Dynamic Language Learning Progressions Project[1] at UCLA
In Partnership with the ASSETS Consortium[2]
www.dllp.org

Participants of DLLP Professional Development Projects

Pre-pilot study. Six university demonstration teachers in an urban area in the western United States

Pilot study. Ten public school teachers, two administrators and two county office of education personnel in a public school district in the western United States (90% English learner students)

➡ PreK-6th grade teachers with 1-25 years of experience

➡ All had multiple-subject credential; two held cultural and/or bilingual certification

Pre-pilot Study Design and Findings

In this exploratory project, teachers practiced implementing the DLLP approach in their classrooms for 2 years. During researcher-facilitated monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, teachers made observations about their experiences and gave suggestions for future DLLP professional development initiatives. Their recommendations included:

➡ Enabling teachers to choose which of the DLLP language features to focus on

➡ Requiring time and commitment from teachers and administrators

➡ Collaborating on feedback during monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings

Pilot Study Design

Using the suggestions made by teachers in the pre-pilot, we conducted a five-month pilot implementation study with ten K-5th grade teachers. The teachers, administrators and county office of education personnel participated in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that began with a day-long professional learning seminar. Findings from the seminar and the five-month implementation are described below.

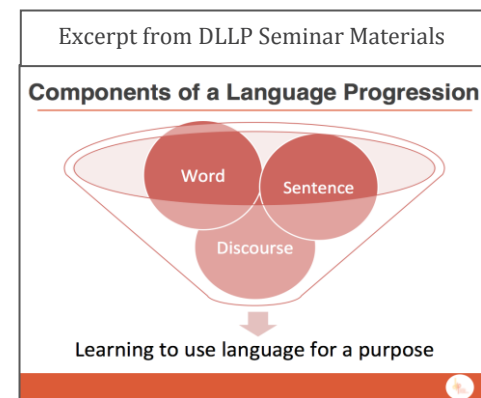## Teacher Learning Following a Day-Long Professional Learning Seminar

The initial day-long professional learning seminar combined information about formative assessment, learning progressions, and the academic language development of English learners. Teachers also learned to analyze students' explanations to find the "best fit" on the DLLP for specific language features (e.g., sentence structure, coherence). At the beginning and end of the seminar, they filled out questionnaires about their knowledge and understanding of the material and its application in their classrooms.

Research Question:

1. *What kinds of changes occur in teachers' perspectives on formative assessment, learning progressions, and academic language development, after a day-long professional learning seminar?*

➡ Few teachers had knowledge of learning progressions at the start of the day. After the seminar, four teachers gave clear descriptions, three described how they would use learning progressions in the future and one was able to describe the purpose of learning progressions. Here is an example of a teacher's before/after responses:

Excerpt from DLLP Seminar Materials

Components of a Language Progression

Word

Sentence

Discourse

Learning to use language for a purpose

Before: *I believe a learning progression is how a student's learning progresses*

through the grade levels. …we looked how students' learning progressed through a specific math standard from K-6th grade.

After: *Learning progressions describe student learning over time. It is a continuum that progressively gets more sophisticated as they progress over time.*

➡ Five teachers began the seminar with a clear understanding of formative assessment. Three additional teachers gave clear descriptions after the seminar.

➡ Teachers' descriptions of academic language development most often referred to vocabulary only, not mentioning the sentence structure and discourse-level language features that also characterize academic language. The responses of seven teachers suggest that after the seminar, they gained some knowledge about purpose of focusing on academic language.

Changes in Teacher Practice Based on the DLLP Approach

Over the five-month period, teachers implemented the DLLP approach during content instruction. Teachers and administrators videotaped students' oral and written explanations to provide teachers with evidence of students' initial language-learning needs and any changes that occurred. Teachers also participated in monthly Professional Learning Community meetings. At the beginning and end of the pilot period, teachers completed a questionnaire about their instructional practices, and each classroom was observed by county office personnel.

Research Question:

1. *What changes occur in teachers' reported and observed practices related to the DLLP approach to formative assessment and instruction across the five-month pilot period?*

➡ Teachers reported (on a five-point scale) that at the end of the pilot period, they provided more frequent opportunities for students to engage in oral discourse, self-assessment, and peer assessment than at the beginning of the pilot.

➡ Classroom observations also showed that most teachers increased the size of their explanation repertoires (i.e., inclusion of additional explanations types, such as cause and effect) by the second observation. Students in the primary grades modelled explanations more often at the end than at the start of the pilot, giving greater exposure to explanations for all students. Students responded more to teacher requests for explanations at the second observations in some cases, especially in the upper elementary classrooms.

Sources: Bailey, A.L. Chang, S., & Heritage, M. (April, 2015). *Teacher Adoption of Language Learning Progressions: First Signs of Impact on Language Development in Students with Diverse English Language Experiences.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL; Heritage, M. & Bailey, A.L. (April, 2015). Scaling-up Language Learning Progressions to Support Formative Assessment: Lessons Learned from a Case Study Implementation. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL; Bailey, A.L, Blackstock-Bernstein, A., Chang, S. & Heritage, M. (2016, October). *Report of Pilot Implementation of the DLLP Approach to Formative Assessment and Instruction of ELD and Academic Content.* ASSETS Consortium (WCER) Project Deliverable. University of California, Los Angeles; Bailey, A.L., & Heritage, M., (2017). Imperatives for teacher education: Findings from studies of effective teaching for English language learners (pp. 697-712). In M. Peters, B. Cowie & I. Menter (eds.) *A Companion to Research in Teacher Education.* Berlin: Springer.

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