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Examining opportunities for dialogic talk in a Kindergarten English Language Development classroom

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**Community of Scholars Day
Individual Paper Presentation Proposal**

*Examining opportunities for dialogic talk
in a Kindergarten English Language Development classroom*

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Purpose and Background

Dialogic talk, in which students are engaged in authentic, extended discourse where meaning is co-constructed and conceptual understanding is incrementally built, is an important aspect of English Language Development instruction (Gersten et al., 2007; Harper & de Jong, 2004; O'Connor & Michaels, 2007; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010; Snow & Katz, 2010; Gibbons, 2015; Mercer, Dawes, & Staarman, 2009). Supported by Russell and Faculty Development Grants, this study examines how teacher language use in an inquiry-based science unit both facilitated and constrained dialogic talk in a Kindergarten ELD classroom in a Two-Way Dual Language context.

Specifically, I ask:

- In what ways are emerging bilingual students engaged in authentic, extended discourse during a science unit in ELD class?
- How does an ELD teacher's language use facilitate and/or constrain students' opportunities for engaging in authentic, extended discourse during this unit?

Methodology

This qualitative case study draws on three, one-hour observations of a Kindergarten ELD class selected from a larger study. This smaller study examines Kindergarteners' language use as they engaged in hands-on, experiential lessons in a "Solids and Liquids" unit. I audio recorded whole-group and small-group interactions and used a combination of inductive and deductive coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) to examine both the nature of the students' interactions and the role of teacher language in constraining and/or supporting extended discourse.

Results and Significance

Preliminary results suggest that a combination of strategic questioning and inquiry-based, hands-on science activities facilitated opportunities for dialogic talk. Nevertheless, traditional monologic patterns of teacher talk persisted at times. Examples of teacher and student language are provided. Implications for both content and language learning are discussed, including the role of teacher facilitation in student interaction.

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Short description of paper for conference program and website:

Dialogic talk, in which students are engaged in authentic, extended discourse where meaning is co-constructed and conceptual understanding is incrementally built, is an important aspect of English Language Development instruction. Supported by Russell and Faculty Development Grants, this study examines how teacher language use in an inquiry-based science unit both facilitated and constrained dialogic talk in a Kindergarten ELD classroom in a Two-Way Dual Language context.