to allocate resources for a (minimum) half-time coach/facilitator per site. Teachers are provided grade-level collaborative planning time facilitated by the coach/facilitator to develop and refine their thematic units. The dedicated SEAL coach/facilitator works with all teachers to maximize the consistency and coherence of instruction and to encourage collaborative and reflective practice. The coach/facilitator also facilitates instructional and curriculum planning sessions to review curriculum standards, plan thematic units, and analyze the core program to determine where intensive language development strategies can be employed. Reflection and implementation tools help SEAL teachers assess the degree to which each of these four pillars is present in their classrooms and school. With these various supports, SEAL teachers are able to respond to the needs of their students and to adapt their practice to meet the needs of their contexts.

SEAL implementation also entails leadership development and technical assistance for site and district administrators. This component of the model focuses on instructional leadership, and builds coherence with other school and district initiatives (such as writing programs, technology initiatives, and behavior programs). It is critical that educational leaders understand their role in supporting teachers in the implementation of this language-intentional and language-rich model.

III.   Methodology, Data Sources, and Site Selection

This study employs a mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative methods, including observations, interviews, and focus groups, were used to explore how the SEAL model has been adapted and functions within superdiverse classrooms and communities. Quantitative methods were used to understand impacts on teacher efficacy.

The authors of this study are practitioner-researchers, occupying leadership roles within the SEAL model as designers, trainers, and supporters of the model's implementation.[19] Because the model was designed both as a demonstration of a unique mix of research-based practices and as a laboratory for understanding issues of systems change and policy within the DLL/EL education field, the authors are aware of their bias in favor of the efficacy of the model and toward its implementation as designed, but are also uniquely placed to leverage the powerful vantage point that close contact with the model in superdiverse classrooms allows.

Because the superdiverse context is a relatively new one for SEAL classrooms, exploratory qualitative methods were employed. These qualitative data were gathered and analyzed alongside quantitative data gathered from an external evaluation conducted by the Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) and the Wexford Institute. Observation in seven classrooms (kindergarten through grade 2) along with semi-structured interviews and teacher focus groups explored the challenges and opportunities related to meeting the needs of DLLs/ELs in superdiverse settings both prior to SEAL implementation and after teachers completed the training series. These data explore how the SEAL model is adapted to support DLLs/ELs specifically in superdiverse contexts. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with 14 teachers (in kindergarten through grade 3), three instructional coaches, two site and two district administrators, and six SEAL trainers.

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19   Peter Jarvis, The Practitioner-Researcher: Developing Theory from Practice (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

Teacher survey data from the external evaluation were analyzed to better understand teachers' feelings of efficacy as they implemented the model and its impact on their understanding of how to meet the needs of DLLs/ELs. These data derive from a survey of teachers who completed the two-year training series. Information on the implementation of the SEAL model as well as general DLL/EL practices was gathered by asking survey respondents to reflect on their professional growth over the course of the two years. The survey is an extension of the research-based, valid classroom observation tool, the Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL).[20] Results from 173 teachers in both superdiverse and more homogenous settings were analyzed. Given the anonymity of the survey, disaggregating data for all teachers in superdiverse schools was not feasible. Researchers were able to disaggregate a subgroup of 26 teachers in grades 2 and 3 within one district, Oak Grove School District, that includes seven superdiverse schools. These data were analyzed to understand whether the overall survey result trends appear consistent with the subgroup of teachers from superdiverse schools.

For the purpose of this study, superdiverse settings are defined as schools and classrooms with at least five language groups represented, and without a critical mass of any one language group in a classroom that would make dual-language/bilingual instruction feasible. This study focuses on two superdiverse school districts in California implementing the SEAL model: Oak Grove School District and San Lorenzo Unified School District. Students in Oak Grove speak 65 languages other than English (18.7 percent of all students speak Spanish, 4.8 percent Vietnamese, 0.5 percent Punjabi, 0.7 percent Filipino, 0.4 percent Arabic, and 4.1 percent speak other languages), while the San Lorenzo district is home to 36 languages (among them, 20 percent of all students speak Spanish, 2.7 percent Cantonese, 1.2 percent Filipino, 1.0 percent Vietnamese, and 0.6 percent Arabic). While both districts offer Spanish bilingual programs in a few schools where the Spanish-speaking DLL/EL population is concentrated, in many schools, the student composition is superdiverse. One of these schools from each district was chosen as a subunit of analysis: Parkview Elementary in Oak Grove and Dayton Elementary in San Lorenzo. Parkview Elementary has a DLL/EL population of 38 percent that speaks 21 different languages and offers Transitional Kindergarten (TK)[21] through grade 6. Dayton Elementary has a DLL/EL population of 63 percent that speaks 11 different languages and serves preschool through grade 5.

IV.   Findings

This section of the report begins with an exploration of the themes that arose when teachers and administrators reflected in interviews and focus groups on their experiences in superdiverse contexts prior to receiving training in the SEAL model. It then discusses the changes to teacher practice evident in the results of the retrospective SEAL teacher survey, interviews, focus groups, and observations.

A.   Pre-SEAL: Teachers and Classroom Practice

As teachers reflected on their pre-SEAL experience in superdiverse classrooms, a variety of themes emerged related to challenges and opportunities for meeting the needs of DLLs/ELs in these settings. Specifically, they identified issues that may be categorized as follows:

- a lack of awareness of the role of a child's home language;

- challenges focusing on students as DLLs/ELs;

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20   Elvira G. Armas and Magaly Lavendenz, "The Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL): A Tool for Supporting Teachers of English Language Learners," *The Multilingual Educator* (2011): 16–22.
21   Transitional kindergarten (TK) programs, as defined by statute, are not preschool classrooms or child development programs. They are the first year of a two-year kindergarten program and use a modified kindergarten curriculum. Pursuant to *EC* 48000(f), TK programs are intended to be aligned with the California Preschool Learning Foundations developed by the California Department of Education (CDE). See CDE, "Transitional Kindergarten FAQs," accessed November 14, 2017, www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kinderfaq.asp#program.

- the possibility of contributing to children's shame of their home language and culture;

- difficulty in communicating and connecting with parents and families; and

- challenges building English proficiency and production.

Another finding that emerged from this exercise is that there are benefits to teaching and learning in the superdiverse context. For example, a shared language (English) creates both motivation and a bond among students. These challenges and benefits are explored more fully below.

1.   Lack of Awareness of the Role of the Home Language

In California, most teachers in K-12 public school systems know which of their students are DLLs/ELs and are aware of each student's English proficiency levels as determined by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), as this information is provided on class rosters at the start of the school year. However, they are not given—and seldom develop—more than sketchy and idiosyncratic knowledge about each child's home-language proficiency unless they teach in a program that intentionally collects this information. Faced with a superdiverse DLL/EL population where children are not engaged in using their home languages with one another and where the English-instruction model makes the classroom an English-dominant environment, teachers reported that they often do not know which languages students speak at home. Furthermore, because children are not using their home languages in school, teachers reported they are not likely to think about the fact that children have knowledge in and facility with another language. In the words of several teachers, the child's home language seems "irrelevant" to their classroom practice and teachers see themselves as teachers of English. Students are expected to use only English in the classroom, and they do. After decades of an English-only context and policy in California schools, teachers function by and large without professional development, materials, or support that would focus attention on their students as bilinguals or provide them with strategies that draw upon a child's home language. Additionally, in the superdiverse context, children have few to no peers with whom they can speak in their home language.

While most teachers are generally aware that language learners have specific needs, most do not understand the role of the home language in language and academic learning.

While DLLs/ELs ideally use their home-language skills to learn a new language and content, the teachers interviewed approach teaching as a monolingual endeavor. In a superdiverse classroom, this tendency is evidently exacerbated since teachers feel overwhelmed by the possibility of engaging with multiple unfamiliar languages. While most teachers are generally aware that language learners have specific needs, most do not understand the role of the home language in language and academic learning.

Two teachers mentioned that they were not aware it was even permissible to allow children to use their home language at school prior to their participation in SEAL training. And two teachers repeated one of the myths about bilingual education that was prevalent during the divisive English-only battles in the state. As one said, "I just thought that it would hold kids back to encourage them to use their home language. Their parents really want them to learn English, and that's what's most important for their futures. I thought that if we encouraged them to use their home language, it would make it too easy for them to not learn English, and that it would be bad for them. My classroom was all about ENGLISH. I thought that was the right thing to do."

Even those teachers who reported being aware of the importance of accessing and supporting a child's home language prior to SEAL training said they did not know what to do with that understanding because they lacked strategies. A kindergarten teacher said, "I just thought, if I only speak and understand English, what can I do? I honestly didn't have a clue how to help." A first-grade teacher was more specific: "The thing is, if you don't know anything about a kid's language, it's really hard to support it or help them make the bridge to English. I didn't understand what's hard about English for them, or what's similar to their language so I could help. It was really hit or miss."

Bilingual teachers, having received a BCLAD credential, have more background in leveraging the home language, but even that doesn't necessarily speak to the challenges of teaching English in a superdiverse context. One of the second-grade teachers interviewed was trained as a bilingual teacher and had prior experience in bilingual programs. She shared:

> The thing is, I AM a bilingual teacher. I have a bilingual credential even though I have been teaching in an English classroom since Proposition 227. So, I know how important home language is. But with seven different languages in my classroom, I can't speak the languages of most of my students. I knew I wasn't supporting them the way I should, so I didn't feel effective before SEAL. I speak Spanish and English, but I thought I needed to speak all the languages of my students to teach them well. If I can't speak their language, how can I help? It felt horrible. It's like I can teach if I know your language, but what do I do if I can't speak it?

2. A Lack of Focus on Students as DLLs/ELs

Teachers noted that in superdiverse classrooms, prior to SEAL training, DLLs/ELs were not always visible to them. Immersed in English at school, most children find ways to function fairly quickly using whatever English they can muster and piece together. For teachers without skills in recognizing the stages of second language acquisition, the specific language development needs of DLLs/ELs can be overlooked since even floundering children can seem to be functioning. As one first-grade teacher explained:

> You just know them as their English selves. It's just Amelia, who loves drawing and hates being called on, and struggles with reading. I don't hear her using her home language, so it's not part of how I know her, and I don't consciously think, "Oh, she's an English Learner." She's just Amelia. If I stop and think, I realize she is using pretty limited vocabulary, but mostly she communicates pretty well so it's just not obvious that she's an English Learner. And in the rush of everything else going on, I have to admit, I just didn't focus that much on them as English Learners.

While this can be an issue for any teacher in an English instructional setting, it is intensified when students don't have peers with whom they can engage in their home language. Teachers don't hear students speaking other languages, so they aren't reminded that those students are DLLs/ELs. And if awareness of language status is low, so too is awareness of the need for specific scaffolds for DLLs/ELs that differ from other types of instructional support. Reflecting on her pre-SEAL perspective, one kindergarten teacher described the way in which the needs of her DLLs/ELs became lost in the overall task of teaching a class full of young children—all of them learning language:

> You know, all of my kids are language learners at this age, so they all need the same kind of support. I have a class of 26 kids and some are English Learners and some aren't, but I honestly think they just all have to learn English—whether they are labeled English Learner or not. To me, it's just about everyone has to get better in English and learn to read—they are all just kids.

3. The Development of Language Shame in an English-Only Classroom

For many young children, school is the terrain on which they first come to interact with people different from themselves and begin to recognize the ways in which their own family, experiences, and culture represent just one form of human experience. They notice and absorb the attitudes of the people around

them, developing either openness to or fear and distrust of people different from themselves. Those attitudes can shape how they come to see and feel about themselves and their language, culture, and family. They are particularly vulnerable to shame when their culture and language are held to be of lower value. Children begin to develop this sensitivity to societal attitudes as early as 3 years old, which then contributes to language loss and rejection.[22]

In reflecting back upon their pre-SEAL experience, teachers cited evidence of students developing shame about their home language and culture:

> *I didn't realize it at the time, there just kept being isolated incidents. But now looking back I can see the patterns. I tried giving affirming messages about how great [it was] that the kids can speak two languages, but actually I realize that when parents came into the classroom some of the kids were clearly embarrassed and would try to keep their parents from speaking, or not respond to their parents talking to them. And the few times I would ask a kid to tell me how they say something in their home language, they would refuse. And they never, ever volunteered anything in their language. How sad is that? And how sad that I never really paid it much mind. It wasn't my intention at all—but I guess I created a pretty total English classroom and kids interpret that.*

4.   Building Academic English Proficiency versus Functional Social Skills

Most DLLs/ELs develop basic interpersonal English relatively quickly. Interpersonal English is sufficient to function at a basic social level, but is not the same as academic English proficiency.[23] In a superdiverse classroom taught in English, with few (or no) peers who share their home language, children find ways to function with relatively low levels of English proficiency. Teachers tend to overestimate their students' language proficiency because they seem to function in English. Given the weak preparation many teachers in California receive for working with DLLs/ELs, it is not surprising that some may simply not understand that the DLLs/ELs in their class have specific needs or what scaffolds might be useful to build their English proficiency. In superdiverse environments, teachers reported that children seldom use their home language and, because they lack proficiency in English, appear less actively engaged in using language or are reluctant to speak. Teachers describe the language "norm" of the classroom becoming a simplified and basic functional level of the English language. As one teacher reflected:

> *I remember at one point I was visiting another school and happened to walk into a bilingual first grade and saw how much language the kids were producing. I looked on the walls and saw how much writing they were able to do. I remember thinking that I had gotten used to just thinking that first graders were supposed to be doing less, a kind of low bar in my own classroom for my English Learners. I mean, they were functioning in a language they barely knew, which I guess makes sense, but I wasn't holding in my own mind that so much language was possible for them—or that so much more language might be going on in their brains in their home language and not being utilized at school. But what could I do, I couldn't teach bilingually.*

Depending on the concentration of DLLs/ELs in a superdiverse classroom, there may or may not be strong English models. This is a challenge shared with teachers in bilingual and homogeneous English-taught programs where the concentration of DLLs/ELs is high. A few teachers spoke of this context and what they observed when their students' engagement with English was primarily with other DLLs/

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22   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English*; Julie Olsen Edwards and Louise Derman-Sparks, *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2010).

23   Jim Cummins, "Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency, Linguistic Interdependence, the Optimum Age Question and Some Other Matters," *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, no. 19 (1979): 121–29. This is the paper in which Cummins first makes a distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. The distinction is intended to draw attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language. Conversational fluency at a functional level is often acquired within about two years of initial exposure to the second language, whereas at least five years are usually required to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language.

ELs. According to teachers, the overall result was that language engagement in the classroom remained at a relatively simple and basic level, characterized by a variety of language errors children seemed to adopt from one another. This was the English that became normalized. As one teacher explained, "They'd just learn it from each other. And in a way, that was great. But then I'd start hearing the same mistakes over and over from all different kids." Another teacher added, "We become the English model. It's us. As teachers, we are the ones. But it's hard to stay conscious about that, you just slip back into saying what you need to say and not thinking of yourself as being the source of where they are going to get vocabulary, where they are going to get proficient English."

5.   Struggle to Communicate Effectively with Families

Across the board, teachers reported that one of the major challenges faced in a superdiverse classroom is difficulty communicating with families. Every teacher in the focus groups and interviews spoke with concern about challenges experienced in communicating with families with whom they do not share a language. Although they had devised various mechanisms to try to bridge the language barrier (e.g., photos posted daily of classroom activities so parents could see what children were working on, weekly translated notices generated with help from district translators, and reliance on bilingual parents to communicate with others), quality two-way communication was frequently a challenge. As one teacher noted:

> My kids and I pick up ways pretty quickly to communicate with each other, and they seem to learn English pretty quickly—or at least enough English so the classroom works. But I really feel the language problem in trying to communicate with their parents. The simplest thing like wanting to share some great thing the kid did that day, or the bigger problems when I'm concerned about a kid. How am I supposed to communicate with the parents? If it's really serious, I can call on my principal who can get a translator from the district for a formal meeting or notice, but it's the everyday things that really matter, too, and what do you do if you can't communicate? And it's not just the language, it's cultural, too. And I don't really know anything about their cultures.

This was echoed by the other teachers, citing their ignorance of the cultures of the children and their families, and sometimes even which languages were spoken at home. A kindergarten teacher noted:

> I had a new student from Nigeria. I looked it up online and saw there were several languages, but I didn't know which one my student spoke and I didn't know ANYTHING about Nigeria. And I couldn't just ask the mom because she doesn't speak English. So, it was just a big blank to me. I felt kind of bad about it. I just smiled at the mom to let her know I was friendly, but we didn't even have a translator or any information in the district about the family.

6.   The Benefits of Superdiverse Contexts

In addition to grappling with the challenges noted above, teachers also spoke movingly of the benefit of a superdiverse context—what one teacher called "the gift." They cited the motivating power of students relying on a single common language, and the unifying power of students experiencing a shared endeavor of learning English. Learning a new language together creates a shared need and also empathy for one another's efforts. Furthermore, as teachers and coaches noted, in a superdiverse classroom, children become aware that there are many different languages spoken in the world. It is clear to children that their language isn't just "not English," but is one of many languages spoken in the community. Where there isn't a critical mass of any language or cultural group in the class, teachers report seeing friendships form across cultural and linguistic boundaries. A kindergarten teacher described how she feels sometimes, looking at her class, "Call me corny. Call me sentimental. Whatever. I just look at these children, of all different colors and from many parts of the world, sitting together and playing together in my classroom. It's what the world should be."

B. Post-SEAL: Teachers and Classroom Practice

After two years of SEAL professional development, coaching, and implementation of SEAL instructional and curriculum changes in their classrooms, teachers reported increased understanding of the needs of their DLL/EL students and how to address them in a superdiverse classroom context. Armed with strategies for handling many of the challenges they faced previously, teachers reported that their students have a higher level of English proficiency, stronger language development, and greater engagement in the classroom. Parent and family engagement has risen, and students appear to have deeper respect and feel more connected with children of other cultures and languages. Teachers attribute these improvements to their professional growth in the SEAL implementation process. This section reports patterns made evident by the teacher survey, followed by an analysis of interviews, focus groups, and observation data to provide more context and detail.

Armed with strategies for handling many of the challenges they faced previously, teachers reported that their students have a higher level of English proficiency.

1. External Evaluation Results

Below are the results from the SEAL teacher survey. These data represent 173 teachers across both superdiverse and other contexts. As discussed in the methods section, a subset of teachers from superdiverse schools was disaggregated (see Appendix) and trends appear consistent between this subgroup and the broader group of teachers. After two years of participating in the SEAL professional development series and embedded teacher collaboration,[24] teachers overall reported possessing high degrees of self-efficacy (a sense that they can positively impact student outcomes) in meeting the needs of their DLL/EL students. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy and confidence in their teaching abilities appear to be more receptive to implementing new instructional practices.[25] Below are findings from each section of the teacher survey.

a. Increased Understanding of and Ability to Address the Language Issues of DLLs/ELs.

The SEAL model had a significant impact on the perceived knowledge and skills of teachers related to addressing the needs of DLLs/ELs. As shown in Table 1, after going through SEAL training, the vast majority of teachers (85 percent to 98 percent) reported that they agree or strongly agree with statements of their knowledge and skills in teaching DLLs/ELs. These items include understanding second language acquisition, designing and delivering intentional ELD connected to the demands of academic content, and skills in differentiating instruction to address language proficiency levels. Compared with a retrospective self-assessment of their actions before the SEAL training (in which 45 percent to 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed with these statements), this represents notable growth.

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24 This consists of seven two-day modules that engage teachers in hands-on activities related to research and best practices, as well as strategies that support English learners (Thematic Planning; Oral Language; Analytic Language and Thought; Collaboration and Team Work; The World in the Classroom and Authentic Writing; Reading and Deepening Writing; and Joy, Choice, and Celebration of Learning). In addition to these modules, teachers receive coaching support, as well as release days for unit development and collaboration with colleagues. Teachers are also invited to participate in a ten-day summer bridge program.

25 Mary Lynne Derrington and Pamela S. Angelle, "Teacher Leadership and Collective Efficacy: Connections and Links," *International Journal of Teacher Leadership* 4, no. 1 (2013): 1–13; Terri Barber Kurz and Stephanie L. Knight, "An Exploration of the Relationship among Teacher Efficacy, Collective Teacher Efficacy, and Goal Consensus," *Learning Environments Research* 7, no. 2 (2004): 111–28; Thomas R. Guskey and Perry Passaro, "Teacher Efficacy: A Study of Construct Dimensions," *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (2014): 627–42.

Table 1. Teacher Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills in Teaching DLLs/ELs, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before (retrospective)			After		
	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree n (%)	Neither Disagree nor Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree n (%)	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree n (%)	Neither Disagree nor Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree n (%)
Designated English Language Development is designed in preparation for and in response to the academic content taught across the school day.	47 (27%)	44 (26%)	81 (47%)	4 (2%)	10 (6%)	156 (92%)
I have the materials, tools, and assessment information to differentiate instruction according to students' language proficiency levels and needs.	49 (28%)	46 (27%)	78 (45%)	13 (8%)	8 (5%)	152 (88%)
I am knowledgeable about language development practices.	14 (8%)	37 (22%)	121 (70%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	167 (98%)
I am knowledgeable about SECOND language development practices.	25 (15%)	36 (21%)	110 (64%)	4 (2%)	14 (8%)	152 (89%)
I know how to differentiate instruction according to students' language proficiency levels and needs.	21 (12%)	30 (17%)	121 (70%)	2 (1%)	9 (5%)	160 (94%)

b.   *Incorporation of a Child's Home Language*

More than two-thirds of survey respondents indicated agreement or strong agreement that, after SEAL training, they provided access to materials and content in the child's home language, opportunities for students to use their home language in the classroom, and instruction that builds metalinguistic awareness (Table 2).[26] This represents growth from their pre-SEAL position. Whereas approximately one-fourth of teachers rarely or never engaged in such practices prior to SEAL training, afterwards, 4 percent to 12 percent rarely or never incorporated home language in their classrooms.

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26 Metalinguistic awareness has been defined as "the ability to objectify language and dissect it as an arbitrary linguistic code independent of 'meaning.'" It is becoming aware of language and how it works. See Froma P. Roth, Deborah L. Speece, David H. Cooper, and Susan de la Paz, "Unsolved Mysteries: How Do Metalinguistic and Narrative Skills Connect with Early Reading?" *Journal of Special Education* 30, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 258. For students engaged in two language systems, it includes awareness of the two systems and the transfer of linguistic knowledge across two languages.

Table 2. Teacher Self-Assessment of Incorporation of Home Languages, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before (retrospective)			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I provide access to content and materials in students' home language.	45 (28%)	59 (37%)	57 (35%)	10 (6%)	40 (25%)	109 (69%)
I know how to teach English taking into consideration students' home language with a focus on contrastive analysis, cognates, and language separation.	38 (22%)	44 (26%)	88 (52%)	7 (4%)	18 (11%)	146 (85%)
I provide opportunities for students to use their home language in addition to English and include support for transferring skills between the two languages.	41 (25%)	41 (25%)	80 (49%)	19 (12%)	28 (17%)	114 (71%)

c.   *Incorporation of Family and Community, and Development of Home-Life Connections*

As in other sections of the teacher survey, SEAL training was shown to have a strong impact on teachers' ability to make home-school connections and to bring students' lives and experiences into the classroom (see Table 3). After receiving training, the vast majority of teachers indicated they always or often create activities and opportunities for children to engage with their families on the content they are learning at school, and nearly all incorporate students' experiences into the curriculum.

Table 3. Teacher Self-Assessment of Building Family, Community, and Home-Life Connections, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before (retrospective)			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I create activities that engage children with their families in connection with the thematic content I am teaching.	47 (29%)	64 (39%)	52 (32%)	1 (1%)	20 (12%)	143 (87%)
I help build on students' life experiences and interests to make the content relevant and meaningful to them.	2 (1%)	40 (24%)	122 (74%)	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	158 (96%)

d.   *Engaging Students in Comprehensible Instruction*

The use of strategies that intentionally teach academic language and academic discourse, and provide language-related scaffolding for DLLs/ELs was greatly enhanced by SEAL training. As can be seen in Table 4, almost all respondents (96 percent to 99 percent) rated themselves as always or often engaging in the stated practices.

Table 4. Teacher Self-Assessment of Engaging Students in Comprehensible Instruction, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before (retrospective)			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I teach complex, high-level language vocabulary and discourse—including a focus on language functions related to academic content.	24 (15%)	88 (54%)	51 (31%)	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	157 (96%)
I amplify student input (e.g., graphic organizers, sketches, photos, realia).	21 (13%)	72 (44%)	71 (43%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	162 (99%)
I model the complex and academic language I want students to hear and use.	13 (8%)	52 (32%)	99 (60%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	163 (99%)
I create opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and thinking—both orally and in writing.	7 (4%)	57 (35%)	99 (61%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	163 (99%)
I explain key terms, clarify idiomatic expressions, use gestures and/or visuals.	10 (6%)	53 (32%)	101 (62%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	161 (98%)
I use strategies to scaffold student comprehension.	6 (4%)	44 (27%)	114 (70%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	161 (98%)
I provide frequent feedback and check for comprehension.	6 (4%)	38 (23%)	120 (73%)	0 (0%)	4 (2%)	160 (98%)
I use informal assessments of student learning to adjust instruction while teaching.	9 (5%)	36 (22%)	119 (73%)	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	158 (96%)

e.   Creating Affirming Classroom Environments that Support Participation and Engagement

In the cluster of survey items related to SEAL's pillar of creating affirming and language-rich environments, shown in Table 5, the vast majority of teachers (88 percent to 99 percent) indicated that their post-SEAL practices always or often reflect children's cultural and linguistic diversity, support hands-on and inquiry-based learning, and provide structures for oral interaction, and that students are consistently engaged and participating actively.

Table 5. Teacher Self-Assessment of Affirming and Participatory Classroom Environment, before and after SEAL Training

Statement	Before (retrospective)			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I create an environment that supports hands-on, inquiry-based centers and dramatic play linked to the thematic unit.	39 (24%)	74 (45%)	51 (31%)	1 (1%)	15 (9%)	146 (90%)
My classroom environment reflects and affirms my students' cultural and linguistic diversity.	11 (7%)	58 (35%)	95 (58%)	3 (2%)	16 (10%)	145 (88%)
I provide content-rich, print-rich, and affirming environments for my students.	4 (2%)	41 (25%)	119 (73%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	162 (99%)
My students are consistently engaged and participate actively.	1 (1%)	54 (33%)	109 (66%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	159 (97%)
I regularly structure oral interaction activities.	14 (9%)	71 (44%)	78 (48%)	0 (0%)	4 (2%)	159 (98%)

Overall, marked growth occurred in the self-reported use of all of the research-based practices after SEAL training, when the vast majority of respondents reported implementing these practices always or often. Performance related specifically to the fostering of home languages was somewhat weaker than that associated with overall language scaffolding and responsiveness to English language proficiency levels. These findings suggest that respondents perceived themselves as using what they learned during SEAL training, while also indicating the need for even greater support and emphasis on how teachers can incorporate children's home languages into instruction.

2.   Interviews, Focus Groups, and Classroom Observations

Interviews, teacher focus groups, and classroom observations also provided evidence that the SEAL model effectively prepares teachers to meet the needs of their superdiverse students. In one grade 2 classroom at Parkview Elementary, more than half of the 30 students are DLLs/ELs. They represent seven different language groups. Five speak Spanish, four speak Vietnamese, three speak Tagalog, two speak Mandarin, one speaks Russian, and one speaks Arabic. Among the ten English-proficient students in the class, four speak a heritage language other than English (Korean, Tagalog, Portuguese, and Persian) with varying degrees of proficiency. After attending a SEAL training, the teacher assigned her students a home-school connection activity—a standard SEAL strategy in a thematic unit, meant to engage families and children in talking about the content of the unit. Students were asked to work with their families to create a chant about an ocean animal and its habitat in the family home language or any other language the parents or students know. Inviting families to work together in the home language and asking children to share in those languages was a new foray for the teacher; as she reported, "It just hadn't occurred to me before SEAL."

Once the project was completed, she reflected, "They seemed so proud, and like it was such a big deal to be able to bring something to class in their home language!" She added that she had been concerned about how her class would react to sitting and listening to chants in languages they couldn't understand,

"… but, you know, I underestimated them. They were really respectful and interested. They LISTENED. It's like they knew it was important to their friends to be doing this. Like they picked up on what it means to share your language. And they wanted to know how to say the chants in Portuguese and Spanish. I'm so proud of them!"

The SEAL training also helped teachers recognize that young children learn language in large part through relationships.[27] Simply, they learn English from listening to and interacting with the people around them who are speaking and using English and with whom they want to interact. SEAL teachers become aware of themselves as an important language coach and language model for their students— informally in relating to them, as well as instructionally. In addition to intentionally amplifying student talk, teachers constantly use language to describe their actions throughout the day. Just as SEAL classrooms are alive with the sound of student talk, SEAL teachers are trained to miss no opportunity to use expressive and complex language to describe the world around them and to engage children actively in conversation.

Teachers use a variety of scaffolds to support students in the production of formal English. These include sentence frames, sentence patterning charts, graphic organizers, and language function walls. The teacher in the grade 2 example above learned to support her DLLs through small group Designated English Language Development (DELD) lessons that, during the ocean habitat unit, focused on using language to compare and contrast. She uses tools such as Venn diagrams and sentence frames (e.g., "Whereas Rachel Carson focused on_____, in contrast _____.")

The challenge of finding materials extends beyond the language of the text to the search for books that include images and experiences that mirror the students' lives and cultures.

Ensuring adequate and appropriate materials to create an affirming and rich learning environment is an essential component of a SEAL classroom. Through their SEAL professional development, teachers learn to tap their creativity as they plan units that respond to the linguistic demands of the academic content. High-level informational and literary text is crucial, and teachers and coaches search for appropriate materials, guided by SEAL criteria. Teachers and coaches in superdiverse SEAL schools report that school and classroom libraries are inadequate for these purposes. To address this need, as per a MoU signed by the school district when initially launching SEAL, each SEAL classroom receives an allocation of roughly USD 2,000 to purchase additional materials related to their thematic units. Within superdiverse contexts, the challenge of finding materials extends beyond the language of the text to the search for books that include images and experiences that mirror the students' lives and cultures. With the exception of Spanish language and Latino/Hispanic culture, there are few distributors that provide access to such materials, and particularly those related to the standards-based context of SEAL thematic units. Within these SEAL superdiverse schools, the coach-facilitator plays an important role in helping to research and gather materials that reflect the language and cultural diversity of students.

Many participants in the interviews and focus groups reported that just a little knowledge of the grammar, syntax, and phonology of student home languages goes a long way toward supporting students' growth in English. Even if they cannot speak Spanish, for example, simply knowing that the adjective in Spanish is placed after the noun (not before it, as in English) gives teachers a way to explain the two language systems to their students and helps them understand why they might hear a Spanish-speaking student misplace the adjective in English. Or, understanding that the "th" sound isn't part of the Spanish language, a teacher introducing English words with the "th" sound might provide extra practice time.

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27 Robert C. Pianta and Megan W. Stuhlman, "Teacher-Child Relationships and Children's Success in the First Years of School," *School Psychology Review* 33, no. 3 (2004): 444–58.

As noted above, an essential component of the SEAL model is the coach/facilitator assigned to each school. At Parkview Elementary School, the SEAL coach/facilitator was supporting a teacher who said she was overwhelmed with all the different languages in her class. This particular teacher had previously taught bilingually and was credentialed as a bilingual teacher, but was (as is the case of many bilingual teachers since Proposition 227 in California) now teaching in an English-only program. Her expertise and training as a bilingual teacher gave her a strong conviction in the importance of home languages, but her superdiverse classroom left her feeling inadequate and uncomfortable; she didn't have the language skills to teach all of the children in their home language.

In order to help the teacher learn how to work with speakers of different languages in her classroom, the coach/facilitator started with one student, researching her home languages, Punjabi and Hindi, so that she could discover some of the similarities and differences between the phonological system of the child's languages and English. Listening to the student read aloud, the coach listened carefully to the child's oral language and realized that the student was having particular difficulty with specific sounds associated with the English letter "o." Using internet resources, and the ESL Teacher's Book of Lists,[28] the coach learned that there were no comparable sounds in the child's languages. The child needed specific practice distinguishing between various vowel sounds that can be written as "o" or "oa." As the coach/facilitator worked with the student, the teacher realized she could listen for and diagnose reading and writing struggles of her students through the lens of cross-linguistic comparisons. She reflected, "It turns out I don't really need to be able to speak all of their languages, but I definitely need to know something about their language and the relationship to English."

Coaches also help teachers access translation services so that they can provide information about the curriculum to families. Knowing that a variety of languages are welcome in the classroom also makes parents feel comfortable enough to become involved. At the end of each unit, students post their work on the walls of the classroom, and can take their parents on a tour of the work, describing their learning in their native language. Parents are also invited to help in the classroom by recording themselves reading books in their language on tape, which become part of the classroom "library" at the listening center.

Teachers also spoke with great pride about the emerging friendships across language and cultural groups that they observed. Cross-cultural understanding is a major feature of their classroom communities. One teacher was almost in tears as she spoke to this point:

> I honestly think of my class as a little United Nations. It makes me teary sometimes to look at them and see children from all over the world who are friends. They don't always visit each other's homes, and sometimes it stops outside of school, but at least here—in this classroom, in this school—they are really learning and experiencing friendship across all of those cultural and language differences. And they know about each other's worlds now. I mean really, what could be more beautiful or more important!

While this echoes what teachers were saying in the pre-SEAL focus groups, it illustrates that the benefits of a superdiverse classroom are deepened through SEAL. The friendships formed before the introduction of SEAL, but the new model helped students become more knowledgeable about each other's worlds.

By organizing teachers into cohorts that collaborate across classrooms and sites, SEAL creates a structured space for professional support, interaction, and leadership. This allows teachers to support one another as they shift their classroom climate and tackle the challenges of working with superdiverse learners. One example serves to illustrate how teachers support one another with ideas they have learned in their SEAL training. One day, a kindergarten teacher in an English-instructed superdiverse classroom at Dayton Elementary school noticed two Mandarin-speaking students stepping out into the hall in the midst of a small group experiment. When they returned to the classroom, she asked why they had left. One answered, "Because only English is allowed in school," and the other said, "I didn't want to get in trouble." In relating this story in an interview, the teacher was aghast, saying, "I never said anything like

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28   Jacqueline E. Kress, *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Book of Lists* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

that, that they were only to speak English. And I certainly never meant to send that message! I guess I never realized the heavy impact of what it means to kids to walk into a classroom where their language is never mentioned." She addressed the issue at a SEAL collaborative planning day with other teachers. Together, the teachers brainstormed how to begin to shift the climate in their classrooms to be more supportive of language diversity. They developed a list of children's books that touch on the subject of bilingualism and attitudes/feelings about language. They talked about how to invite parents and families to share their language, read books in their language, and help teach some songs and chants to the class. The teacher recalled:

> *Once we started talking about it, we got ideas. And they seemed like kind of little ideas. I mean, would it really make a difference to ask everyone in the class to go home and find out how to say something and then to teach us how to say "force and motion" in their home language so we could make a poster for the classroom of our theme in multiple languages? Well, guess what, it really DID make a difference. A little thing can begin to shift how kids feel. It breaks the English-only lock. It turns out that it takes surprisingly little to make a difference in our student's pride.*

She went on to describe that her students loved learning the different languages, and that one girl asked her the word for someone who speaks six languages because, "I'm not just bilingual anymore, now I can say 'force and motion' in six languages."

V.   Conclusions and Implications

Superdiversity is an increasing reality in many communities and schools, and it poses unique challenges and opportunities for meeting the needs of DLLs/ELs. In a field that has largely focused on either bilingual/dual-language program settings or English-taught settings without distinguishing the superdiverse context or its implications, teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms have been left without the explicit tools and support to leverage children's home languages and create classrooms that embrace the cultural realities of student lives beyond the classroom. The binary view of two language model settings (bilingual/dual language or English instructed) reflected in policy, field guidance, and professional development for teachers is inadequate. While superdiverse classrooms share many similarities with more homogenous DLL/EL contexts, they should be understood as a specific type of setting with specific practice and policy implications.

To focus solely on English misses an important leverage point in language/literacy development for the DLL child.

Research on the foundational importance of children's home languages, regardless of whether they are being schooled in an English-instructed or bilingual/dual-language program, suggests that all teachers of DLLs/ELs need to understand the role that a child's home language plays in the development of language and literacy overall, including the learning of English. To focus solely on English misses an important leverage point in language/literacy development for the DLL child. Though linguistic theory and practices of bilingual pedagogy are applicable to the instructional context of superdiverse classrooms, they must be adapted and expanded for that context. The SEAL model offers teachers in all settings foundational understanding of dual-language development and strategies that respond to students as DLLs/ELs. However, the applicability of some of those strategies differ for superdiverse classrooms. For example, metalinguistic awareness is relevant in all settings but is implemented quite differently depending on the make-up of the classroom. In a homogenous DLL/EL setting, the teacher can engage the class in direct

cross-linguistic work focusing with some depth on the relationship between the two languages that all of the children know. In a superdiverse classroom, the teacher may use a few examples from one or two languages to make a general point about issues of transfer and contrast, but leave specifics to one-on-one instruction with students.

The SEAL model is an example of professional development that follows the components of high-quality, sustained staff development supported by job-embedded coaching and facilitation, and coupled with leadership development across the system. This requires significant investments in teacher time and support staff, as well as in the purchase and development of specific materials. This investment is made over time (three years at minimum). And while this investment may have been possible in the past, for districts that prioritized a comprehensive approach, for districts without this commitment, and in a time of tightening resources, this kind of professional development may depend upon an infusion of resources beyond the regular base budget. It becomes, therefore, a matter of state or federal policy. In the 1980s and 1990s, state and federal investments helped build a workforce for bilingual programs.[29] In the 21st century, federal and state funds for professional development, pilot and demonstration projects, research on effective practices, and development of teacher preparation coursework would go a long way toward creating a stronger knowledge base and capacity to deliver effective DLL/EL education in superdiverse settings.

The validation, celebration, and encouragement of multilingualism create a climate in which the languages and cultures of all children are embraced

All students are best served in classrooms that affirm their language and culture and that create community. In superdiverse classrooms, a teacher's ability to comprehensively know and understand all languages and cultures is limited. Strategies that work to highlight cultures, promote metalinguistic awareness, and leverage home languages are far more difficult to accomplish in such settings. And yet, the validation, celebration, and encouragement of multilingualism create a climate in which the languages and cultures of all children are embraced; this is critical in diverse classrooms. Strategies should be used to build home-school connections across language and cultural differences, and to communicate to families the importance of home-language development. This requires additional resources and expertise, given that materials and translation services are essential. In addition, teachers in superdiverse settings need resources specific to their contexts. For example, they need books for their classrooms in all the home languages of their students, reference materials related to cross-linguistic transfer patterns, cognate dictionaries across multiple languages, as well as literature and visuals that reflect broad cultural and linguistic diversity so students see themselves reflected in the classroom and in the world of books. All of this can be fairly easily accessed for some languages, but many superdiverse classrooms serve children who are speakers of home languages that are less common in the United States. The SEAL model provides not only professional development, but also coach/facilitators and collaborative models for teachers. This enables them to plan for and prepare the materials reflective of the cultures and languages of their students.

In all of these areas, there is a need to adapt general principles of good practice, to be explicit in taking what is generally known and supported by research about DLL/EL education, and to apply it to the superdiverse setting. The teacher preparation, training, coaching, and collaboration needed to ensure that

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29 For example, for decades, federal Title VII funds supported pilot and demonstration projects, professional development, evaluation research, and teacher recruitment and preparation related to meeting the needs of ELs and specifically to build capacity to deliver bilingual programs. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, California provided state funding for specific professional development efforts to build a bilingual teacher workforce, as well as to provide stipends for credential candidates to fill the need.

DLLs/ELs in superdiverse settings receive high-quality curriculum and instruction require investments and systemic approaches that truly build professional capacity.

In superdiverse classrooms, English is the common language, and children have tremendous motivation to learn and use it. For most of the children in the classroom, there is no lingua franca besides English. Being a DLL/EL in a community of multilinguals becomes a shared experience that bonds children across language groups.

This exploratory study points to the potential that exists in English-taught superdiverse classrooms for children to experience language loss, develop a sense of shame, and conclude that their home language and culture are irrelevant. However, when teachers and schools can build upon the opportunities of superdiverse settings, rich with multiple languages and cultures, they can forge vibrant learning communities. Then, classrooms and schools can operationalize the vision of preparing global, 21st-century citizens who are rooted in the gifts of their home cultures and heritage, with a strong common language in English, and the skills and attitudes to bridge cultural differences. This is the promise of superdiverse classrooms.

Appendix. Subset of Grades 2 and 3 Superdiverse Teacher Survey Results from Oak Grove (n=26)

Table A-1. Superdiverse District: Teacher Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills in Teaching English Learners, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before			After		
	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree n (%)	Neither Disagree nor Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree n (%)	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree n (%)	Neither Disagree nor Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree n (%)
Designated English Language Development is designed in preparation for and in response to the academic content taught across the school day.	8 (31%)	7 (27%)	11 (42%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	21 (81%)
I have the materials, tools, and assessment information to differentiate instruction according to students' language proficiency levels and needs.	12 (46%)	6 (23%)	8 (31%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	23 (88%)
I am knowledgeable about language development practices.	3 (12%)	5 (19%)	18 (69%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	24 (92%)
I am knowledgeable about SECOND language development practices.	5 (19%)	5 (19%)	15 (58%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	23 (88%)
I know how to differentiate instruction according to students' language proficiency levels and needs.	4 (15%)	6 (23%)	16 (62%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	22 (85%)

Table A-2. Superdiverse District: Teacher Self-Assessment of Incorporation of Home Languages, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I provide access to content and materials in students' home language.	8 (42%)	7 (37%)	4 (21%)	4 (21%)	4 (21%)	11 (58%)
I know how to teach English taking into consideration students' home language with a focus on contrastive analysis, cognates, and language separation.	5 (19%)	12 (46%)	9 (35%)	1 (4%)	6 (23%)	19 (73%)
I provide opportunities for students to use their home language in addition to English and include support for transferring skills between the two languages.	6 (32%)	5 (26%)	8 (42%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	13 (68%)

Table A-3. Superdiverse District: Teacher Self-Assessment of Building Family, Community, and Home-Life Connections, before and after SEAL Training

Statements	Before			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I create activities that engage children with their families in connection with the thematic content I am teaching.	4 (21%)	9 (47%)	6 (32%)	0 (0%)	3 (16%)	16 (84%)
I help build on students' life experiences and interests to make the content relevant and meaningful to them.	2 (11%)	2 (11%)	15 (79%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)

Table A-4. Superdiverse District: Teacher Self-Assessment of Engaging Students in Comprehensible Instruction, before and after SEAL Training

Statement	Before			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I teach complex, high-level language vocabulary and discourse—including a focus on language functions related to academic content.	2 (11%)	6 (32%)	11 (58%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
I amplify student input (e.g., graphic organizers, sketches, photos, realia).	3 (16%)	5 (26%)	11 (58%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
I model the complex and academic language I want students to hear and use.	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
I create opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and thinking—both orally and in writing.	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
I explain key terms, clarify idiomatic expressions, use gestures and/or visuals.	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	13 (68%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
I use strategies to scaffold student comprehension.	0 (0%)	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	17 (89%)
I provide frequent feedback and check for comprehension.	1 (5%)	6 (32%)	12 (63%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
I use informal assessments of student learning to adjust instruction while teaching.	1 (5%)	4 (21%)	14 (74%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)

Table A-5. Superdiverse District: Teacher Self-Assessment of Affirming and Participatory Classroom Environment, before and after SEAL Training

Statement	Before			After		
	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)	Rarely/ Never n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Always/ Often n (%)
I create an environment that supports hands-on, inquiry-based centers and dramatic play linked to the thematic unit.	3 (16%)	8 (42%)	8 (42%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
My classroom environment reflects and affirms my students' cultural and linguistic diversity.	3 (16%)	6 (32%)	10 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
I provide content-rich, print-rich, and affirming environments for my students.	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
My students are consistently engaged and participate actively.	0 (0%)	7 (37%)	12 (63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
I regularly structure oral interaction activities.	3 (16%)	7 (37%)	9 (47%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	17 (89%)

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The early part of Dr. Hurwitz's career was in New York City, where she helped start a small secondary school in the Bronx and then became a Network Leader within the NYC Department of Education for a diverse group of 24 schools, preschool through early college. In 2010, she moved to northern California and began working as an educational consultant supporting district and school leaders as they planned and implemented strategic reform efforts. Dr. Hurwitz joined the SEAL team in 2014, first as Deputy Director and then taking on the role of Executive Director in 2016.

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