THE CONVERGENCE OF NEGOTIATED IMAGINATIVE PLAY, LITERACY LEARNING AND KINDERGARTEN COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this labor of love to my family. To my late father who came before me. The man who didn't have much of a childhood and was forced to grow up too soon. I wish you would have played more. To my husband who walked alongside me. Thank you for your patience, support and for reminding me to find time to play through this process. To my daughter who will go ahead of me. May you cultivate your vivid and rich imagination throughout your life and always remember to take time to play..

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of strict academic requirements is replacing play as a previously widely accepted developmentally appropriate practice in kindergarten classrooms around the United States, resulting in an imbalance in cultivating the whole child. This ethnographic, single-site case study in a kindergarten expeditionary learning school, focused on the importance of play in children's cognitive, linguistic, physical, moral, creative, emotional and artistic development exists. Couched in Vygotsky's social development theory and the Reggio Emilia principle, this ethnographic case study investigates how kindergarteners demonstrate literacy learning, practice and mastery of CC.ELA Standards (CC.ELA) through imaginative play in a negotiated environment in an expeditionary learning school setting. Research outcomes suggested that negotiated play appears to provide a recursive teaching practice and mindset whereby children learn, practice and demonstrate understanding of a quarter of the CC.ELA standards through imaginative play in the official, unofficial and imagined spaces of a classroom rich with literacy learning opportunities.

Keywords: imaginative play, Common Core, literacy learning, Vygotsky, Reggio Emilia, negotiated play, kindergarten, early literacy

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning.

But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."

-Fred Rogers

Introduction

The amount of time children in kindergarten spend in play has decreased significantly over the past two decades resulting in a deficit in the skills necessary for success in the workforce (Gray, 2013; Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek & Singer, 2006; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Jarret & Waite-Stupiansky, 2009). The learning that takes place during child led play is important to their overall development and growth. Through play children practice skills in multiple domains of development. I anticipated that data collected would provide early educators with knowledge and new perspectives on how to blend beliefs about play and instructional practices while continuing to adhere to education policy and meet accountability requirements. This research employed an ethnographic case study methodology at a single site to investigate this phenomenon. Using criterion sampling, the participants of this study included one teacher and fourteen kindergarten children in a play-based afternoon kindergarten classroom in the Pacific Northwest. This chapter begins with background and context which frames this study. Next is the problem statement, the purpose of the study and research questions. This chapter also includes a definition of terms, research approach, assumptions and bias, rationale/significance and ends with a chapter summary.

This study sought to explore the phenomenon of the reciprocal relationship between teacher-led direct instruction and negotiated imaginative play in kindergarten children. I posited that through a deep understanding of the phenomena found in a negotiated play environment, one might be able to authentically assess the ways in which kindergarten children practice and meet Common Core English Language Art (CC.ELA) Standards. In terms of this research study, negotiated play, a term coined by me, refers to the mutual relationship between the direct instruction of CC.ELA standards and the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with literacy learning activities/opportunities directly attached to kindergarten ELA standards for children to practice, and its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs. The goal of this single site case study was to record direct instruction objectives/activities and observe kindergarten children's imaginative play and literacy learning activities looking for patterns and trends among and between the three construct spheres of imaginative play, literacy learning and kindergarten CC.ELA standards. Literacy learning activities are comprised of the following meaning-making practices of children including the corporeal attributes of literacy activities like singing, speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing, creating, sculpting, and imaginative playing while physically using a variety of resources and supplies as a means of communication, often resulting in artifacts, but which are not a requirement.

Background and Context

"There was a time when play was king and early childhood was its domain. Fantasy was practiced leisurely and openly in a language unique to the kingdom."

-Vivian Gussin Paley

Indeed, there was a time when play was the hallmark of the kindergarten experience. Friedrich Froebel, often considered the founding father of kindergarten, laid the groundwork and advocated for play as a means of learning, in that his philosophy centered on kindergarten as a child-centered experience (Froebel, 1902; Smith, 2010). This idea of child-centered learning focused on the developmental domains, with play as a central feature of the learning experience, has been a core component of many educational and psychological theories, and instructional practices throughout the history of play research (Bredekamp, 1987; Fleer, 2011; Froebel, 1902; Ortega, 2003, & Vygotsky, 1933). Over five decades ago Dewey (1963) described the ongoing dichotomy between traditional and progressive education:

> "MANKIND likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Or, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities." … The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without; that it is based upon natural endowments and that education is a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure. At present, the opposition, so far as practical affairs of the school are concerned, tends to take the form of contrast between traditional and progressive education." (p. 5).

Progressive education is defined as, "relating to, or constituting an educational theory marked by emphasis on the individual child, informality of classroom procedure and encouragement of self-expression." (Progressive, Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2017). Landreth and Homeyer (1998), articulated that play *is* the child's self-

expression. A half a century later, the debates continue while changes in institutional logics over time have sparked debates over whether developmental or academic philosophies and instruction best serve the learning of children (Goldstein, 2007, 2008; Graue, 2010, & Russell, 2010). As a result, finding a balance between these competing educational philosophies has proven difficult (Wiesberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013). Teachers do not have the luxury of ignoring educational policy changes; they will be held accountable to state and federal regulations, often resulting in a cognitive dissonance whereby teacher beliefs and practices do not align (Wen, Elicker & McMullen, 2011). This disconnect spurred the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to adopt the Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 by the NAEYC guidelines in 2009, which formally included play as a central component of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP); (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). For the purposes of this research study, I utilized "the DAP versus standards dichotomy" to represent the disparity between the idea of child–centered, developmentally appropriate practices aimed at supporting children's cognitive, social, physical and emotional needs and teacher-directed, traditional, standards-based teaching practices focused on teaching recommended academic content (Goldstein, 2007).

In the past ten years, researchers and play advocates have brought the DAP versus standards debate back into the spotlight, encouraging a balanced approach to young children's learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Ghosh, 2007; Kernan, 2007 & Wiesberg, et al. 2013). Weisberg and colleagues' work on "guided play" has come to the forefront in education research and has assisted in legitimizing play as a meaningful way for children

to learn. Nonetheless, even with current research and the adoption of NAEYC guidelines, the trend of content-focused instructional practices continue to favor the use of direct instruction rather than play (Wiesberg et al., 2013). Perhaps this stems from the difficulty of standardizing play in a way in which quantifiable statistics and percentages can be obtained.

In general terms of play, a significant change in children's access to unstructured free time has decreased over the past few decades (Gray, 2013; Jarret & Waite-Stupiansky, 2009; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). In a longitudinal study, Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) compared the amount of time children spent engaged in different activities in 1997 to similar time samples of the same activities in 1981. One of the findings estimated a 25% decline in play from 1981 to 1997, including both indoor and outdoor play. In a follow up study, Hofferth (2009) suggests a further 7% decrease in play from 1997 to 2003. In the latter study, Hofferth used the same methods and documented children's time in three ways with the data suggesting the following: "First, nondiscretionary time, the sum of day care/school, personal care, eating, and sleeping, increased and, therefore, discretionary time declined. Second, time in structured activities such as art activities and sports increased and unstructured play, housework, and television viewing declined. Third, time spent in religious attendance declined, but children's study and reading time rose." (p. 1). Justor, Ono and Stafford's work (2004) looked at how much time children, ages 6 to 17, spent on various activities during the week. They collected data comparing children who live in homes with and without a computer; data indicated a decrease in time spent playing during the weekdays in both settings. The data also pointed to a decrease in the amount of time spent playing as the

age of the child increased in both settings (Justor et al., 2004). There also exists indirect research which proposes that children are engaging in less outdoor play and free and unstructured play without adult interference (Burdette & Whittaker, 2005). Therefore, one can conclude that play across many settings has indeed decreased over time.

Furthermore, research results suggest that the demand on teachers to teach specific content in order for students to pass mandated standardized tests and demonstrate mastery of academic standards can also be linked decline of play in schools (Almon, 2003; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006). Due to an increase in participation of more structured activities imposed by schools and parents, children's time for play, in general, is waning (Hofferth, 2009). Extant literature has highlighted a range of reasons for the decline of children's play time in schools. This trend opposes the overwhelming research which endorses the importance of play and the opportunity for play in children's learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Ginsberg, 2007; Gleave, 2009; Gray, 2009, 2013; Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer, 2009; Myck-Wayne, 2010; Paley, 2004; Riley & Jones, 2010; Weisberg, Kittredge, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Klahr, 2015). This contrast will be further articulated and deliberated in subsequent chapters, as history and research provide a structure for understanding this conflict in educational philosophies and teaching practices and the gap within the research.

Researcher Assumptions

Through my sixteen years of teaching experience, combined from pre-k, high school and collegiate instruction, I have worked with a wide range of children and young adults. My educational background includes two bachelor's degrees, one in child development/family relations and another in psychology. In addition, I hold a master's

degree in education with a special education emphasis. Consequently, I brought to this investigation applied experiences and knowledge of early childhood development and developmentally appropriate practices, in addition to direct teaching experiences with young children. While these experiences provided valuable insights, I acknowledged these same experiences could serve as a liability, biasing judgement in the findings, interpretations of findings and discussion.

Based on my professional experience as an early educator and personal background as the daughter of a seasoned Head Start teacher, four primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, developmentally appropriate practices take into account the development of the whole child. This assumption is based on NAEYC's statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs servicing children from birth through age 8. Second, imaginative play boosts children's literacy, cognitive and socio-emotional skills. This assumption is guided by the decades of research on play in relation to these developmental domains. Third, because oral language is a precursor to reading and writing and play builds language and sharpens imagination when children are given opportunities to engage in language, literacy rich experiences and cooperative imaginative play, children's literacy learning should demonstrate understanding of language and increased literacy skills. Fourth, early educators do not have to sacrifice play in order to provide instruction that helps kindergarten children master CC.ELA standards. This assumption is based on the idea of experiential learning where understanding and learning are created through the transformation of knowledge. For example, 'learning by doing' through hands-on

investigations and negotiated play provides children with a diverse repertoire of how they can demonstrate their knowing.

In addition to the theoretical orientation and assumptions explicitly delineated, I remained dedicated to ongoing self-reflection though dialogue with colleagues. In an attempt to strengthen the credibility of the research, several precautions were implemented such as triangulation of methods, member checks to verify or extend interpretations, and inter-rater reliability checks with professional colleagues.

Problem Statement

"*In our culture of fast food, media sound bites, and instant downloads, we mistake Faster for better. That assumption has led countless school districts to promote 'academikindergartens' where 5 year olds are more likely to encounter skill and drill exercises and nightly homework than unstructured, imaginative playtime."*

-Jen Curwood

Changes in kindergarten education are driven by policy at the federal level. These policy influences are further evidenced at the state level in the creation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its accompanying SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium which aligns assessment to standards (Idaho State Department of Education, 2013) and is rooted in the increased accountability practices both at the national and state level. According to the CCSS Initiative, the English Language Arts and Mathematics standards, "clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012) in addition to a long-term goal of preparing students at each grade level. Moreover, the CCSS are "aligned with college and

work expectations" and are "informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society" (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012, p. 153).

Kohn (1999) surmises that in response to federal mandates, classrooms around the nation have become increasingly like factories producing students who can echo facts, fill in the blanks and score well on standardized tests, further expounding that the educational system then expects this will prepare future generations for the workforce and to be competitive in the global world. Yet, the social, creative and interpersonal skills which naturally stream from imaginative play and are necessary for success in the workforce, are not being nurtured in contemporary classrooms (Golinkoff et al. 2004). Runco (2006) prompts parents and educators to recognize that a child's creativity reveals itself quite differently from adult creativity. Adult creativity often produces a product; whereas, children's creativity is often observed in their imagined spaces where children try to reconcile the world around them. Russ, Robins & Christiano's, (2000) longitudinal study was designed to explore the relationship between pretend play and creativity, research results suggested that children who expressed higher levels of affect in fantasy in first and second grade were inclined to show more affect in fantasy in fifth and sixth grades. Russ and colleagues (2000) looked at processes in play and creativity, including affective components like happiness/pleasure, anxiety/fear, sadness/hurt, and nurturance/affection and if and how they surfaced in children's imaginative play and how these constructs later influenced the child's ability to recognize and sustain their creativity skills. The data suggested that children with strong play skills were more capable of problem solving when faced with everyday problems (Russ et al., 2000). Problem solving, creativity and

knowledge are important skills for the workforce and competition in the global world. Our society is continually evolving. Change is inevitable and often swift, especially in the areas of education and technology. These rapid changes require workers to be adaptable, flexible, quick learners and innovative, all of which require various levels of creativity and Russ (2014) suggests that imaginative play is the cornerstone for creativity in adults. This divide between research and policy has led to significant changes in the ways children's learning is assessed.

Over the past four decades, educational reform has been consistently moving toward an assessment model which has primarily focused on standardized testing as a means for accountability in student learning (Apple, 2004). Two different orientations exist in the discourse about kindergarten: the focus on child-centered education (developmental appropriate practice, DAP) versus teacher-directed (academic standards) instruction (Russell, 2010). Standards instruction can be aligned with current educational practices focused on curriculum, in which the teacher disseminates information aligned with standardized assessments to be learned in an explicit and systematic manner (Apple, 2004; & Singer, Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2006). Child-centered education refers to instruction that is driven by meeting the cognitive, social, emotional and learning needs of children (NAEYC, 2009).

As current kindergarten curriculum becomes more and more focused on academics and skill development, children's social and emotional developmental needs are not being cultivated in classrooms (Graue, 2010; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006). In fact, media reports across the nation announcing "kindergarten is the new first grade" are becoming more commonplace (Curwood, 2007; DeVise, 2007; Kronholz, 2005;

Schoenberg 2010). As a result, play is endangered. Herein, lies the research problem and it is twofold.

First of all, kindergarten classrooms around the nation are spending a reduced or little amount of time on crafting creative environments where developmental skills are practiced through play (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff & Eyer, 2003). This focus on the kindergarten curriculum and its movement toward a solid concentration on academic skill development is resulting in pedagogy that matches the movement (Graue, 2010; Russ, 2014, Russell, 2010; Weisberg et al, 2013). It is important here to make the distinction between curriculum and pedagogy; curriculum focuses on the specific content that teachers are required to expose children to, whereas, pedagogy refers the modus of instruction or the means for getting to an end and the how behind children's learning (Weisberg et al., 2013).

Fueled by increased parent expectations and federal education initiatives the attention on kindergarten and its corresponding curriculum has sparked debate in homes, schools and in higher education. Parental concerns about developmentally appropriate curriculum surface in the face of high stakes testing and fear that their children will be left behind if they are not reading by kindergarten (Graue, 2010). This poses a considerable disconnect for early childhood educators and the gap between their beliefs and practice (Buchanan, Burts, Bidner White, & Charlesworth, 1998). Paolo Freire (1996) clearly articulates the power structures in place impacting children's learning in his *Third letter to Christina*, a chronicle of his schooling and life experiences written to his niece. In this letter, Freire (1996) concisely and explicitly explains the teaching dilemma facing educators today, "I was always invited to learn and never reduced to an

empty vessel to be filled with knowledge." (p. 29). Mihans (2008) suggests that teachers also feel a loss in freedom regarding their instructional and professional choices which were once foundational to the teaching profession. Additionally, teachers feel the pressure to make sure their students perform well on high stakes tests and to ensure students are prepared for the subsequent grade level (Goldstein, 2007; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006).

The second part of the research problem is that while many teachers believe that developmentally appropriate instruction including play is valid and important, their practice often does not align with their beliefs; rather, they are driven by instructional practices that reflect the increasing academic nature of kindergarten (Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006) and increased accountability.

Education's focus on quantifying learning through measurable outcomes puts added pressure on teachers. Mandated testing assesses children's knowledge of facts and standardized tests cannot quantify play. It is quite difficult to standardize play; in fact, it's quite an oxymoron. Though elements of play can be measured, the organic and generative features of play create countless nuances in children's imagined spaces that a standardized taxonomy is difficult to achieve. Subsequently arising from conflicting research perspectives, the twofold research problem includes investigating ways in which kindergarten teachers meet Common Core standards while providing a developmentally appropriate education that includes play.

Bergen (2002) suggests the reason there is a limited amount of play research in the primary grades is due to the rarity of elementary classrooms where, in fact, children are allowed to participate in play as an avenue for learning and even less research

focusing on the relationship between state standards and play. Though the DAP versus standards dilemma has a strong research base on each side (Fisher, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Gryfe, 2008). There is still limited research attempting to the narrow the gap between imaginative play in kindergarten classrooms, a core component of DAP, and the relationship between negotiated imaginative play and kindergarten Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. This research study sought to deconstruct the relationship between the implementation of rigorous academic requirements and the decline of play in kindergarten classrooms and endeavors to provide research to help bridge the gap between the DAP and standards factions, and build on the current momentum advocating for the return of play to kindergarten classrooms. Further, this research aimed to add to limited research data focused on negotiated imaginative play as a means for practicing and assessing CC.ELA Standards in kindergarten. However, before this investigation and analysis can take place, an understanding of play must be articulated and defined.

Statement of Purpose

Life must be lived as play.

-Plato

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to discover and describe the relationship between negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning, and practice/mastery of CC.ELA standards for kindergarten students at a public expeditionary learning charter school in a Pacific Northwest metropolitan city. Negotiated imaginative play will be generally defined as the mutual relationship between the direct instruction of CC.ELA Standards and the deliberative designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with literacy learning activities/opportunities directly attached to

kindergarten ELA standard for children to practice and its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs. The theory which guided this study was Vygotsky's social constructivist theory as it is rooted in the ideas that learning is co-constructed through social interactions whereby the learner is actively engaged in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1933). By using Vygotsky's central tenets and elements from the Reggio Emilia philosophy, I was able to observe and identify children's ability to demonstrate their knowing and learning.

But what exactly is play, and why is it important for children's learning? Play is part of a universal culture; in fact, the young of all mammals play (Burghardt, 1998; Groos, 1898; Pellegrini & Smith, 2005). Groos, as cited by Gray (2013), argued that "play came about by natural selection as a means to ensure that animals would practice the skills they need in order to survive and reproduce" (p. 1). Groos (1901) extended this notion of "practice theory of play" in his follow up book, *The Play of Man*, and noted that human children, needing to learn significantly more than other species, are the most playful and learn different skills depending on the culture in which they are raised. Children in cultures around the world engage in play; this is especially true for children of hunter/gatherer communities where children's play is often closely tied to skills that contribute to the community at large (Bock, 2005; Gosso, Otta, Salum e Morais, Riberiro & Bussab, 2005 & Gray, 2013). Paley, as cited by Grace (2005), reaffirms and reminds us about the importance of play, stating:

> "We know from the wonderful work of anthropologists done in the 1960's and '70's with orphaned primates that young primates without mothers do not play. They do not learn survival. They literally cannot learn without play. They cannot learn basic protective functions. Why should we think we are any different?" (para. 1).

In addition, existing research contends that play deprivation can have a negative impact on the brain growth of children, "A child who is not being stimulated…and has few opportunities to explore his or her surroundings, may fail to link up fully those neural connections and pathways which will be needed for later learning (Sutton-Smith, 1995, p. 17). Play is how humans learn. Further, the freedom of exploration inherent to play is a necessary component of children's learning and understanding (Jensen, 2006).

In terms of child development, the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) stated that "play- a dynamic, active and constructive behavior – is a necessary and integral part of childhood; infancy through adolescence" (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 1998). This includes all children's healthy growth, development and learning across all ages, domains and cultures. Bruner (1983) contended that play is "an attitude toward the use of the mind…a hot house for trying out ways of combining thought and fantasy and language" (p. 69). Ultimately, play is the exploration of the possibilities of imagination and materials (Brewer, 2004). In terms of this research study, play includes the following six elements: intrinsic motivation to participate, active involvement of player(s) who may or may not have nonliteral meanings of the activity, focus on participation rather than outcomes (although artifacts can and often result from the play), meaning of activities and objects are supplied by player(s), and flexibility of rules (Brewer, 2004; Parten, 1933; Vygotsky 1933) In this study I sought to blend Brewer's (2004) elements of play with Vygotsky's (1978) definition of play. Vygotsky's (1978) definition is narrowed to make-believe/dramatic play (also known as pretend, fantasy, sociodramatic, symbolic, dramatic, or make-believe play in the literature) which from this point forward, will be referred to as imaginative play, and includes three

components: child-created imaginary scenarios, role play (acceptance and acting out) by children and the following of child-determined roles and rules. This study identified imaginative play as individual and/or cooperative, where children drive the play in child-created imaginary scenarios, which may or may not include role play (acceptance and acting out) by children and the following of child-determined roles and rules in a negotiated imaginative play environment. The history of play will be further discussed in chapter two.

Negotiated Play

In the context of this research study, and core to the inquiry under investigation, I developed the term negotiated play to describe the reciprocal relationship between the direct instruction of Common Core standards and the deliberate and intentional designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with literacy learning opportunities directly tied to kindergarten ELA standards by providing children with the opportunity and an invitation to practice standards embedded in the play environment. Secondly, negotiated imaginative play also includes the ongoing negotiation of the play environment based on student interests and academic needs.

Significance of Study

The rationale for this study stems from my professional desire to provide early and primary education teachers with information about a potential approach called negotiated play, in which characteristics of developmentally appropriate practices (like imaginative play) and standards based direct instruction merge as a way to authentically assess what children know and how they demonstrate knowledge of Common Core English language arts standards. Increased knowledge of combining beliefs and practice

in ways that fulfill early education teachers' accountability requirements, while also providing developmentally appropriate practices, could impact the teaching practices of kindergarten teachers and increase the return and use of imaginative play as a means for learning. Using negotiated play as a learning approach may not only offer children opportunities to direct their learning, but could also provide teachers with a way to reconcile teaching beliefs and practices in the midst of complex accountability requirements.

The extremes often produced by instructional practices informed by educational reform can often leave little room for entertaining a balanced educative experience, and this is where the union of negotiated imaginative play and kindergarten CC.ELA Standards research is limited. When policy and educational reform are presented in a rigid manner, with strict expectations and accountability measures, teachers are left with limited autonomy and added pressure in their profession. With the push for stringent academic content in contemporary kindergarten classrooms what can be done to advocate for the return of play into the curriculum? My research goal is to add to the limited body of kindergarten play research that seeks to support and advocate for quality, balanced literacy learning experiences in conjunction with imaginative play and direct instruction of CC.ELA Standards. Academic standards instruction, when paired with play and used as catalyst for investigation and manipulation of knowledge, can be a viable option for finding balance in the educational practices of teaching kindergarten children. The purpose of the study was to document the negotiated imaginative play, CC.ELA Standards taught, and literacy learning experiences in the official, unofficial, and imagined spaces of kindergarten children in an expeditionary learning school setting. I

examined these constructs with the hope of illustrating if and how these experiences work together and provide children opportunities to practice and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Common Core English Language Art (ELA) Standards.

Research Questions

To shed light on the problem, I posed and explored the following research questions:

1. In what ways does negotiated imaginative play provide opportunities for kindergarten children to practice literacy learning skills?
2. How can Common Core English Language Arts Standards be authentically measured through negotiated imaginative play?

Definition of Terms

Authentic Assessment- A type of performance assessment that is contextualized and more like a portfolio in nature which emphasizes the progress toward mastery and encourages children to show what they can do; it is constructed to challenge children to think of and practice their knowing, culminating in the child's process and/or artifact, "for which 'content' is to be mastered as a means, not as an end" (Wiggins, 1989, p. 711).

Cooperative Play-This type of play involves the division of efforts among children in order to reach a common goal and everybody wins (Parten, 1933)

Cooperative-Constructive Play- A type of symbolic play which includes children manipulating their environment to create things and includes experimenting with materials; e.g. they can build towers with blocks or construct objects with miscellaneous loose parts (Biserka, 201).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) – NAEYC's guidelines cite three core considerations for DAP. The first is what is known about child development and learning, specifically referring to the knowledge of age related characteristics about what experiences best promote learning and development, including play. Second, what is known about each child as an individual, resulting in how practitioners adapt and respond to individual variation. Lastly, what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live so that practitioners can create experiences that are meaningful, relevant and respectful for children and families? (NAEYC, 2009).

Expeditionary Learning (EL) - Expeditionary Learning Education focuses on teamwork, courage and compassion, with an active approach to learning including building background knowledge, extending reading and research and emergent writing (EL Education, 2020).

Experiential Learning- The learning process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, for example, learning by doing with hands-on investigations.

Expressive Play (creative arts) - A type of play that provides opportunities to express feelings and ideas by engaging with materials. Materials used in expressive play include paints, finger paints, watercolors, crayons, colored pencils and markers, drawing paper, clay, water, and sponges, sensory materials, and rhythm instruments.

Imaginative Dramatic Play- A type of play where children act out situations, imaginary or based in real experience. Dramatic play can be either spontaneous or guided. (Encyclopedia of Children's Health, 2017).

Imaginative Play- Imaginative play includes the acting out of situations, imaginary or based in real experience and also the three following components: child-created imaginary scenarios, role play (acceptance and acting out) by children, and the following of child-determined roles and rules.

Imagined Space- "The imaginary space bounded by children's rules for pretense while situated within the everyday reality of the classroom" (Wohlwend, 2011). This is the space that children create and enter when engaged in imaginative play and includes the negotiated play areas and/or imagined space such as blocks, dramatic play, art center, writing center and manipulative area.

Literacy Learning- The meaning-making practices of children including the corporeal attributes of literacy activities such as singing, speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing, creating, sculpting, and imaginative playing while physically using a variety of resources and supplies as a means of communication, often resulting in artifacts.

Negotiated Play- The reciprocal relationships between the direct instruction of Common Core standards and the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with opportunities for literacy learning activities directly tied to kindergarten ELA standards for children to practice standards, and its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs.

Official Space- The official space is provided by the teacher and includes the official classroom space with activities, materials and instruction provided to support instructional curricular goals, classroom rules, and student learning (Dyson, 1993).

Parallel Play- A type of play in which children play adjacent to each other, but do not try to influence one another's behavior. Children usually play alone during parallel play but are interested in what other children are doing.

Play- Play in which the player(s) decide how and what to play and can modify the rules and goals as the play progresses, it is self-chosen and directed. (Gray, 2013). Play includes the following six elements: intrinsic motivation to participate, active involvement of player(s), may or may not include nonliteral meanings of the activity, a focus on participation rather than outcomes, the meaning of activities and objects are supplied by player(s), and flexibility of rules (Brewer, 2004; Parten, 1933; & Vygotsky 1933).

Unofficial Space- The unofficial space is the child-ordered social organization that operate according to "activities, routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers", also known as the peer culture. (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 197).

Summary

This chapter outlined the essential components needed to explore the phenomena under investigation in this research study: the research problem, purpose and research questions. The melding of these three major components was core to the research study and further data collection and analysis were reliant upon their cohesion and alignment. In addition, this chapter also described and articulated the following elements: the rationale and significance of the study, definitions for vital terminology used in the study, and the assumptions made and bias inherently brought to the study by my lived experiences and educational background.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of this single site case study was to document the negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning experiences in the official, unofficial, and imagined spaces of kindergarten children in an expeditionary learning school setting. Specifically, I sought to understand the reciprocal relationships between the direct instruction of Common Core standards, the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with literacy learning activities linked to kindergarten ELA standards for children to practice standards, and its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs. Before beginning the data collection, it was necessary to collect, read, review and synthesize seminal and current research in the area of play, literacy and learning and the relationship(s) between and among them. A comprehensive literature review was conducted beginning with broader topics on play and then narrowed in focus to represent research relevant to this study's goals and purpose. Review of literature continued concurrently throughout the research process.

Scholars have been fascinated with play for centuries and support the idea that a major element fundamental to children's development is play (Erickson, 1950; Elkind, 2007; Froebel 1898, 1902; Ginsberg, 2007; Gleave, 2009; Groos, 1901; Ortega, 2003; Stone & Stone, 2008-2014; &Vygotsky, 1933). Though play is developmentally appropriate for children and often encouraged in preschool classrooms, once children enter elementary school, play is nearly non-existent in the classroom (Riley & Jones,

2010). Providing context surrounding the history of kindergarten and the evolution of developmentally appropriate practice will serve as a backdrop for framing this research study. Presenting this framework will provide insight regarding the effect of play on cognitive, social and literacy development discussed in this literature review. Finally, the latter part of this critical literature review will explore the convergence of socio-cultural influences on imaginative play, literacy learning, and CC.ELA Standards, all constructs central to this research study.

Historical Roots of Kindergarten

Play, then is the highest expression of human development in childhood,

for it alone is the free expression of what is in the child's soul.

-Friedrich Froebel

Friedrich Froebel, a nineteenth century German student of Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer Johann Hienrich Pestalozzi, is considered to be the founder of kindergarten (Shapiro, 1983). Kindergarten, a word from Froebel's native German, means "children's garden" (Shapiro, 1983). The core of Froebel's kindergarten beliefs was to "both help them prepare and to protect them from the regimentation they would soon face in school" and his philosophy revolved around three central ideas: "the unity of creation, respect for children as individuals, and the importance of play in children's education" (Manning, 2005, p. 372). Froebel (1898) further articulated, "A child who plays vigorously, freely, and quietly, and who persists till he is thoroughly tired, will of a certainty grow into a capable and persistent man" (p. 55). Froebel sowed the seeds of the importance of play and his ideas about play led to more child-centered educational theories whereby students actively and socially construct their own learning. The work of

Jean Piaget (1962) and Lev Vygotsky (1978) linked play with cognitive development (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). The idea of "child-centered" education has been around since the mid 1800's and remains a focal point in current discourse of early childhood education (Chung & Walsh, 2010).

In 1856, the Froebelian kindergarten model was introduced in a German language private school in Wisconsin (Bloch, Seward & Seidlinger, 1989). At this time in history, religious education permeated society and served as an integral part of what children were educated about (Nall, 1993). The first English-speaking kindergarten was established by Elizabeth Peabody, whose tutelage came from Bronson Alcott, a leading Transcendentalist (Chung & Walsh, 2010). At this time, kindergarten was still considered as a form of private education. The inauguration of kindergarten as a public school came in 1873, by Susan Blow (Chung & Walsh, 2010). The goal of kindergarten intended that all children should learn how to become intelligent members of society and to transmit the "cultural values of American civilization" (Chung & Walsh, 2010, p. 219). Play continued to be a hallmark component of kindergarten. By the late 1800's kindergarten educators began to feel the pressure to adapt to the curriculum of the primary grades, and thus began the "schooling" of four and five-year-old children and the beginning of the departure of play from kindergarten.

With the emergence and evolution of theories of learning in the 20th century, the acknowledgment of child-centered instructional practice for learning was recognized and accepted, but then diminished with the American acceptance of behaviorism in the early 1900's. It is important to note that before behaviorism took root in American psychology, the idea of kindergarten first came under attack as not being efficient and thus did not

merit public funding due to the overlap in curriculum (Chung & Walsh, 2010). Concurrently, during this time in history, behaviorist research focused on experiments in which behaviors could be manipulated and observed; the idea of student-centeredness did not mesh well with behaviorism. One could deduce that if learning was student driven and centered, and young children were not able to adequately articulate their learning, then it was not quantifiable or overtly observable and as a result, of little worth to the research community. Schecter (2011) pointed to Dewey's (1963) ideas serving as the foundation for the progressive education movement, which included a focus on how education should be guided by the developmental growth of children. Though in the minority, progressive educators reiterated the importance of child-centered education focused on the interest of children. However, the era of the Great Depression resulted in a marked decrease in kindergarten, and the discourse regarding kindergarten and its purpose faded for a time. Once cognitive learning and the concept of the social construction of knowledge began to reclaim its position in the field of psychology, what was transpiring within the human mind in relation to the social domain of the individual became central to research regarding learning and education (Driscoll, 2005).

Zigler and Bishop-Josef's (2006) research suggests a relationship between the launching of the Soviet Sputnik in the 1950's with the second major rejection of play in schools, and the growing movement toward an emphasis on academic skills in classrooms. These fears and analyses were reinforced in the early 1980's when the American public was presented with the idea that schools were failing to prepare students for a global economy (National Commission on the Excellence in Education, 1983). The well-known, *A Nation at Risk* report commissioned by the National Commission on

Excellence in Education, which served as “an open letter to the American people” fueled the educational reform movement and focused on tougher standards calling for “more rigorous and measurable standards and higher expectations for academic performance and student conduct” (p.1). This report stimulated the creation and implementation of federal educational initiatives including No Child Left Behind (2001), Race to the Top Initiative (2009), and Common Core State Standards Initiative (2009), (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Sass, 2014). These federal mandates also powered the sentiment that play ought not to be included in school, with the one exception being recess at the elementary school level (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006). Ironically, recess is *now* also in jeopardy; a recent study, focused on the execution of Texas’ accountability system revealed that kindergarten and primary teachers “decided to reduce their classes’ recess to 15 minutes *per week* to provide more time for academic instruction” (Booher-Jennings, 2005, p. 255). Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk and Singer (2009) point to the Reauthorization of Head Start in 2003, when Congress directed Head Start’s focus on academic preparation, as the latest pivotal event impacting the demise of play in early childhood educational programs.

Global competitions and federal policies were not the only factors influencing the loss of play in schools; the media’s representation of institutional logics regarding kindergarten has shifted over time as well (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Russell, 2010; Sass, 2014; & Zigler; Bishop-Josef, 2006). From the 1950’s through 1980’s the majority of newspaper articles advertised a developmental logic, also known as child-centered education; in the 1980’s and 1990’s both academic and developmental logics were presented, however, by the

2000's there were twice as many articles with an academic logic rather than developmental logic (Russell, 2010). While many events and influences may have contributed to the decline of play in kindergarten classrooms around the nation, it is difficult to ignore the vast body of research generating the importance of play in children's cognitive, linguistic, physical, moral, creative, emotional and artistic development (Bergen, 2002; Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Elkind, 2001a; Gray, 2009, 2013, 2014; Myck-Wayne, 2010; Pellegrini, 2009; Russell, 2010, Sandberg & Heden, 2011; Saracho, 2002; & Wohlwend, 2008). It is clear through this history of play that multiple forces combined to de-emphasize the importance of play in kindergarten over the years.

The impact of behaviorism at the turn of the twentieth century continues to influence instruction and policy regarding education. At the core of the ongoing education debate, over a one-hundred-year span, is the dichotomous DAP versus standards discourse. The opposing sides include the progressive education movement, whose foundations are rooted in constructivism with the child at the center of learning, and traditional education on the other side, steeped in behaviorism and dedicated to observable measurements of learning. Though the proverbial pendulum swings with the times, one thing that has appeared to remain constant in American education throughout the past half century is its emphasis on standardized testing and the decline of spontaneous imaginative play. Standardized testing often does not take into account the fluctuating maturation stages between children, and the fact that chronological age does not always match developmental age. This is why standardized testing and the principles of developmentally appropriate practice are often in conflict.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The most pressing need of to-day is, then, to relate school to home-life. Till this is done man cannot free himself from the burden of empty verbal formulas stored in the memory—mere husks of knowledge—or experience the joy and power of a living knowledge of the real nature of things.

-Freidrich Froebel (1912)

As early as the 1800's scholars understood the importance of the relationship between the home and school in children's development. Elkind (2001A) suggests that Froebel summed up the importance of play and its later impact on academic skills in his statement, "Children must master the language of things before they master the language of words." (Froebel, 1902). Children's environment and nature serve as their first curriculum (Elkind, 2001a). Children must interact with their world before they can learn about its properties; they need to manipulate objects, touch, feel or taste things before they can distinguish differences between and among objects. Individuals including Freidrich Froebel, Maria Montesorri, Rudolf Steiner, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky support the developmental theory which purports that reading and math require syllogistic reasoning which often does not mature in children until five or six (Elkind, 2001a). Therefore, these processes should not be hurried in young children. Another influential child-centered educational approach can be observed through the fundamental components of the Reggio Emilia philosophy which adheres strongly to the idea of child-driven inquiry where the curriculum is defined by the child's interests using pedagogy rooted in play and investigation (Feldman & Benjamin, 2006). Loris Malaguzzi, a founder of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, advocates for the belief in children

as adept individuals who can construct their own knowledge through inquiry. According to Malaguzzi, "What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught. Rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing, as a consequence of their activities and own resources (Gandini, 2012, p 44). These developmental theorists and educational philosophies in many ways originated the concept of developmentally appropriate practice.

The term developmentally appropriate practices in early education stems from the first position statement issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1987 to adjust to changing educational needs of students. During this time the educational debate revolving around the dichotomous relationship between academic, teacher-directed (standards) and developmental, child-centered practices (DAP), and which was better, was active in the field of early education (Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006). Child-centered research suggested that literacy is a means of communication and is interwoven throughout a child's everyday play, experiences and interactions, whereas skills based research proposed reading and writing as independent school tasks and which are not automatically connected to a child's real life experiences (Dahl & Freppon, 1995; Nolen, 2001; Turner & Paris, 1995). Academic teacher-directed instruction adheres to the philosophy that there are specific standards to be met and teaching should mirror the standards (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006).

These discussions led to the adoption of Bredekamp's (1987) work, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8.* In order to reflect a newer framework for optimal education and critical issues in early childhood education, revised principles and guidelines were

added in 1997 by Bredekamp and Copple. These revisions provided criteria for necessary knowledge early educators should have in the following areas: age appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and cultural appropriateness (Kim, 1999). In 2009 the guidelines were adopted by NAEYC. As the name suggests, DAP is developmental in nature, which aligns with Piaget (1962) and Erickson's (1950) ideas on developmental stages of physical growth, and the cognitive progression of children. In addition, developmentally appropriate practice necessitates the importance for early educators to meet children where they are in their development and move forward using developmental stages as a guideline. Further, Piaget (1962) posited that "concrete operations" are required before complex reading tasks can be achieved, which, according to his cognitive tenets, often do not develop until the age of seven. Developmentally appropriate practice also introduced practitioners in classrooms to the significance of sociocultural influences on children's intellectual and social growth, as supported by Vygotsky (1978) and Bronfenbrenner (1989). Child-centered, developmentally appropriate practice incorporates a pedagogy which invites and uses the ideas, knowledge and culture that each child brings to the learning environment (Gullo & Hughes, 2011a, Moll & Greenberg, 1990). While DAP guidelines were in the process of being formulated in the eighties, emergent literacy research, outlined later in the literature review, suggested a relationship between developmental sequences and children's attempts at literacy construction both in reading (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Sulzby, 1985) and writing (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984), in addition to oral language use (Dickinson, 1987; Snow, 1983; Bryan, 1995; Griffin et al., 2004). The impact of home environments on emergent literacy growth was studied, yet minimal research had focused

on classroom environments; this is where DAP assisted in filling a gap. Developmentally appropriate practice core considerations include the following:

1. What is known about child development and learning—referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development.

2. What is known about each child as an individual—referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.

3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live—referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children's lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family. (NAEYC, 2009, p. 9-10)

Lee, Baik and Charlesworth (2006) also provided a definition of teachers who engage in developmentally appropriate practice, as those who emphasize the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) and "construct an integrated curriculum while meeting the individual child's needs, developmental level and learning style. DAP teachers provide for active exploration and concrete, hands-on activities and motivate children to learn by using children's natural curiosity" (p. 936).

Research conducted on children in classrooms with opposing philosophies suggested that children in classrooms with developmentally *inappropriate* practices, including workbooks, worksheets, extensive waiting, television watching and teacher directed whole group activities demonstrated more overall stress than children in developmentally appropriate classrooms (Hart, Burts, Durland, Charlesworth, Dewolf & Fleege, 1998). What is clear from the NAEYC's position on developmentally

appropriate practice is the emphasis of the sociocultural influences, play and the unique developmental needs on the learning of children from birth to age 8. Yet, the standards that public school teachers are charged with ensuring their students meet were not created using the NAEYC's recommendations (Goldstein, 2007). A further concern is that regardless of detailed guidelines and examples of DAP, teachers from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds likely have distinct lived experiences and social upbringings that could potentially impact their interpretation and understanding of developmentally appropriate practices, thus resulting in different implementation (Kim, 1999). Before examining the research about play and its impact on the developmental domains of children, an understanding of how play has been perceived, defined and redefined is needed to provide groundwork for distinguishing what play is and what play is not.

Play Defined Over the Years

You see a child play, and it is so close to seeing an artist paint, for in play a child says things without uttering a word. You can see how he solves his problems. You can also see what's wrong. Young children, especially, have enormous creativity, and whatever's in them rises to the surface in free play.

-Erik Erikson

Play can be defined in a variety of ways and scholars have often debated the characteristics and function of play (Fein & Wiltz, 2005; Ortega, 2003; Sutton-Smith, 2003). Over the years the definition of play has changed in accord with the scholar's professional discipline, theoretical backgrounds and ideology (Sutton-Smith, 1995). Most recently, early childhood advocate Almon addressed this very issue articulating the

difficulty the in education field to define play, emphasizing that the idea of play is just too large, like love (Education Roundtable, 2016). It looks and means different things to different people; therefore, it is hard to define, but it can be described. As a result, certain characteristics to describe play have emerged from the research as outlined in this section. Froebel (1912) proposed three kinds of play in early childhood, "imitations of the doings of actual life, spontaneous applications of what has been learnt in school, impulsive manifestations of any and every form of mental vitality" (p.96). A more traditional view of play is outlined by Garvey's (1977) four principles which need to be present for an interaction to be considered play. The criteria include play as spontaneous and voluntary, in that the child must be given the freedom to participate, switch or retreat from the activity; play has no defined extrinsic goals and serves only to meet intrinsically motivated, self-selected goals. It is pleasurable, enjoyable and valued by the child and play requires the active involvement of participants and does not include spectators (Garvey, 1977). A more contemporary definition of play is provided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and identifies the characteristics for play to include the following elements: "children enjoy play, that as children play, there is flexibility in their purpose and in how it unfolds, children seek out opportunities to play and in it they determine what happens and finally there is a non-literal, non-realistic aspect to play" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2005, p. 8). This study adhered to Pellegrini's (2009) statement that play "is ***not*** play when teachers or researchers ***tell*** children to 'play' a phonemic awareness game or require them to sing a scripted letter-sound corresponding song" (p. 134, emphasis mine). Rather, play is an active, child-selected and directed

activity with countless potential plots, narratives and themes providing delight and a sense of ownership to its participants.

Play is driven by the child's innate desire to grow and learn, but also in the early years it reflects what children see and hear from adults in their world and manifests as imitation (Almon, 2003). Play is one way children attempt to make sense of where they fit in the wider world (Berk, 1994; Bruner, 1983). Vygotsky's (2004) elaborated definition sums up the interweaved psychological, political and intellectual nature of play;

> Everyone knows what an enormous role imitation plays in children's play. A child's play very often is just an echo of what he saw and heard adults do; nevertheless, these elements of his previous experience are never merely reproduced in play in exactly the way they occurred in reality. A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired. He combines them and uses them to construct a new reality, one that conforms to his own needs and more, it does not occupy a separate place in human behavior, but depends directly on other forms of human activity, especially accrual of experience (p. 12).

Further, play does not require a correct answer. Play through the eyes of children does not focus on an end product; rather it emphasizes the process and journey of the play experience (Fein & Wiltz, 1998). The process of child-directed investigation and play allows children to create, manipulate, and investigate as they move in and through the experience, rather than concentrating on the end product and/or result. This process focus removes the pressure children may feel that they must perform rather than naturally engage in the activity. Additionally, the use of play is a fundamental way to achieve this concentration on process rather than product, because play is always changing with the dynamics of the group, setting, and dialogue. This focus on process is often contrary to current educational assessment practices. Standardized testing relies on empirical

evidence of right and wrong answers, what a child can recall from memory instead of demonstrating other ways of knowing, for example, active manipulation of learning content and application of knowledge to different settings or situations. The following section will address play as communication from four perspectives: (a) the importance of play; (b) play and social development; (c) play and cognitive development; before examining (d) play and literacy development.

Children's Play in the Context of the Whole Child

"If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow."

-Alfie Kohn

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Elkonin (2005), a Russian researcher, asserted that "play is the activity in which imagination shows itself" which grows, rather than the existing thought among experts at the time that play was an expression of "an already well-developed imagination" and rooted in instinctive tendencies (p. 13). Elkonin (2005), through observation with his own children, proposed that play was a transference of meaning between objects. Jerome Bruner, influenced by Vygotsky's work and adherent to the social influence of language acquisition, extended Elkonin's ideas on the transference to learning. The relationship between play and learning is captured well in Bruner's (1983) statement, "In play we transform the world according to our desires, while in learning we transform ourselves better to conform to the structure of the world" (p. 61). From a sociocultural perspective, children's play reflects their lived experiences and often includes reinterpretations of events, feelings, and ideas as an effort to construct their own meaning as they attempt to situate themselves in the greater world (Kendrick,

2005). As a result, play is not only enjoyable and socially constructed, but has a functional role in children's learning as well.

Before delving further into the literature, an understanding of the importance of play needs to be established, both in general and in terms of this research study. The following section includes a brief overview of research studies identifying the importance of play. Then proceeds with elaboration and discussion of research studies addressing how social development is influenced through play (play and social development) and the ways play boosts reasoning processes (play and cognitive development). Next, research on the role of dramatic play in children's comprehension of literate content (literacy learning and imaginative play) and the role of the physical environment will be presented. Finally, literature addressing children's play in the context of Common Core English Language Art Standards will be provided. By providing a comprehensive background in the aforementioned areas, a solid foundation of theory and ideas for this research study will be established.

Importance of Play

The importance of play for young children's cognitive, socio-emotional, and literacy development is well documented (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Curwood, 2007, Ginsberg, 2007; Graue, 2010; Myck-Wayne, 2010; Russell, 2010; Sandberg & Heden, 2011). Through play children are provided opportunities to experiment with social rules and expectations, as well as develop critical self-regulation skills including managing behavior and emotions (Golinkoff et al., 2006). Play provides an opportunity for children to develop all areas of human development; focusing on one aspect of development

ignores the intertwined relationship with other areas of development that are required to cultivate the whole child (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006).

The influence of play on children's learning is widely supported through research. Play is extremely intellectual, as Vygotsky (2004) indicates in the construction of new knowledge that erupts from spontaneous play. What's more, Vygotsky's (1978) idea of the zone of proximal development is not meant for academic settings only. Vygotsky (1978) addresses both the social nature of children's play as well as the intimate characteristics of internalization. He further extends the social relationship between self and the journey through identification of the zone of proximal development, whereby a more advanced individual challenges and stretches the meaning making of the less developed child. In fact, Vygotsky couches play in a sociocultural context and suggests that play itself creates a zone of proximal development because play is imaginative and creative; it naturally allows children to perform beyond their average age (Vygotsky, 1933; Berk, 1994).

Bodrova and Leong (2003) point to play as a means of developing comprehension, attention span, curiosity, empathy, concentration and group participation. In a longitudinal investigation on learning environments, Marcon (2002) suggests that children in playful child-centered classrooms exhibited better social and academic performance and demonstrated fewer conduct disorders over children who participated in didactic, teacher directed classrooms. Other researchers have documented similar gains in playful DAP classrooms over standards driven classrooms (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & DeWolf, 1993; Freppon & McIntyre, 1999; Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006; Marcon, 1993, 1999; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997).

Sandberg and Heden's (2011) research revealed that play is valuable for both the social and academic growth of the child and for teachers as tools for dramatizing, fun, problem-solving and movement. Additionally, their research exposed a further gap between teacher beliefs and practice, in that teachers recognized the importance of play but demonstrated "hesitation regarding play in the school world" (Sandberg & Heden, 2011, p, 326). Demanding that primary-grade children sit quietly, listen attentively, and complete tasks individually without disrupting others disregards the natural development of children and ignores the social context Vygotsky (1978) emphasized is critical to learning. Play is a natural aspect of human development and especially important for young children. In addition to functional skills provided through play, other domains of development are enhanced, including the social domain of development and literacy skills.

Play and Social Development

The constructivist social learning perspective emphasizes the influence of the environment and/or world of an individual; the idea that a child's learning development is social in nature (Vygotsky, 1986). Before addressing the impact of play on a child's social development in the school setting, it is significant to address the therapeutic benefits of play on the whole child.

Therapeutic Play.

It is important to note the impact that play has on the physical and mental well-being of children, in addition to their learning and development. In Virginia Axline's (1974) seminal book on play therapy, she illustrates the healing which can take place in a safe play environment. Axline's (1974)

explanation of play therapy provides a glimpse into the restorative and empowering benefits playing out feelings and issues can provide children with:

> "a frankness, and honesty and vividness in the way children state themselves in play situation. Their feelings, attitudes, and thoughts emerge, unfold themselves, twist and turn and lose their sharp edges… Bit by bit, with extreme caution, the child externalizes that inner self and states it with increasing candor and sometimes with dramatic flair. He soon learns that in this playroom with this unusual adult he can let in and out the tide of his feelings and impulses. He can create his own world with these simple toys that lend themselves so well to projected identities. He can be his own architect and create his castle in the sand, and he can people his world with the folks of his own making. He can select and discard. He can create and destroy. He can build himself a mountain and climb safely to the top and cry out for all his world to hear, 'I can build me a mountain or I can flatten it out. In here, I am big!" (preface).

In play, a child can attempt to reconcile the world around him/her. Play is the child language used for communication and can be a place where children send messages about the meaning he or she attributes to personal, or more global experiences (Landreth, 2003). Barnett (1984) found that children demonstrated lower levels of anxiety after enacting their fears through play episodes. Almon (2003) pointed out the impact of play on children's mental health and suggested some children "seem blocked and unable to play" which can adversely impact their development" (p. 1). Play therapy is a counseling tool used to assist children to develop and discover their strengths, to be able to say, "I am capable." (Landreth, 2003).

Axline (1974) supports the idea of play as a form of therapy for children, and contends in play therapy, "there is value in catharsis- the outpouring of feelings; but the addition of reflection of feeling and acceptance is the added element that helps to clarify the feelings and helps the child to develop insight (p. 146). Ginsberg's (2007) American Academy of Pediatrics clinical report strengthens educational and psychological research which asserts the importance of unstructured play on children's health. A hurried lifestyle

with overscheduled academic readiness activities has the potential to increase pressure on children leading to stress and anxiety, and may even contribute to depression, school avoidance and somatic symptoms (Ginsberg, 2007). Health benefits of play are only a fraction of the impact of play on the lives of young children.

Social Development through Play in School

Play, which includes negotiation with others, is a shared activity that influences the meaning of the child's surrounding world in that these types of play situations compel children to consider a viewpoint other than their own (Brewer, 2004). Children don't engage in imaginative play to escape the real world; they do it to get into the real world (Holt, 1967,1983). The collective nature of play obliges children to work on social skills which are fundamental to the very act of play. Further, play is the outlet for a child's self-expression; "it is the medium through which children project dimensions of their personality" (Landreth & Homeyer, 1998, p.193).

Play and social skills are vital elements of early childhood development. At age three, play and social interactions are developmentally appropriate; at age five they also become important skills in a child's ability to learn. The ability to interact socially with others is an essential skill needed for kindergarteners and impacts their later success in formalized education (Ginsberg, 2007; McClelland & Morrison, 2003; Porath, 2003). Interpersonal skills like positive interaction with peers, sharing, and respecting other children are essential aptitudes for learning and later social adjustment and performance (Cooper & Farran, 1988). McClelland and Morrison's (2003) research revealed that if children develop strong learning related social skills like self-control, cooperation, and assertion as early as age three, those skills stay stable over time and may make the

transition to formal schooling easier. Play is the perfect platform for children to practice such skills.

During play, children experiment with cause and effect in a safe setting as they make choices and negotiate the outcomes which provide opportunities for self-regulation, which is both cognitive and social in nature (Riley & Jones, 2010). By telling children what to do and how to do it, adults deprive them of the practice of controlling and managing their behaviors and their learning. Further, play provides a space for children to develop and improve empathy skills (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). The key component to play is language and its inherent, required role in play. Language is the facilitating factor in this development of self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1934-1986). Often present in play is self-talk, whereby children talk themselves through challenging tasks, or work through ideas verbally (Berk, Mann & Ogan, 2006). Children tend to adopt language previously offered by others (peers, teachers, family members) and use this self-talk to guide and control their own thinking. Play provides opportunities for children to work on expressing needs, problem solving, compromising, negotiation, listening to playmates and understanding and following rules; all of which target self-regulation skills (Bellin & Singer, 2006; Singer, et al., 2006; McClelland & Morrison, 2003; Vickerious & Sandberg, 2006). Dyson's (1989, 1993, 1997 & 2003) extensive research on the social negotiation and creation of school culture and peer culture within classrooms suggests a relationship with literacy development and social skills. Wohlwend (2011) cites Dyson and others when presenting the definition of these two constructs:

1. *School culture* fills the official classroom space with activities, materials and instruction provided by the teacher to support instructional curricular goals, classroom rules, and student learning.

2. *Peer culture* is the child-ordered social organization of the unofficial space that operates according to 'activities, routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers' (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 197). Making and protecting –child governed spaces are among the primary concerns of peer culture, which also include constructing a gendered identity, resisting adult culture, protecting interactive space by bonding through inclusion, and exercising power over others through exclusion (Kyratzis, 2004). p. 5-6.

This research suggested that the construction of peer culture is observed in the classroom, and inferred that it can be seen within the imagined spaces of play (Wohlwend, 2011). Martin and Dombey (2010) suggest that the language used in play is often rich and complex; therefore, play language may not lie in its "formal properties, but in how players manage the tensions of creating the play world and storylines, sustain multiple identities, and strive to find a voice and make his heard" (p. 58). Play language and play engagement not only influences identity construction in young children but permeates their social sphere and peer interactions.

Australian research on pretend play skills found that children ages 5-7 had better abilities to engage with classmates and participate in classroom activities when compared to children with poorer pretend play skills (Uren & Stagnetti, 2009). Swedish researchers Vickerious and Sandberg (2006) suggested that children identified play as a way to obtain friends and keep friends. Ladd's (1990) quantitative research study yielded results which suggest that children "who formed more new friendships in the early months of kindergarten tended to gain in school performance over the course of the year" (p.1096). Ladd (1990) used three different measures of academic behavior and achievement as

pre/post-test to analyze data. When children were unable to make and maintain friendships there were more rejection episodes, which functioned as stressors and interfered with overall school performance (Ladd, 1990). Ladd (1990) and Hartup's (1994) work supported the importance of making and maintaining friendships through play which impacted children's early school adjustment and school performance.

Play and Cognitive Development

Over the centuries scholars have agreed that play impacts cognitive development positively (Bergen, 2002; Elkind, 2007; Froebel, 1898; Erickson, 1950; Ginsberg, 2007; Gleave, 2009; Montie, Xiang, & Schweinhart, 2006; Piaget, 1962; Saltz, Dixon & Johnson, 1977; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Vygotsky, 1978). Play allows children to push their mental borders as they argue, explain, persuade and justify choices, ideas and concepts (Paley, 2007). Saltz and colleagues conducted seminal work investigating the effect of imaginative play on facets of cognitive development which drove Pellegrini, (1984) and Pellegrini and Galda (1982) to design studies that included children acting out the stories used as comprehension measures. Montie et al. (2006) longitudinal research of children in ten European countries, investigated the association between cognitive and language performance at age seven and their respective preschool experience and identified four characteristics which applied to all the countries in the study:

1. Children who were in preprimary settings in which free choice activities predominated had significantly better language performance at age 7 than those in settings in which personal/social activities predominated.
2. As levels of teacher education increased, children's language performance at age 7 improved.

3. The less time children spent in whole group activities, the better was their age 7 cognitive performance.
4. As the number and variety of materials in settings increased, children's age 7 cognitive performance improved. (p. 327)

Children's cognitive thinking can be observed through how children categorize, organize materials and solve problems during their imaginative play (Cooper & Dever, 2001). When children engage in imaginative play they engage in cognitive strategies including joint planning, negotiation, problem solving and goal seeking (Bergen, 2002). Bergen and Coscia (2001) suggest that imaginative play may stimulate dense synaptic networks because of the way play engages the brain in emotions, cognition, sensorimotor actions and language. Kim's (1999) quantitative study found that when given the opportunity to act out what they learned with dolls, children demonstrated long-term retention of academic information. Though the internal validity of this study was strong, the external validity was compromised due to the demographics of the children; most of the children came from affluent homes. Further, generalizability concerns centered on the lack of diversity among participants, almost 87% of the children in the study were Caucasian (Kim, 1999).

Yet, one only needs to look at the history and research in German kindergartens to realize that play impacts learning. In Germany, many play based kindergartens were changed into centers for cognitive achievement during an educational reform movement in the 1970's (Miller & Almon, 2009). Longitudinal research results of a comparison between 50 play-based kindergarten classrooms and 50 early-learning centers (kindergarten classrooms with limited and/or no play) proposed that children who

engaged in play, by age ten, excelled in creativity, intelligence and oral expression, in addition to being more advanced in reading and mathematics than their early-learning center counterparts (Miller & Almon, 2009). As a result, Germany returned to play-based kindergarten. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that play creates the zone of proximal development that, "In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior" (p.102).

Sometimes the very nature of play may incite disequilibrium for a child, when outcomes are different than expected and hypotheses are not supported; this is when cognitive dissonance compels the child toward deeper inquiry (Vygotsky, 1978; Wasserman, 2000). Hatcher and Petty (2004) exhorted educators to be intentional in viewing children's play as an outward expression of their cognitive thinking. A milestone in early childhood development is recognizing and understanding unobserved mental states including how beliefs, desires and thoughts drive people's decision making and behaviors (Kavanaugh, 2006). The dialogue that is generated during imaginative play exposes children to diverse viewpoints and ideas, prodding children to view and talk about circumstances in new ways and deepening their understanding as they engage in meaningful literacy experiences (Riley & Jones, 2010). Therefore, the social lens which children operate from will impact the nature, themes and verbal exchanges of their imaginative play. As a result, the individual social perspective makes the play and

literacy experiences, and its accompanied learning, distinct to the attributes and influences of the specific play group participants.

Emergent Literacy Development through a Sociocultural Lens

Reading the word and learning how to write the word so one can later read it are preceded by learning how to write the world, that is having the experience of changing the world and touching the world.

-Paolo Freire

The skill set that serves as the foundation for formal literacy, including oral language, reading and writing, is frequently referred to as emergent literacy skills. In her book, *Becoming Literate* (1991), Marie Clay defines emergent literacy as the literacy practices children have before formal schooling begins, including exploring the detail of print, invented writing attempts and the development of concepts about books. Clay (1991) asserts that these literacy experiences "lead them to form primitive hypotheses about letters, words and messages in books" (p. 28). Thus, Clay suggests that providing rich literacy experiences help children in their later reading and writing development. However, this definition of literacy leaves out the sociocultural context of literacy. Language and literacy learning are social and collective experiences that are so much more than reading and writing; they are socially mediated processes (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Freire, 1983; Nueman & Roskos, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Giroux (1987) identified Italian social theorist, Antonio Gramsci, as a founder of sorts, of critical pedagogy who, "viewed literacy as both a concept and a social practice that must be linked historically to configurations of knowledge and power, on the one hand, and the political and cultural struggle over language and experience on the other" (p. 1). Therefore, literacy can be

viewed as a blending of language and culture. Language and culture, though different contexts, are symbiotic in nature; they are entwined and it is difficult to divorce one from the other (Nieto, 2002). Critical pedagogy permits, and in fact, encourages students to use these sociocultural aspects in their discourse with others, including educators and peers, as they endeavor to look beyond of the surface of societal institutions and find their own voices (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Defining literacy as a set of decontextualized skills implies that literacy occurs as separate tasks. This study adheres to the idea that literacy learning transpires within a social framework, is grounded in how individuals use it and that it is a complex process (Gee, 1996; Gregory, Long & Volk, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

Hayes, Baruth & Kessler's (1998) research found that literacy experiences infused with exposure to "interesting, relevant and comprehensible language" substantially increased the reading and writing proficiency of migrant children labeled chronologically as fifth grade, yet with significantly lower reading levels. The importance of accepting the language and culture of children's home experiences, inviting it into the learning experience, and valuing it at all times in all interactions and circumstances is vital to children's socio-cultural identity (Carlo & Bengochea, 2006; Lemberger, 1995; Nieto, 2009). According to Collier (1995), "sociocultural processes strongly influence, in both positive and negative ways, students' access to cognitive, academic, and language development. It is crucial that educators provide a 'socioculturally supportive school environment which allows natural language, academic, and cognitive development to flourish" (p. 4). Even the sociocultural influences on parents can negatively impact children's emergent literacy development. Parents are often bombarded by media and society in general to ensure children are reading before they enter kindergarten. Hirsh-

Pasek and colleagues provide (2003) an anecdote in their book, *Einstein Never Used Flashcards,* which illustrates the union of developmentally appropriate practice and emergent literacy and further illustrates how sociocultural influences on the parents can trickle down to the child. They juxtaposed two, 2-year old children's early literacy experiences, both with attentive parents wanting to do the best by their children and desiring that their children be able to read before they enter kindergarten (Hirsh-Pasek, et al., 2003). One child's experiences paralleled the academic emphasis with the use of flashcards, the latest technological educational toy and story-reading with minimal interruptions. Meanwhile, the other child's parents allowed the child to direct the literacy experience and this child made "storybook reading a challenge" with incessant questions and interruptions, resulting in a voracious appetite for books to be read to him (Hirsh-Pasek, et al., 2003). This freedom to direct the interaction also developed a craving for books; by questioning and engaging in discourse about books. While the authors aren't saying that either method is better than the other, they do emphasize the importance of vocabulary, storytelling, phonological awareness and deciphering the written code as foundational skills in later reading success that should *not* be rushed in an effort to have children master reading before they are ready and able, regardless of the commercialized social commentary which pushes earlier introduction to phonics (Hirsh-Pasek, et al, 2003).

Scribner and Cole (1981) posit that there are multiple literacies associated within all fields. Sociocultural influences on children's literacy are ever present regardless of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children. Yet, even within the sociocultural context, literacy tends to follow a general progression. Children's attempts at literacy

construction and development are related, as supported by research both in reading (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Sulzby, 1985; Griffin et al., 2004) and writing (Harste et al., 1984; Welsch, Sullivan, & Justice, 2014), in addition to oral language use (Dickinson, 1987; Snow, 1983, Griffin et al., 2004). In fact, Neuman and Dickinson (2002), experts in the emergent literacy field, affirm that children's literacy development begins at birth and continues not only throughout a child's early childhood before formal schooling even begins, but throughout the life span. One perspective about language is that "it is not acquired externally but rather is part of a process of personal development and emerges in the context of social use (Goodman, Brooks-Smith, Meredith & Goodman, 1987, p. 38).

One of the most important skills required for later reading success is a strong command of oral language; an important precursor to reading and writing. Talking and playing with language at a young age helps young children create a solid foundation for the building blocks of reading (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2003; Seefelt & Wasik, 2006). In fact, Hirsh-Pasek and colleagues (2003) argue the most valuable offering parents and teachers can provide for children are experiences and environments where reading is fun and a shared interactive activity. By the time children are three years old they generally have 2,000 to 4,000 words in their vocabulary and begin to demonstrate knowledge about the structure of language (Seefelt & Wasik, 2006). This research reiterates the importance of children engaging in language play at early ages to help develop vocabularies. In a joint position statement of the International Literacy Association (previously known as the International Reading Association) and NAEYC, researchers Neuman, Copple and Bredekamp (1998) discussed the use of symbols in children's literacy development and indicated that children combine "their oral language, pictures, print and play into

coherent mixed medium and create and communicate meanings in a variety of ways" (p.198).

Sulzby's (1985) seminal research which centered on the phenomenon of young children's independent reenactment of stories claimed that children exhibited an understanding of the written word as early as age two or three. Children demonstrated a progression in their manipulation and storytelling of books, in that they moved from treating each page separately to weaving their stories across the pages of the book using speech with characteristics of proper oral and written language (Sulzby, 1985). Using Halliday's (1978) linguistic theory, which postulates that "language is a sociosemiotic system- a meaning making symbols system with its roots in evolution, and individual development in social interactions and function," Cox, Fang and Otto (1997) investigated how cohesive harmony is related to emergent literacy in preschool children (p. 34). Cohesive harmony is the textual cues writers and readers use to make meaning, including semantic/syntactic cues and word choice, both of which are considered fundamental to later reading (Goodman, 1967; Halliday, 1978; Hasan, 1984). Cox et al., (1997) evaluated two child-created monologues about a topic provided without any sort of prior knowledge building, the first being an oral account and the second a written attempt (dictated) of the same story. This study documented that some preschool children are capable of code switching and are cognizant of audience when constructing oral and written stories; further, this study revealed that children from higher socio-economic backgrounds exhibited advanced cohesive harmony (Cox, et al., 1997). More recent research supports the relationship between children's ability to tell stories and learning how to read (Allor & McCathren, 2003; Ford, McDougall, & Evans, 2009). Storytelling is "decontextualized

language," meaning that a good storyteller provides multiple elements in the structure of the story and detailed language to convey the story in a way that the hearer can follow easily (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2003).

The ability to retell a story also builds emergent literacy skills. Interactive storytelling, which invites the child to take an active role in telling the story, rather than passively listening, improved preschool children's expressive language skills (Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994). Likewise, kindergarten children who repeatedly listened and retold stories were able to recall more facts from the book and demonstrated written language structure in their recounted narrations (Pappas, 1991, 1993; Pappas & Brown, 1988). Recent research indicates that when teachers utilized a print referencing style targeting elements including print organization, print meaning, letter and words, children demonstrated gains in print knowledge, alphabet knowledge and name writing abilities when compared to a control group, wherein children who had stories read to them but the teachers confined discussion and did not permit interrupting (Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka & Hunt, 2009; Reese & Cox, 1999).

Emergent writing skills are also important factors in the literacy development of young children (Cullham, 2005). Marie Clay (1979) emphasized that children develop knowledge about the purposes and elements of print when they endeavor to transfer meaning through their attempts at writing. Through the analysis of kindergarteners' writing efforts in the first two months of formal schooling, Clay (1979) generated five concepts she believed children understood about print, including:

1. The sign concept, whereby children learn that a sign (letter) conveys a message.
2. The use of recurring patterns in their writing including overgeneralizations through repeated letters and words.
3. The directionality principle which includes children's understanding of the organization of print.
4. The generating principle; the ways children combine elements to create an invented message. This generally includes a string of invented words with known words and additional spaces.
5. The ability for children to take inventory of their literacy knowledge, including the use of known letters, words, and/or numbers. Also children who exhibited use of abbreviations in their writing demonstrated advanced understanding of how language works.

A current research study looked at what preschool children's name-writing representations communicated about the child's print and phonological awareness (Welsch et al., 2014). Research findings suggest that accuracy of name writing reflects and parallels fundamental skills in other areas of literacy (Welsch et al., 2014). This research supports the idea that literacy is a complex and interconnected wonder.

Goodman (1967) suggested that reading is *not* a precise process; rather, it is the result of an interaction between thought and language. In Vygotsky's (1978) estimation, thought and language are socially constructed and developed through adult-child and child-child interactions. Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2003) support this notion in their assertion that children need to engage in authentic experiences that build vocabulary, storytelling,

phonological awareness and exposure to the "written code," that is, the letters that make up words and how those words tell stories in text to build the skills necessary to read and write later on (p.102). Neuman and Wright (2014) push for rich vocabulary experiences in the early childhood classroom. Their research suggested that when children from low-income backgrounds were given explicit vocabulary instruction and repeated exposure to vocabulary, they demonstrated increases in both vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, thus increased learning. A further element to the sociocultural lens of literacy is the role of play. Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) referred to play as a place where children coordinate and organize the social discourses and practices that establish their social and cultural resources, thus creating a "space of authoring" (p. 272).

Though there are many viewpoints on how children develop literacy skills, we know that a child's first introduction to literacy is oral language. From the minute they are born, parents use oral language to coo, speak and communicate with them. As children grow, play provides an avenue to practice oral language skills, including speech articulation, building vocabulary and learning the structure of speaking.

Literacy Learning and Imaginative Play

"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn."

– O. Fred Donaldson

The relationship between play and literacy development has also been researched extensively (Christie, 1990; Montie et al., 2006; Korat, Bahar & Snapir, 2003; Kendrick, 2003; Pickett, 1998). Play allows children freedom from situational restraints by creating imaginary scenarios where they control their own actions and further develops with age into internal speech, logical memory and abstract thought (Vygotsky, 1933). Imaginative

play is an important component of emerging literacy which is often overlooked (Stone & Stone, 2008-2014). According to Gleave (2009), children often equate play with independent choice and autonomy, yet play with these parameters is often restricted. Play is a developmentally appropriate way in which children can practice literacy skills. The core of literacy skills is language; for young children this includes the hearing and use of language in the context of their surroundings (Hart & Risley, 1995). In an anecdote about baby talk with mothers, Bruner (1983) provides the following example: when young children play with language they do so in a malleable world where there is not pressure to perform and they have freedom to experiment with varying word or utterance combinations in an attempt to reach a goal. This is a perfect example of the child not only learning language but learning how to *use* language in a social context. Language not only facilitates the creation of play experiences, it is a required feature (Brewer, 2004). Kendrick (2005) posited that by using literacy skills through play, children generated identities in imagined communities, "communities to which they hope to belong" (p. 9). The language and literacy experiences in the early stages of children's lives are crucial to their learning in later years (Hart & Risley, 1995; & Singer et al., 2006).

Play and literacy both impact the development of young children's minds. Play gives children the chance to practice and hone skills that are needed to understand the syntax and semantics required for meaning making in later reading and meaning creation in writing (Rowe, 2000; Griffin, Hemphill, Camp & Wolf, 2004). Research evidence suggests play supports literacy, in that play provides an environment where literacy activities, skills and strategies can be practiced (Roskos & Christie, 2000). Research in the late 1990's suggested that the addition of physical role play to the spoken word

increased what children brought to the reading experience and offered fluency, deep immersion and publicly successful experiences (Wolf, 1998). Kraus (2006) researched homeless children using similar strategies as Wolf's (1998) and suggested that by "playing the play" a reluctant reader gets the opportunity to feel what it is like to be a strong reader (p. 420). Montie et al.'s (2006) longitudinal research, proposed that when children were given freedom in play activities, it required dialogue between them:

> Free choice activities provide the opportunity and, often, the necessity for children to interact verbally with other children in one-on-one or small group play --assigning roles for dramatic play, establishing rules for games, making plans for block building, and so forth. (p 328).

Further, Montie and colleague's (2006) research suggested the relaxed environment free play creates, allowed educators to engage with children by providing new vocabulary directly related to their interests, thus supporting language acquisition.

Play also provides a space for children to connect oral language to the written word. Pellegrini and Galda's (1993) research revealed that imaginative play positively impacts literacy development which supports Clay's (1972) assertions about the concepts of print. Clay postulated that children use linguistic verbs such as say, talk, and write as they play. Clay (1972) further suggested that the ability to talk about language predicted reading. It is common for children to replicate vocabulary and syntax of the speech they hear in their environments, often mimicking their parent's dialogue (Haywood & Perkins, 2003). Other research suggested that when print was embedded within the environment children's ability to read the print increased (Vukelich, 1994). Neuman and Rosko (1991) investigated the impact of peers as literacy coaches during informal play. Their research

suggested children's oral exchanges during play paralleled the adult-child interaction during shared reading. Through their dialogue the children socially constructed meaning through negotiation as they named and categorized literacy related objects (e.g. "Look, is that a dinosaur?"). Also identified was the "coaching attempts" by children assisting peers with a literacy problem, which regularly encompassed forming letters, word spelling or demonstrating routines. Neuman and Rosko's (1991) work suggested children do, in fact, have considerable impact on each other's literacy learning; they are able to teach and learn from the natural conversations embedded within their imaginative play. This provides a visible example of the zone of the proximal development central to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory further illustrating the peer as a "more knowledgeable other."

Imaginative play, also denoted as pretend, sociodramatic, fantasy, symbolic, dramatic, or make-believe play in the literature, has been a theme bathed in controversy for the past fifty years (Pellegrini, 2009). Disagreements stem from the ambiguity of the definition of play among diverse disciplines, including psychology, evolutionary biology, and education (Pellegrini, 2009). Further discord resulted from the on-going DAP versus standards dichotomy and clashing views as to whether play should be included as part of the classroom curriculum (Goldstein, 2007; Hatch, 2005; Wein, 2004). As a result of this debate the literacy benefits of imaginative play have been researched abundantly (Christie & Enz, 2002; Kendrick, 2005; Morrow & Rand, 1991; Pellegrini, 1984, Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Saltz, Dixon & Johnson, 1977; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990; Woodward, 1984).

There is a progression of how play unfolds in children with imaginative play as an important milestone, which generally occurs between the ages of, two and half and three (Almon, 2003). In infancy, children's play centers on objects and people; in preschool, children engage in exploratory and practice play and begin to participate in imaginative play (Brewer, 2004). As children move into the early primary grades play is imaginative or constructive in nature (Brewer, 2004). Imaginative play incorporates imitation and language, and signals the development of representational thought (Watson & Jackowitz, 1984). This begins to emerge in the second year when young children begin to introduce a role taking component while playing with objects (Brewer, 2004). At its peak between 4 and 6, children's imaginative play begins to include multiple children and is more complex, allowing children to transcend space and time in extraordinary ways (Almon, 2003; Singer & Singer, 1990). Kavanaugh (2006) suggested that the role play element in imaginative play may help children understand mental state awareness. As children begin to understand and navigate complex stimuli in their environments they replicate their ideas, thoughts and experiences through imaginative play (Singer & Singer, 1998). Piaget refers to this symbolic representation as "self-assertion for the pleasure of exercising his powers and recapturing fleeting experience" (Piaget, 1962, p. 131).

Israeli psychologist, Sara Smilanksy's seminal research in the 1970's and 80's on the role of dramatic and sociodramatic play and cognitive and socio-emotional development of young children, reiterated the importance of play and served as the foundation for further research into the impact of imaginative play on children's development. Smilanksy and Shefatya (1990) observed three to six-year-old children; they assessed their ability to organize and articulate thoughts and observed their social

interactions in a clinic and grocery store dramatic play area. Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) chose these themes because the children had engaged in meaningful experiences which could serve as the basis for play episodes. Results of this study suggested that teachers could indeed facilitate and teach sociodramatic play skills directly and within play through language (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990).

Thus, modeling sociodramatic play skills and discussing play materials could positively impact children's imaginative play. Materials and supplies available in the imagined spaces impact the overall play experience as well. The provision of thematic play materials in the block area with the goal of enhancing children's imaginative play did result in longer play episodes with richer imaginative language (Woodward, 1984). Woodward's (1984) research prompted additional research into how play boosts literacy abilities. Morrow's et al. (1991) research study which focused on the manipulation of physical play environments and its impact on literacy behaviors, found that the type of play environment and teacher interaction influenced literacy actions during play. They randomly assigned children to one of the following four groups: (a) paper, pencil and books with adult guidance, (b) thematic materials with adult guidance, (c) thematic materials without adult guidance and (d) traditional curriculum which served as the control group. In the paper, pencil and books with adult guidance, teachers explicitly communicated about the materials and explained their use at the beginning of each play time; in the thematic materials with adult guidance group, teachers guided students during the play time by reminding children to utilize the materials (e.g. fill out prescriptions, or patient information forms, etc.). Literacy behavior in this study was categorized into three groups: reading (e.g. browsing, reading aloud to self or others and

reading silently), writing (e.g. drawing, scribbling, tracing, copying, dictating, writing on a computer or typewriter, writing related to thematic play, story writing and invented writing forms), and paper handling (e.g. sorting, shuffling and scanning). Results of this study proposed that increased literacy behaviors occurred in the paper, pencil, books with adult guidance and thematic play with adult guidance groups. It has also been noted that older children engaged in imaginative play often create contoured scripts, more complex organized plots, and richer use of vocabulary (Johnson, 1998). This more mature imaginative play not only positively influences the development of play itself but also impacts early academic skills (Barnett, Yarosz & Hornbeck, 2006; Bodrova, 2008). Further, research by Christie (1990), Christie & Enz, (1992), Nielson & Monson (1996), Neuman & Roskos (1997), and Korat et al. (2003) also reported similar results supporting the idea that materials and physical play environments impact literacy behaviors during imaginative play. Therefore, the play environment plays a fundamental role in whether children engage in and enhance literacy skills during their play. The Reggio Emilia approach to learning delineates the physical environment as the "third teacher," in addition to the teacher him/herself, and peers. In this child-driven inquiry approach, the children pilot the content to be studied, which results in an emergent curriculum that has the potential to move in innumerable directions (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012). Therefore, literacy learning can be referred to as the ways in which children express their knowing, and can include, but is not limited to any of the following: speaking, singing, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing, creating, sculpting, imaginative playing (pretend, role play, puppeteering etc.).

Bodrova (2008) proposed that utilizing a Vygotskian approach focused on intentional scaffolding of imaginative play, can result in improvement of the play itself, and the creation of the zone of proximal development in the cognitive, social and emotional domains. In order to help children develop literacy fluency, a core component is the reciprocal relationship between teacher/adult and child, whereby they feed each other's ideas through dialogue, mutual investigation and creative expression (Paley, 2004). Mature imaginative play also has the potential to enrich writing literacy skills (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). The Vygotskian approach situates imaginative play as a viable method for reconciling the DAP versus standards dilemma (Bodrova 2008) and purports that imaginative play can be used to expose children to opportunities to practice and meet academic standards.

Children's Play in the Context of Common Core Standards

"The very act of taking control of children's learning turns that learning from joy to work."

-Peter Gray

Today teachers are faced with the pressure to ensure that children are exposed to and master knowledge and skills mandated by their state in accordance with Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010a) have multiple components. According to the standards document, they:

1. Are aligned with college and work expectations
2. Are clear, understandable, and consistent
3. Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills
4. Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards
5. Are informed by other top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society
6. Are evidence-based

The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) inform the Common Core State Standards. As outlined in the CCSS for English Language Arts, "The CCR standards anchor the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed" (NGA & CCSSO, 2010b, p. 4). The CCR standards serve as general anchors whereas the CCSS are the specific targets to be reached within the broader anchor (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). In light of No Child Left Behind legislation, Ardovino, Hollingworth and Ybarra (2000) introduced the idea of standards which build upon each other beginning at the kindergarten level and serve as the starting point for "progressive, expanding, non-repeating curriculum of increasing complexity, depth and breadth" (p. 8). Standards are objectives and expectations for what students are expected to know at a particular period of time (Logue, 2007). Barrett-Tatum (2015) identifies the enacted curriculum as what is actually taught; it is "defined as the teacher's interpretation and implementation of the written curriculum" (p. 258). As a result of differing influences on teacher pedagogy, experiences and worldviews, the manner in

which teachers interpret and put value on the mandated curricula varies greatly. Ardovino's et al. (2000) description of standards adequately reflects the current set of Common Core State Standards.

Though official testing is slated to begin in third grade, states including New York and Oregon have administered standardized tests to kindergartners, a highly developmentally inappropriate practice for children (Korby, 2014). Hatch (2002) addresses this phenomenon as "accountability shovedown," resulting in the perceived need to prepare children with foundational skills to obtain acceptable test scores by third grade, thus requiring mastery of learning standards as early as kindergarten (p. 457). The Common Core standards were created with the overarching goal of adequately preparing students for the workforce and higher education, and resulted in a backward mapping of sorts beginning at the final target: what should students know at the end of their formal public schooling (Education Roundtable, 2016)? The idea of standards has been integral to early childhood and kindergarten professionals since the early 1960's when Title I programs were included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Catapano, 2005).

Even though the past 50 years of educational reform has led to intense standardized testing, the new Common Core Standards Initiative allows for some degree of possibilities for play to serve as a means to an end which can provide children with additional opportunities and experiences to understand educational content (Goatly, 2012). Goldstein's (2007) research, including two experienced kindergarten teachers, suggests that a relationship between DAP and standards-based instruction is indeed achievable. In the past few years play as a means for learning has resurfaced in the

research (Weisberg et al., 2015). However, one must also note that nationally there is great disparity among and between kindergarten classrooms. The structural variations between kindergarten expectations and enrollment can differ from state to state (Snow, 2012). For example, the length of the school day for kindergarten instruction is not uniform across states (2 to 3-hour half-day programs and 6-hour full day programs). Further, of the 43 states that require districts to offer kindergarten, only 11 offer full day programs, and in some states kindergarten is not even mandated (Snow, 2012). This disparity among states makes it difficult for children to achieve mastery of kindergarten Common Core Standards, and results in widening the learning gap among children across the United States. Students receiving full day kindergarten instruction are naturally exposed to more content than those receiving half day or no instruction at all. Table 1 provides an abbreviated look at kindergarten ELA CC standards; each of the areas includes multiple objectives and goals. Standards for mathematics, social studies and science also exist for kindergarten, further demonstrating the struggle and pressure kindergarten teachers face in terms accountability requirements.

Table 1 Abbreviated Common Core Kindergarten English Language Art Standards

Reading Literature	
Key Ideas and Details	RL.K. 1 through RL.K.3
Craft and Structure	RL.K.4 through RL.K.6
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RL.K.7 and RL.K.9
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	RL.K.10
Reading Informational Text	
Key Ideas and Details	RI.K. 1 through RI.K.3
Craft and Structure	RI.K.4 through RI.K.6
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	RI.K.8 and RI.K.9
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	RI.K.10
Reading Informational Text	
Print Concepts	RF.K.1
Phonological Awareness	RF.K.2
Phonics and Word Recognition	RF.K.3
Fluency	RF.K.4
Writing	
Text Types and Purposes	W.K.1 through W.K.3
Production and Distribution of Writing	W.K. 5 and W.K.6
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	W.K.7 and W.K.8
Speaking and Listening	SL.K.1 through SL.K 3
Comprehension and Collaboration	SL.K.4 through SL.K 6
Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	
Language	L.K.1 and L.K.2
Conventions of Standard English	L.K.4 through L.K.6
Vocabulary and Acquisition and Use	

Note: Source: Adapted from Instructional Support Tools, Idaho Department of Education. Retrieved from www.sde.idaho.gov

Therefore, building on the limited research and need for more detailed understandings of how children's imaginative play can provide opportunities to practice and master the ELA Common Core Standards, this research study's primary focus is documenting if and how negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning opportunities might provide teachers a way to address the CC.ELA standards in kindergarten classrooms.

Conceptual Framework

Through the reviewing and critiquing the literature surrounding imaginative play, literacy learning, and the kindergarten ELA Common Core standards, coupled with my educational experiences, the development of a conceptual framework (CF) for the design and implementation of this study was formulated. Creating a CF results in a visual representation of the assumptions, expectations, beliefs, systems of concepts and theories that inform the research study (Maxwell, 2013). This framework assisted in shaping the research process, informed the methodological design and guided the data collection methods and tools to be used. The CF further informed various iterations of a coding scheme and served as an organizing structure for the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of the study's findings.

Each category was derived from a combination of the research questions presented in Chapter 1, and the comprehensive literature review. The first three sections of the literature review framed the study in terms of the histories of broad concepts associated with the study. The last three sections of the literature review were narrowed in focus and identified key constructs to the study. Thus, categories for the conceptual framework were deduced from these sections as well. The CF served as an operational

and organizational tool, and was subject to ongoing revision throughout the research study. Five main categories were identified with each category directly associated to constructs in at least one of the research questions. RQ1 (research question 1) and RQ2 (research question 2) are used in table 2 to identify research questions and which categories might provide data to answer each research question. The five categories included: Type of Imaginative Play, Social Space, Imagined Space, Unofficial Space, and Official Space. I drew from literature, educational and social theories, and my own educated guesses about potential responses to the research questions resulting in each category having subcategories and multiple bulleted descriptors (See Table 2). During the course of data collection and analysis, some categories and bulleted descriptors were deleted, others were added, while others were collapsed. Maxwell (2013) compares this process to a "bricoleur," the person who constructs or creates from a sundry of existing things. In this case, the resulting CF was a reconstruction of ideas, theories, assumptions, and beliefs which brought together the constructs under investigation.

The first research question concentrates on the exploration of patterns between negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning. Therefore, logical conceptual categories to help capture the answer to this question would include: the "Types of Play" children are engaged in, "The Imagined Space" and the "Unofficial Space." Within these three categories descriptors provide specific literacy learning activities, physical negotiated spaces where imaginary play takes place and the type(s) of play children are engaged in. The second research question aimed to delineate if and how negotiated imaginative play could be used to assess Common Core (ELA) standards. Consequently, multiple categories could be used to respond to this question including, the "Imagined

Space," the "Unofficial Space" and the "Official Space." Expanding the descriptors for these categories, I was combined constructs and triangulated data to answer this question.

Table 2 Conceptual Framework Categories and Descriptors

TYPES OF PLAY (RQ1)	SOCIAL SPACE (RQ1)	IMAGINED SPACE (RQ1 & RQ2)	UNOFFICIAL SPACE (RQ1 & RQ2)	OFFICIAL SPACE (RQ 1 & RQ2)
What types of imaginary play are children are engaged in?	The bounded context within the physical classroom.	The imaginary space where children engage in imaginary play and dialogue situated in classroom play environments.	The activities, routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in with classmates.	The official classroom space including activities, materials and instruction provided by teacher.
Parallel Cooperative Cooperative-constructive Dramatic/Pretend/Imaginary Expressive	Classroom routines, expectations	Blocks Dramatic Play Writing Center Art Center Manipulative Area	Literacy Learning Activities Singing Speaking Storytelling Writing Drawing Painting Constructing Creating Sculpting Imaginative playing Artifacts Physical Component Product/Design Literacy Component	Teacher Direct Instruction (DI) Negotiated Play

			Language/Dialogue Written Oral Visual Zone of Proximal Development More Knowledgeable Other Teacher Peer Environment Recontextualized Spaces: Ways of Knowing Specific ELA Standard(s) Demonstrated Through Play	

Note: RQ 1 and RQ2 refer to research questions aligned with the CF categories.

This CF underwent multiple iterations as data was collected and analyzed. I used this tool to maintain the integrity of the study by framing and balancing each step of the research study in relation to the research problem, the study's purpose, and relevant literature in the field, research questions and the theoretical framework. The CF provided the infrastructure for the entire research study and ties all elements within the chapters together to bring cohesiveness to the study.

Summary

It is commonly believed that there doesn't seem to be any room for play in today's curriculum. In traditional terms, curriculum and the focus of instruction "consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to the new generation" (Dewey, 1963, p 5). This continues to ring true for our current generation, even though there is extensive research supporting the importance of play on children's overall development and cognitive development. The gap between kindergarten classroom practices and research-based instructional practices regarding play continues to persist. The polarized debate surrounding DAP versus standards instruction leaves little negotiation for a blended approach. Needless to say, this debate cannot deny the contributions of the NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice, and empirical research defending the benefit of play for the whole child. Further, research investigating the effects of an amalgamation of the DAP and standards dichotomy could help in legitimizing the role of play in children's learning. In the past few years, early childhood researchers have turned to "guided play" as a potential strategy for the blending of these two philosophies. "Guided play fosters academic knowledge through play activities in which the adult sets up the environment and participates in the play according to the adult's curricular goals and the child's developmental level and needs" (Fisher, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Singer, & Berk, 2011, p.5). However, much of this play research targets the preschool age children. Still, a ray of hope has breached the dividing wall of the DAP and standards standoff. Educators are beginning a discourse that brings play back into children's learning. Conversations are taking place to address the

developmental appropriateness of the Common Core Standards for kindergarteners (Education Roundtable, 2016). Nonetheless, there are few research studies investigating imaginative play, literacy learning and kindergarten ELA Common Core Standards and the relationships among and between them. The significance of play on the development of young children and their intellectual growth has been addressed through the literature. Imaginative play, if returned to primary classrooms, can provide a practical opportunity to augment student learning (Education Roundtable, 2016; Bodrova, 2008; Barrett et al., 2006; Goldstein, 2007; Weisberg et al., 2013). This research study extended the idea of guided play by establishing the term *negotiated play* and investigated the relationship, if any, between negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning and kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. This study sought to answer if negotiated imaginative play in kindergarten classrooms could be a means of cultivating the whole child and their learning and serve as an authentic assessment of academic standards.

CHAPTER III: ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY APPROACHES FOR INVESTIGATING LITERACY LEARNING THROUGH IMAGINATIVE PLAY

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

-Plato

Introduction

The purpose of this single site case study was to document the negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning experiences in the official, unofficial, and imagined spaces of kindergarten children. Specifically, I sought to understand the reciprocal relationships between the direct instruction of CC.ELA Standards, the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments, and literacy learning activities linked to kindergarten ELA standards designed for children to practice said standards. I believed that exploration of these relationships would allow early educators to reconcile their beliefs and practices while not compromising accountability expectations within the teaching field and encourage teachers to advocate for the return of play to kindergarten. This research study focused on two research questions to help understand the phenomenon: (a) In what ways does negotiated imaginative play provide opportunities for children to practice literacy learning skills? and, (b) how can Common Core English Language Arts Standard be measured through negotiated imaginative play?

This chapter outlines the study's research methodology and includes considerations in each of the following areas: a design overview that addresses the

research approach, rationale for case study methodology, the setting, the case and its bounded context, procedures, data collection and sources, methods for data analysis and synthesis, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and closes with a concluding summary.

Research Design Overview

Research Approach

With the approval of the university's Institutional Review Board, I recorded and observed fourteen kindergarten children's imaginative play and literacy learning experiences. This investigation utilized a single site case study using ethnographic research methods. These methods will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

Video/audio recordings, field notes, and gathering of artifacts were the primary methods of data collection. The data collection process of video/audio recording began on January 29th, 2015 and concluded on May 26th, 2015. Five different imagined spaces were recorded a minimum of 2 times and a maximum of 5 times. Areas of imaginative play recorded included: blocks, dramatic play, manipulative area, art center, and writing center. Field notes were also taken during each session and artifacts were gathered throughout the course of the research study. The information obtained from the video/audio recording, field notes and artifacts formed the foundation for the overall findings for this study. Each child was identified by a pseudonym and all video/audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Following the transcription of the data, I watched the videos again focusing on children's play and literacy learning experiences and began to identify themes which presented repeatedly and then organized the themes into categories for future coding. By using inductive analysis and creative synthesis,

immersion into the details and specifics of the data was necessary to identify important patterns, themes and interrelationships by first exploring and then confirming the synthesis (Patton, 2002). Coding categories were guided by the study's conceptual framework and refined on an ongoing basis, which is presented in-depth later in this chapter. The primary methods of data collection served as a means for triangulation. Other strategies used included member checks and debriefing with the teacher throughout the study, inter-rater reliability in the coding process completed by a fellow expert in the field, and peer review at different stages in the research process.

Rationale for Case Study Methodology

This research study blended two methodologies: ethnographic and case study methods of inquiry situated in a social-constructivist paradigm. The purpose of this study was to document if and how negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning experiences provide kindergarten students with opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of Common Core kindergarten English Language Art standards. Qualitative ethnographic research emphasizes exploration, discovery and thick descriptions of the constructs seeking to be understood. Case study research is used to gather descriptive information about "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 28). Because this research study operated from a social constructivist framework that views literacy and learning as socially, culturally and historically constructed realities, ethnographic research methods afforded a suitable means for understanding the relationships under investigation. I observed behaviors of the culture group, in this case the kindergartners and their classroom culture. I then analyzed their expressed and enacted behaviors in an attempt to understand their

experiences in terms of learning. A blending of case study and ethnographic strategies for inquiry can provide a broader and deeper understanding of the questions seeking to be answered.

Merriam (1988) defines case study research as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 16). Merriam (1988) extends this definition by providing four additional characteristics of case study research design:

1. Particularistic, in that the study is centered on a particular situation, program, event, phenomenon or person.
2. Descriptive, in that the researcher gathers rich description of the object of study.
3. Heuristic, as the study enriches the reader's understanding.
4. Inductive, as the data drive the understandings that emerge from the study.

Case studies tend to be utilized when the researcher has no control over the behaviors of the participant(s) being studied (Barone, 2011). The quality of case study can be measured through the use of multiple observations, collection of artifacts and documents and interviews, in addition to the amount of time spent in the field (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994). By using several data sources, the researcher can discover and develop a "converging line of inquiry" (Yin, 1994, p. 92) and thus, strengthen the trustworthiness of the research. In terms of literacy research, case studies provide researchers the opportunities to collect information about the "dimensions and dynamics of classroom living and learning" (Dyson, 1995, p. 51). Ethnography, because of its roots in theories of

culture, allows researchers to "view literacy development, instruction, learning and practice as they occur naturally in sociocultural contexts" (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 135). The decision to use case study methods in this research study was rooted in one of Yin's (1994, 2009) single case research reasons, "A revelatory case that allows for the analysis of a phenomenon previously unavailable to researchers." This research fit well with case study and ethnographic methods of inquiry because it sought to gain understanding of a specific context and the meaning making and ability to demonstrate knowing for those involved. Further, allowing me to focus on a connection which is narrowly reflected in the research: the investigation of the relationship between CC.ELA Standards and imaginative play in a negotiated play environment. This study focused on observing and documenting how the relationships between negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning behaviors and experiences could be used as a means to authenticate and assess children's demonstration and understanding of kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, when corresponding direct instruction of standards were also shared.

Research Questions

1. In what ways does negotiated imaginative play provide opportunities for kindergarten children to practice literacy learning skills?
2. How can Common Core English Language Arts Standards be measured through negotiated imaginative play?

Setting

Sampling Process

A purposeful sampling procedure was used to select this study's sample in order to reveal the most information about the relationships between and among constructs under investigation. Purposeful sampling is a method typical to case study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Miles et al.,2014). A pilot study was conducted prior to this study which led to the sample selection for the current research study, in that specific criteria needed to be present in order to investigate the phenomenon, including unstructured time for imaginative play as part of the daily schedule, teacher led direct instruction of kindergarten ELA Common Core Standards and literacy learning opportunities.

Pilot Study.

A pilot study focused on language art instruction in three distinct educational settings: a public charter school, a private school and a private parochial school in a Pacific Northwest metropolitan city which served as the catalyst for the current study under investigation. I investigated the relationship between two constructs: teacher beliefs and developmentally appropriate practice in relation to language arts instruction through observations of teaching strategies and interviews. Three female, Caucasian teacher participants were included in the study and who ranged from five years teaching kindergarten to 16 years of experience at the kindergarten level. Data on developmentally appropriate practice was obtained through class observations and teacher interviews. Developmentally appropriate practices and strategies were taken from NAEYC guidelines (NAEYC, 2009). Information on teacher beliefs was gathered through teacher interviews. I observed five times in each setting for approximately 1 hour for a total of

fifteen observations; during the observation I made notes of the teacher's language arts instruction, i.e. was it whole group, small group, independent, was it teacher led, was there a tactile component, songs, rhymes, routines, etc. During all the gathering of field notes and observations pseudonyms were used at all times and no indentifiable information was used. I shared all transcribed notes with the teacher participants to obtain aggreement regarding the observations. Findings from the pilot study interviews suggested that the disconnect between teacher beliefs about DAP and actual teaching practice did exist. One theme which emerged from the interview questions included discussion on developmentally appropriate practices, teacher directed instruction, and child centered instruction (as the teachers were asked to specifically comment on these). Teachers in the charter and private setting addressed the increased focus on standards and federal mandates as possible reasons for a diminution in kindergarten programs focusing on children's developmental needs, acknowledging the standards push and the ensuing pressures that an academic focus creates. For example, the private school teacher said her pressure comes mostly from parents; whereas, the charter school teacher noted the pressure felt from subsequent grade level teachers. This idea of feeling pressure aligns with research gathered on the current study under investigation, as teachers felt pressure to teach to the Common Core standards in accordance with looming accountability measures resulting in an increase in more teacher led instruction and a decrease in play in many classrooms around the nation (Golinkoff et al., 2004). Also, the theme of play was present in the interviews, and though teachers provided independent free choice play and the amount of time dedicated in each setting was similar, the breakdown of play time differed significantly (i.e. one setting included one 30-45 minute block of play and the

two remaining settings offered two 10-15 minute blocks at different times of the day). This difference is significant because it suggested that children may not have had enough time to engage in and sustain play in some settings.

Though the sample selection was purposeful, it was also a sample of convenience primarily because I was unaware of any other play-based, *public* kindergarten classrooms in the city to select from and investigate. I reached this conclusion by speaking with colleagues in the teaching profession to help identify classrooms that might meet the criteria of having unstructured play time as part of the daily routine. This is significant because the sample not only needed to have a play component, but also needed to adhere to district, state and federal curriculum requirements and teach the Common Core Standards, constructs essential to this research study. Therefore, private or parochial schools would not meet criteria since they are not held accountable to district curriculum requirements and state-mandated assessments.

Case Study Classroom Selection

Through the pilot study, I was able to flesh out the identification and development of the research topic and determine case criteria required to explore the inquiry into the phenomenon. Therefore, the public charter school was selected as the single site for this case study research. The public charter school and kindergarten classroom serving as the research site was an expeditionary learning (EL) school.

Expeditionary Learning. Expeditionary learning is a pedagogical approach that uses project-based learning to emphasize the acquisition of skills and knowledge through in-depth inquiry and explorations. Expeditionary Learning was founded in 1992 through a partnership between Outward Bound – a nonprofit, independent outdoor-education

organization – and the Harvard Graduate School of Education (EL Education 2020). Expeditionary Learning Education focuses on teamwork, courage and compassion with an active approach to learning including building background knowledge, extending reading and research and emergent writing and is "based on the work of educator Kurt Hahn. EL is grounded in ten Design Principles that include foci on diversity and inclusion, the natural world, solitude and reflection, empathy and caring, and service and compassion" (Owens, 2013, p. 5). In this particular EL school the kindergarten expedition was "birds," where content area objectives in math, literacy, reading and science skills were embedded within the expedition. Kindergarten children in this classroom essentially became ornithologists or "bird experts" as the expedition expanded in breadth and depth throughout the course of the school year,. The kindergarteners partnered with sixth graders in the school and were assigned a bird buddy. These fifth graders served as more knowledgeable others and worked closely with the kindergarteners to look up facts, watch videos, and to practice their presentations. The expedition culminated in an exhibition night where children presented individual research and knowledge gathered on a specific bird native to area. The research included information about the type of bird (songbird, water bird, bird of prey, etc.), the bird's habitat, adaptations, diet, physical features (type of beak, feet), migration patterns and general bird conservation education. Throughout the year, the children worked on a series of scientific drawings. The progression of scientific drawings was part of the presentation board and the final drawing was revealed the night of the exhibition. The children dictated an informational passage about their bird, and "bird notecards" were published

for sale with the proceeds donated to a conservation group voted upon by the children. See Appendix A for examples of student generated research.

The Case

This single-site case study focused on the official, unofficial, imagined and social spaces of fourteen children in an afternoon, play-based kindergarten classroom in a metropolitan city in the Pacific Northwest. In seeking to understand the reciprocal relationships between the negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning and the assessment of CC.ELA Standards of these children, two research questions were explored. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), four areas of information needed for qualitative studies include the following: contexual information, demographic information, perceptual and theoretical information. In order to address and attempt to answer the proposed research questions data was collected during formalized direct instruction times and also during children's "work time". In this setting, free choice, negotiated imaginative play time was called "work time."

Contextual Information

An understanding of the contextual information related to this study proved critical to investigating the constructs under investigation. In order to answer the research questions, clear delineation of the official, unofficial, imagined and social spaces needed to be presented succinctly to manage the data in the bounded system of the classroom and to preserve the integrity of the study. The following sections provide an overview of the contextual spaces. Chapter four will provide broader and deeper detailed information related to the context of this study including the social, imagined, unofficial and official spaces where the foundation for this study resides.

The Kindergarten Classroom and the Social Space. The bounded context of the case site served as the "social space" where the remaining official, unofficial and imagined spaces were observed. Specifically, the social space included the physical kindergarten classroom in a public charter EL school. This social space was also comprised of the expectations, routines, and all the nuances in and among the culture of the classroom.

The Teacher and the Official Space. In determining the information needed to answer the research questions, the official classroom space including activities, materials and instruction provided by the teacher, were integral components to understanding if and how negotiated imaginative play could serve as an authentic assessment of kindergartners' knowledge of the CC.ELA Standards. This required me to look for patterns and relationships within the data that might answer this question.

The Kindergarteners and the Unofficial Space**.** In order to grasp an understanding of the relationship between the negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning, the unofficial space within the classroom also needed to be observed. For the purposes of this study the unofficial space within the case study site consisted of literacy learning activities, the creation/production of artifacts and the roles in and among the research participants (teacher-child, child-environment and child-child relationships). Within the creation/production of artifacts information about the physical and literacy components were investigated, including product design (visual) and language/dialogue (oral and written) surrounding the artifact. The unofficial space included, but was not limited to, literacy learning activities including singing, speaking, storytelling, writing**,** drawing**,** painting**,** constructing**,** creating**,** sculpting and imaginative playing. The analysis of the

unofficial space was ongoing throughout the data collection, analysis and synthesis of the research.

The Kindergarten Environment and the Imagined Space. Lastly, information needed about the imagined spaces of children's imaginative play was central to understanding the phenomenon under study. The imagined spaces included the negotiated play environments available to students during "work time" and the actual play that took place in these areas (dialogue and artifacts created). The negotiated play environments included blocks, dramatic play, art center, writing center, and manipulative area, and how the teacher negotiated and scaffolded the environment to provide children with authentic opportunities to practice what they know in a variety of ways. The imagined spaces are where the unofficial space and the official space converged, within the bounded social space.

Demographic Information

Participants attended Hillview Expeditionary Learning Public Charter School. The teacher participant was a 28-year-old Caucasian female with 7 years of experience teaching kindergarten in an EL setting. The participant population included 14 children in a PM kindergarten classroom in a public charter expeditionary learning school in a metropolitan city in the Pacific Northwest. Participants include five boys and nine girls ranging in age from 5 years 2 months to 6 years 2 months. Thirteen children were Caucasian and one child was mixed race. This information was gathered through the informed consent forms signed by parents for their minor children, and teacher interview. Ethnic data was obtained from school records.

Perceptual Information

Perceptual information includes the the perceptions of the participants in relation to the specific constructs delineated in the study's inquiry into a phenonmena. Often this information is gathered through interviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). However, in this research study interviews were not conducted with children. So in the context of this study, the gathering of perceptual information from the children was in video and audio format and through child created artifacts. Perceptual information was needed to adequately address the first research question regarding if and how children practice literacy learning skills through imaginative play in a negotiated play environment.

Theoretical Information

Couched in Vygotsky's social development theory, which postulated that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development processes, this research study operated from the premise that children learn through active engagement and interaction in their social environment. Consequently, children construct knowledge, refine skills and develop their own attitudes as they interact and engage in imaginative play. Further, adopting elements from the Reggio Emilia principle, this research study examined imaginative play and literacy learning through a social lens which seeks to discover if and how imaginative play provides freedom in the exploration of meaning making processes, allowing me to understand the child in a social context.

The Reggio Emilia principle is a philosophy toward learning, or a blending of theory and practice that views children as skilled and capable social learners (Biermeier, 2015). Both Malaguzzi and Vygotsky believed that learning was a social act (Moss, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978) Vygotsky's (1978) theory incorporates the significance of

mediating tools and signs, and how they impact imaginative play and learning. These mediation tools can include physical tools, artifacts, language and culturally learned processes (Vygotsky, 1978; Davis, 2015). Specifically, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that mediation instruments shape the way individuals act and respond within and upon the world. Vygotsky (1978) further defined the mediation tool's function as, "… to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity; it is externally oriented; it must lead to changes in objects. It is a means by which human external activity is aimed at mastering, and triumphing over, nature." (p.55). Davis (2015) describes the relationship between an individual's goals and mediation tools as how:

> "Human subjects engage in the world enacting motives or what are called objects. The object or idea of what a person wants to achieve may be held within a subject's mind, however, realisation of this relies upon mediation through various means – these are variously called tools, instruments, artefacts and signs." (p.1)

Figure 1 Vygotskian mediation triangle

Note: Source, Davis, S. (2015). *Transformative learning: Revisiting Heathcote and Vygotsky for the digital age. p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e, 2* (1-2). http://www.p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org/?p=1835

Vygotsky's (1978) visual representation of the mediation process utilizes a triangle with S representing stimulus on the left, and R on the right for response and an X at the top to represent the mediation methods used to achieve the response, as shown in Figure 1. A second tenet to Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist social development theory is the influence of culture and the social context. A theoretical construct central to Vygotsky's theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as, "the distance between the actual development of a child as determined by the independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable

peers" (Vygotsky,1978, p. 86). This theoretical construct suggests that what some children would not know on their own, they could learn through social contact and communication with the assistance of a "more knowledgeable other" (MKO); for example, a mentor, peer, or teacher (Doolittle, 1995). In this context, learning is the result of collaboration and interaction between people and objects which are mediated by tools, signs, and artifacts situated in a social and/or cultural context (Pena-Lopez, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

Blending Vygotsky's (1978) ideas of mediation tools used to construct meaning, Wohlwend's (2008) components of mediational means and incorporating constructs from this research study, I use the term "literacy learning" to encompass the meaning making practices of children including the corporeal attributes of literacy activities, including singing, speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing, creating, sculpting, and imaginative playing, while physically using a variety of resources and supplies as a means of communicating what children know. From an instructional perspective, I pull from Weisberg *et al's.* (2013) types of play in the school setting. Weisberg and colleagues (2013), describe guided play as lying "midway between direct instruction and free play, presenting a learning goal, and scaffolding the environment while allowing children to maintain a large degree of control over the play and learning" (p. 104). In guided play teachers initiate the learning process and ensure children focus on the goals while giving the child the freedom to explore and learn, by co-playing, commenting, asking open ended questions and modeling the exploration of materials (Weisberg *et al*,.2013). I extended the idea of guided play into negotiated imaginative play: the reciprocal relationship between the direct instruction of Common Core

standards, the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments embedded with literacy learning activities linked to kindergarten ELA standards for children to practice standards; and, its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs. This approach provides children with the opportunity to transfer academic skills taught in isolation and practice those skills in an authentic setting rather than a more structured setting.

An adapted mediation triangle of negotiated imaginative play is shown in figure 2. I added the three constructs central to this research as the mediational means: imaginative play, literacy learning and the negotiated environment, each with subcomponents discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters. Through the social development learning theory lens, the teacher and peers in the social context of kindergarten are probable and expected MKO's. In terms of this research study the negotiated environment functions as a mediational means, it served as another potential MKO and allowed children to engage in self-directed literacy learning. Kolb (1984), a prominent theorist of experiential learning stated "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." (p. 39). The sides of the triangles represent the zone of proximal development (ZPD), moving from left to right. This movement up the left side of the triangle to the peak of the triangle and down the right side conceptualizes the experiential learning journey of the child. This journey begins with what the child can do on his/her own (bottom left), transforming through the mediational means, and progressing toward experiential learning (bottom right). This travelling toward the destination necessitates the engagement in the mediational means of

literacy learning activities through imaginative play in negotiated environments embedded within the social practices of the classroom.

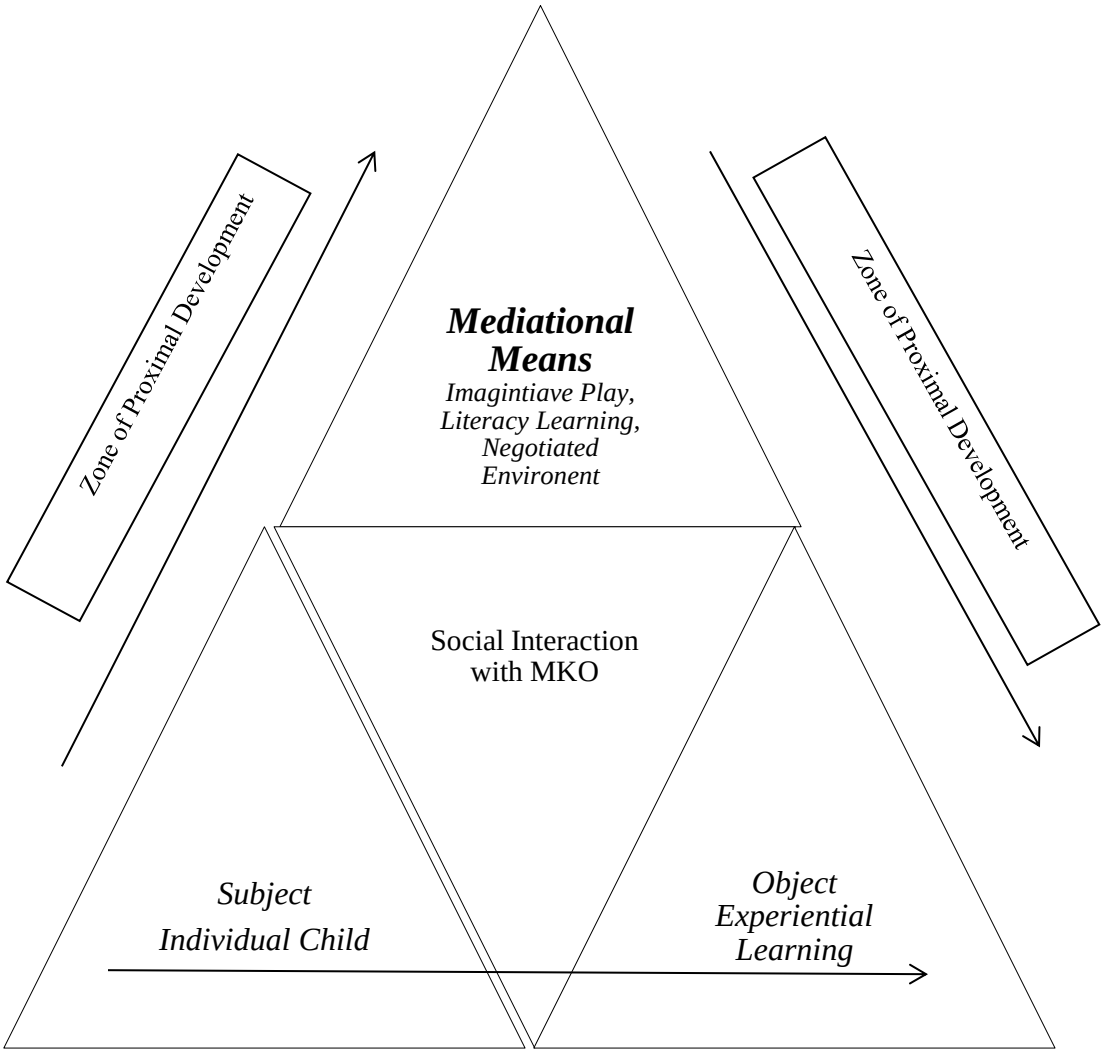

Figure 2 Adapted mediation triangle of negotiated imaginative play.

Procedures

IRB Approval

Upon completing the comprehensive review of literature and successfully defending the research proposal, including the following elements: background/context, problem statement, statement of purpose, research questions outlined in chapter 1, the literature review presented in chapter 2 and the proposed methodology outlined in chapter 3, I completed the required IRB protocol application and received approval on October 31, 2014.

Research Stance as a Participant Observer

Participant observation is a qualitative research method with its roots in traditional ethnographic research, and the objective of this method is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study participants (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2011). I was interested in exploring multiple perspectives in the kindergarten community and understanding the relationship between them by both observing and participating in the daily activities of the kindergarten classroom. I served as the primary human instrument for data collection and analysis; the data was mediated through me rather than inventories, questionnaires or machines, thus impacting the confirmability and ultimately the trustworthiness of this study (Shenton, 2004; Peredarvenko & Krauss, 2013).

The children were already familiar with me as I was a volunteer in the classroom on Tuesdays and Thursday since the beginning of the academic school year. As a result, my presence was not a new disruption to the environment. Further, the children were comfortable and familiar with me, and would often come to me throughout the day for

assistance with the routines, problem solving, conflict-resolution and help in general; if the situation was out of my scope as a classroom volunteer, I would always defer to Liz, the teacher. This did not change during the data collection period; the children continued to engage me for assistance regarding daily activities in the classroom. I recognized that this pre-established relationship with the children had the potential to bias my data collection and analysis.

Data Collection

Methods

Data collection at the expeditionary learning, kindergarten classroom site began toward the end of January, 2015 and was completed at the end of May 2015. I implemented the use of multiple methods and triangulation of data as a way to obtain thorough understanding of the phenomenon under exploration. This strategy added depth and breadth, in addition to supporting evidence of the data gathered (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This study employed multiple triangulation elements including data sources, method of data collection, theory and data type to provide support to suggested findings (Miles *et.al.*, 2014). The primary mode of data collection was video/audio recordings of the children's imaginative play.

Data Sources

The student participants in this study were not asked to do anything outside of their normal daily schedule. I video and audio recorded children's play during the scheduled "work time" in the classroom when children were given free choice play in one of the following imagined spaces: dramatic play, art center, blocks, writing center, and manipulatives center. Data collection through video recording was a way to obtain

information in a naturalistic setting. Video recording equipment was set up on a tripod and placed on the perimeter of the imagined space. Equipment was set up at the beginning of the day in the play area to be recorded and moved between play settings only when no one was engaged in play in the designated area for more than ten minutes or if/when a child asked to stop the recording . Only one negotiated play environment center was recorded at once, to provide children with the choice of entering the play area or not.

The collection and writing of field notes utilized pseudonyms at all times and no indentifiable information was used. I shared all transcribed notes with the teacher participant to obtain aggreement regarding the observations. The wrote field notes on the standards based instruction that occurred prior to the participants' "work time" in addition to thoughts, ideas and feelings after each recorded session.

Data Collection

Recorded Observation in Five Negotiated Imagined Spaces. Data collection for this research was primarily through multiple video recordings over the course of five months, field notes and through the collection of artifacts and documents. I video recorded children's imaginative play during the scheduled "work time" in the classroom when children were given free choice play in one of the following imagined spaces: dramatic play, art center, blocks, writing center, and manipulatives center. I began video and audio recording on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the five month in an effort to maximize on "work time," as these days were identified by the teacher as days where the classroom schedule was more streamlined with fewer breaks to participate in school special classes, like art or physical education. However, due to unforseen circumstances

halfway through the data collection I switched observation dates to Monday and Wednesdays. While Monday traditionally was a "heavy" expedition bird work day, the amount and quality of negotiated imaginative play did not seem to be impacted. In retrospect, the data collected over the course of five months provided a balanced cross-section of typical negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning experiences.

Field Notes. I also obtained daily field notes on the standards based instruction that occured prior to the participants' "work time." This data was important and needed for further analysis of the relationship between negotiated imaginative play and assessing children's knowledge of CC.ELA Standards. Minimal field notes were taken during the actual video-audio recording of negotiated imaginative play because I was concerned that children's play would be altered with my presence. However, I did write notes, ideas, thoughts, and feelings down at the end of each day. The video and audio recordings were less intrusive and allowed me to look for patterns between direct instruction of standards and imaginative play. After data collection, I transferred information obtained from field notes, for example, the activities children engaged in during learning centers, and added to the beginning of the corresponding transcription so as to have all data in one place and provide ease of comparison between play dialogue and teacher-led direct instruction. .

Literacy Learning Activities and Artifacts. The video and audio recordings provided the dialogue and evidence of the literacy learning activities including, but not limited to singing, speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing, creating, sculpting, and imaginative playing. Further, I gathered physical artifacts created by the children during their play in the imagined and unofficial spaces, for example, artwork, artist statements, books, letters, pictures of block constructions, etc. Artifacts

were also able to be obtained through the video recordings, for example, the computer software allowed for still photos to be extracted from the video. In order to be selected as an artifact, a physical product or design component had to be present as well as a language (written, oral, visual) or dialogue component was also required. Artifacts were identified as "written or visual sources of data that contribute to [the] understanding of what is happening in classrooms and schools" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 374). Artifacts also corroborated what was being observed, validated field notes, and confirmed which CC.ELA Standards were demonstrated.

Methods for Data Analysis and Synthesis

Throughout the study, I tackled copious amounts of information during the data collection process. The challenge throughout the data collection and analysis included identifying and narrowing the amount of data in order to idenfity relevant patterns and begin to recontexulize the data in a cohesive manner. I began the data analysis process by transcribing the play scenarios verbatim, reviewing, selecting excerpts and analyzing children's negotiated imaginative play and literacy learning experiences looking for themes and patterns which presented repeatedly. I initially coded the dialogues into aprioi codes based on my conceptual framework and through an iterative process which created sub categories and codes for potential future coding schemes. Some categories were predetermined by the the intial conceptual framework, for example, the types of play and the different spaces being observed including the social, imagined unofficial and official spaces. I used these apriori categories as a way to organize data and begin the descriptive coding process and to provide a means to later index and categorize further codes within each pattern (Miles et al., 2014). In qualitative research it can be difficult to separate the

data analysis from the data collection, as sometimes the process occurs concurrently (Ngulube, 2015). However, by using inductive analysis and creative synthesis, immersion into the details and specifics of the data was necessary to identify important patterns, themes and interrelationships by first exploring and then confirming the synthesis (Patton, 2002). See Appendix B for example of first cycle coding. This type of data analysis allowed for a rich, thick and holistic description of the context of the case and phenomenon being investigated (Patton, 2002). To strenthen the trustworthiness of this research study, I also implemented other guidelines outlined by Glesne (2011) including: prolonged engagement in the field, clarification of researcher bias, member checking, providing a thick description and triangulation of data (data sources, method of data collection, theory and data type) for example, field notes, video recording and artifacts. The following list provides a summarization of the steps used to carry out this research, with further discussion in the following sections:

1. Prior to actual data collection of data, I conducted a comprehensive literature review to understand the broad history surrounding kindergarten, developmentally appropriate practice, imaginative play and their relationships with cognitive, literacy and social development. In addition, the review of literature afforded me the opportunities to glean information from previous research contributions with similar constructs and assist in framing and narrowing the research focus.
2. After defending the research proposal to my dissertation committee, I proceeded with and completed the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and received approval to advance with the research study. The IRB process required a full board human subject protocol application delineating all processes and

procedures to ensure that human subject standards were adhered to, including participant confidentiality and informed consent.

3. I then made contact by phone and email with the director of the EL public charter school and provided a copy of the research proposal requesting permission to approach and discuss the research study with the kindergarten teacher.
4. Upon approval from the EL director and kindergarten teacher, I provided recruitment letters with the research outline and informed consent forms to the teacher to send home to the parents of the kindergarten children in the afternoon class. All consent forms were signed and returned before data collection began at the end of January of 2015.
5. Video and audio recording of children's negotiated imaginative play was collected over five months, in five different play environments with each play environment recorded *at least* three times, for a total of 16 recorded observations. Field notes were also taken during direct instruction and play, as well as pictures and some physical copies of created artifacts.
6. Video and audio recording was transcribed verbatim by me and concurrently with data collection, with attention paid to emerging themes later developed into a coding scheme.
7. I watched the raw data making notes and categorizing play episodes into apriori coding schemes and marking excerpts, creating potential new codes, and deepening analysis.

8. I began the coding process of the data alongside the video and audio recording, a recursive procedure that took place throughout the data collection and analysis process.
9. I continued with the analysis of data within and between the core constructs of the study (negotiated play, literacy learning activities and CC.ELA Standards) formulating findings based on the data gathered.
10. I addressed issues of trustworthiness through triangulation methods and the use of inter-rater reliability.

Ethical Considerations

In this qualitative research study, it was my responsibility to inform and protect the confidentiality of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Merriam, 1998; & Miles et al., 2014). Enlisting voluntary cooperation becomes complicated when participants are children and parents are the ones who provide consent. Therefore, in this study, not only did I obtain consent from parents, but I also informed the children about the purpose of the study in general terms and reinforced that they could choose to not participate at any time by requesting the video recording be turned off. Therefore, while conducting participant observation, I was careful in the methods I used to gather the data so that there was limited disruption to normal activity within the classroom. However, when children asked what the video recorder was for, I provided a truthful response that, "I was just trying to learn more about how children play." This was in an attempt to minimize attention to the recording device. I also alerted relevant gatekeepers (school officials) to my presence and purpose by signing in at the front office before every observation. Further cautionary measures included the written and verbal informed

consent to continue with the study. I also did not neglect to inform the children of their right to refuse further participation in the video/audio recording, and on one occasion a child asked me to turn off the video recording, in which I promptly responded by fulfilling their request. These precautions were put in place to protect the rights, interests and overall well-being of the children. Also the participants' rights and confidentially were considered when making choices about the reporting and dissemination of data. I was dedicated to keeping names and other identifying information about the participants and case study site confidential. The children were given pseudonyms which were used in the transcription process, including abbreviations of pseudonyms and numbers. I also secured the storage of research records and data on a password protected laptop and locking file cabinet, so no one other than I had access to the research materials. Lastly, I avoided watching or transcribing videos in any public setting where others might be able to see any participant identifying information.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, issues of trustworthiness can be paralleled to issues of validity and reliability often associated with traditional quantitative methods. Guba (1981) uses the terms credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability as terminologies to address internal validity, reliability, objectivity and generalizability, respectively. These issues of trustworthiness were put in place to assist me and hold me accountable in monitoring potential biases that could present in the research study, including design, implementation and analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Credibility

The credibility or validity in qualitative research refers to whether the findings are accurate and sincere. In case study research, the goal is not *verifying* conclusions, rather the researcher seeks to identify and test validity of the conclusions reached. In essence, do the conclusions measure what they claim to measure? Further, in case study research the credibility is dependent on the richness and depth of information gathered, not necessarily the amount. In this research study, I had to evaluate whether the interrelatedness of the research design components matched the logic of the method used to answer the research questions. That is, I spent a great deal of time, and prolonged engagement with data, developing the study's purpose, conceptual framework, research questions and methods, and revisited these components throughout the study. These strategies allowed me to immerse myself in the data and complete multiple iterations of questioning whether, in fact, the data did answer the research questions. I also further triangulated data sources, in addition to data collection methods.

Triangulation. In terms of data sources, I triangulated information by gathering multiple data media through video/audio recording, writing field notes, and collecting artifacts and literacy learning dialogues. Two of the strongest methods of triangulation in this study were the video recordings and the collection of artifacts. This was especially important during the analysis process because the physical documents provided an opportunity for more objective analysis rather than subjective interpretation.

Dependability

Dependability, often associated with the ability of the research findings to be replicated by others with similar studies, is not often strong in case study research

(Shenton, 2004). The reason behind this is that case study research is context-bound and does not include the quantity of participants or experiences needed to warrant strong reliability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008 & Guba, 1981). In addition, because ethnography research focuses on a particular social group, it is challenging to potentially repeat the study in the same context with the same methods and similar participants. This, in large part, is due to the fact the observations are tied to the situation of the study, including the demographic make-up of the group, the personality dynamics and extraneous variables including but not limited to, family structures, school community, local influences, events in the media etc. (Shenton 2004).

Confirmability

In order to strengthen the research study's confirmability, I engaged in reflective processes to address issues of bias and subjectivity. It is important to note that while I was actively present and interacted with children at the site, there were other factors that influenced the research stance and ultimately impacted the study. I brought certain assumptions about what would/could be gleaned from the study and how that information would be gathered. Further, I held philosophical ideas about the ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology of what knowledge is, how we know what we know, the values attached to what we know and the processes for studying knowledge. These influences shaped the way I understood and interpreted the data. Thus, I created an audit trail including records of field notes, video/audio transcripts, and memos/notes to represent the ongoing reflection of objectivity and to address the research paradigms unique to me. Therefore, to address issues of confirmability it fell to me to document the consistency of coding schemes and categories, demonstrating reliability in the

procedures. Thus, I incorporated inter-rater reliability methods validating the dependability of the research. The inter-rater reliability measures were used to establish consistency of verbatim transcriptions and of coding procedures of categories and descriptors of the video transcriptions. Video transcription reliability yielded 100% agreement of three randomly selected transcriptions (15% of the transcription data). An inter-rater reliability score of 97% was achieved for coding procedures. This was achieved by selecting a 15% random sampling of coded transcriptions and comparing them to a second coder's (colleague in the field of literacy education, and fellow kindergarten teacher with strong knowledge of CC.ELA Standards) codes of the same transcriptions. The transcriptions used in this comparison coding process used pseudonyms. Recoded samples were based on discussion of disagreements, this process also resulted in discussions about adding CC.ELA Standards that I didn't initially code but added as a result. See Appendix C for comparison of codes between coders.

Transferability

As is the case with most qualitative research and specifically case study research, generalizability is not a goal or intended purpose for the research (Miles et al., 2014). I attempted to address transferability by providing a thick, rich description of the participants' literacy learning activities and play monologues (oral transcription of dialogue between children) and the context in which the research study was situated. Whether and to what extent the constructs in this context could be transferred to another context is difficult to determine because of the sheer nature of the study's purpose, conceptual framework, research questions and methods bounded to the case.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations to this study are related to the inherent critiques of qualitative research methodology in general, and some are characteristic to this particular study's research design. For example, because analysis ultimately resides with the researcher, this study was limited by my subjectivity. While I attempted to account for this subjectivity by clarifying assumptions up front and addressing research paradigms, nonetheless research bias proved a significant concern. One of the key limitations of this study was my subjectivity and my bias influenced by my educational and professional background in early childhood education and my commitment to developmentally appropriate practices as a play advocate.

An associated limitation was that the participants may have played differently because they were being recorded, a phenomenon referred to as participant reactivity (Mizes, Hill, Boone & Lohr, 2016). By both observing and participating, to varying degrees, in context of the kindergarten classroom's daily activities, the children's imaginative play, behaviors may have been affected. Further, because the participants knew me and were informed that I was trying to learn more about how children play, their play may have been exaggerated. Therefore, I continuously reflected on how and in what ways I might have influenced the participants in the data collection process of the study. Within two weeks into the study, as the children engaged in play, it was clear that they did not notice the recording apparatus. In addition to bias and participant reactivity issues, a major limitation of the study was the restrictive nature of the research sample. Though generalizability was not an intended goal for the research it still impacted the study's transferability. However, through thick description of research constructs, in

addition to detailed information about the context and background of the study, it is anticipated that information could be accessed and evaluated for possible application to other contexts.

Summary

In summary, this chapter provided a comprehensive framework of this study's methodology. A blended qualitative ethnographic case study methodology was utilized to articulate the phenomenon of if and how the reciprocal relationship between direct instruction and negotiated imaginative play, in official, unofficial, and imagined spaces within the bounded social space of the kindergarten classroom, could be used as an authentic assessment of how kindergarten children practice and meet Common Core English Language Art Standards in a negotiated play environment. Five data collection methods were used including: video/audio recording, writing field notes, collection of artifacts, and identification of literacy learning monologues/activities. Credibility and dependability were addressed through multiple strategies, including data source and method triangulation. A comprehensive literature review was completed and used to formulate a conceptual framework informing the analysis process discussed in detail in chapter four.

I examined these constructs with the hope of illustrating if and how these experiences work together and provide children opportunities to practice and demonstrate knowledge of Common Core English Language Art (ELA) Standards. I further anticipated that data collected would provide early educators with knowledge and new perceptions on how to blend beliefs and practices while continuing to adhere to education policy and meet accountability requirements. Moreover, it is my hope that this study will

narrow the gap between opposing DAP and standards educational teaching practices and in legitimizing the role of play in children's learning, calling for its return to kindergarten.

CHAPTER IV: CONVERGING FORCES: IMAGINATIVE PLAY, LITERACY LEARNING AND ELA COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colors.

-Loris Malaguzzi

Introduction

Paley (2007) reminds educators to listen to what children say and do, and attend to how they articulate their curiosities. This mindfulness provides teachers with an opportunity to utilize information to inform teaching practices that put the child at the center of the educative experience (Paley, 2007). By utilizing imaginative play as an on-going assessment method, the environment can be used as a means for informing direct instruction practices as well serve as a gauge for negotiating the play space. This reflective practice serves the whole child and allows teachers to glean information about the child as a multifaceted person, using an unfiltered lens to observe, learn, and appreciate the child, rather than defaulting to the academic lens which only provides a small sliver of the whole child, in many cases their quantifiable performances on tests of knowledge.

The following chapter provides the thick description and context of children's imaginary play and corresponding literacy learning activities, in addition to CC.ELA Standards observed through play and engagement in literacy learning activities, at Hillview Charter School. This chapter is a melding of both the analysis and findings. My

aim is to illustrate three converging forces: imaginative play, literacy learning and ELA Common Core Standards. This section includes an overview of data which was gathered, reviewed, organized and distilled that I used to attempt to answer the research questions. By addressing the means of measurement and providing a thick description of the imaginative play, literacy learning behaviors and their association with kindergarten ELA Common Core Standards, I hope to create an inductive representation of how the research questions are answered through the extrapolation of play dialogue and vignettes, explanations of literacy learning activities, direct instruction and CC.ELA Standards exhibited during play and the negotiated play evironment. Thus, the key findings are presented first and the play vignettes provide the story and analysis that led to the findings. Using an ethnographic case study approach was a very effective tool for identifying interactions between the following constructs: imaginative play, literacy learning and kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. Which I anticipated might lead to greater acceptance of negotiated play as a valid method for practicing, learning and working toward mastery of some ELA Common Core Standards. My hope is that it will also provide an avenue for educators to reconcile their beliefs and teaching practices surrounding play as a learning approach and a developmentally appropriate practice in kindergarten.

Further, this chapter begins with the key findings from the study and then outlines ten play vignettes, two from each imagined space, which provide the analysis process between and among the imagined, official and unofficial spaces and their respective subgroups. In addition, the relationships between and among the unofficial and official spaces are discussed more thoroughly in the Recontextualized space sections of the play

vignettes, resulting in the information used to deduce most of the findings based on the data gathered, analyzed and synthesized.

Presentation of the Findings

Based on the, analysis and synthesis of the data collected in this bounded case study, six key findings emerged from the data:

Finding 1: Children appeared to demonstrate knowing in numerous ways through literacy learning opportunities and activities.

Finding 2: Negotiated play and embedded literacy learning experiences likely helped children practice and demonstrate mastery of some kindergarten ELA standards.

Finding 3: Based on the highlighted vignettes, all 13 of the 14 children appear to have demonstrated practice and/or mastery of a combination of at least 6 CC.ELA Standards in the areas of Foundational Skills, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening categories from a total of 24 standards.

Finding 4: During imaginative play, peers and the environment seemed to serve as the more knowledgeable other by fostering and challenging learning.

Finding 5: CC.ELA Standards in the areas of Informational Text and Literature were infrequently observed during imaginative play.

Finding 6: Literacy learning activities enacted during play are context-specific and require intensive attention to oral language and self-selected created artifacts.

These findings appeared to be supported by the play vignettes which provided information used to answer both research questions. By analyzing the animation and enactment of the literacy learning activites in each vignette, as well as identifying any creation of artifacts and analyzing them for literacy components and kindergarten

CC.ELA Standards, I was able to deduce the ways in which the children demonstrated their knowing. The findings were extrapolated from the oral transcriptions of play, the identification and enactment of literacy learning activities, the analysis of artifacts created and which, if any CC.ELA Standards were observed through the play or artifact. A more thorough discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter five.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Data Analysis Procedures

Once all the data was gathered, transcribed and coded to the point where the final conceptual framework was reached, I conducted more iterations through data to make sure that coding strategies were implemented using the final conceptual framework so as to ascertain as much information as possible to answer the research questions, while also providing a holistic picture of the bounded site and the culture of the kindergarteners. Though much of the data had already been coded up to this point, by looking at the data from various vantage points and in some cases, in isolation, it proved to be helpful in the analysis of the relationships between and among the main constructs of negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning activities and CC.ELA Standards. Further, by sequestering the constructs and analyzing from within the apriori "spaces," the reconstruction of how they related and influenced each other created a much smoother inductive process for converging the relationships, identifying findings and interpreting those findings. A minimum of seven layers of analysis took place for each play sequence, including the identification of the type of play occurring, the imagined space (play area), the literacy learning activities observed, the artifacts created, addressing the zone of proximal development, if applicable, documentation of presence of negotiated play and

the recontextualized spaces or ways of knowing and the specific CC.ELA Standards observed through play or artifact.

Exploring Literacy Learning Through Ethnography

By using the qualitative approach that includes ethnograpy and the observation of behavior, I sought to institute the meaning of the releationship(s) between and among constructs through the eyes of the participants revealing their shared meaning, culture and behavior, within a bounded context (case study). What is the shared meaning in this study and how is it measured through culture and behavior? It is measured through authentic assessment: observations of children during play in a negotiated envrionment, literacy learning activities (both child and teacher directed) and the artifacts they create that demonstrate practice, comprehension and, in some cases, mastery of kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. I documented and described the experiences of kindergarten children, specifically, their literacy learning experiences, and negotiated imaginative play during free play periods or "work time" throughout the school day.

The case study site was a kindergarten classroom in the Pacific Northwest whose philosophy encompassed a play-based and inquiry approach to learning. The school adopts many of the characteristics of an Expeditionary Learning School, in which children at different grade levels have a specific focus that is investigated deeply. In this case, the kindergarten expedition was birds. The children participated in an in-depth study all about birds throughout the course of the year. As a result of the teacher Liz's commitment to play and her work to educate those entering her classroom about imaginative play and its relationship to learning, the reseacher decided to examine the children's learning by gathering data as the children engaged in imaginative play and

look for patterns and trends within and among the constructs of kindergarten CC.ELA Standards (the official space), imaginary play (the imagined space) and literacy learning activities (the unofficial space) in an attempt to document specific learning and understanding through their play. In essense, what did Liz explicitly teach prior to unstructured play time, what/how did the children engage in imaginary play, what literacy learning activities did the children participate in before and during play, and which and how many, if any, CC.ELA Standards were observed in any/all of these spaces?

The Official Space Overview

The teacher, Liz, a female, Caucasian teacher, with seven years of teaching experience, found herself having to defend her use and time allottment for play to parents and administrators. Through an interview with Liz, she stated she believed that play is how children learn and that it is a developmentally appropriate practice. Yet, she also voiced her experiences and frustrations at the increasing pressure to meet academic standards. Liz was also held to the accountability standards that all public school teachers face; she acknowledged her personal and professional battle with finding balance between and among her beliefs, practices and accountabilty requirements. While commited to giving her students time to engage in unstructured play or "work time," she was also required to provide instruction that exposed children to and provided opportunities to practice Common Core Standards, as well as teach and faciliate deep inquiry into the study of birds. Nonetheless, with only a little over three hours each day to teach and address the needs of children, Liz took her promise to include play or "work time" earnestly, by including at least 30-45 minutes daily. Liz was working on her

master's degree during the time that data was collected in her classroom. Her action research focused on creating a rich play environment for children with literacy opportunities and providing a list of ***potential*** Common Core Standards that *might* be seen within the specified play environment; however, in her research there was no specific data gathered (See Figure 3).

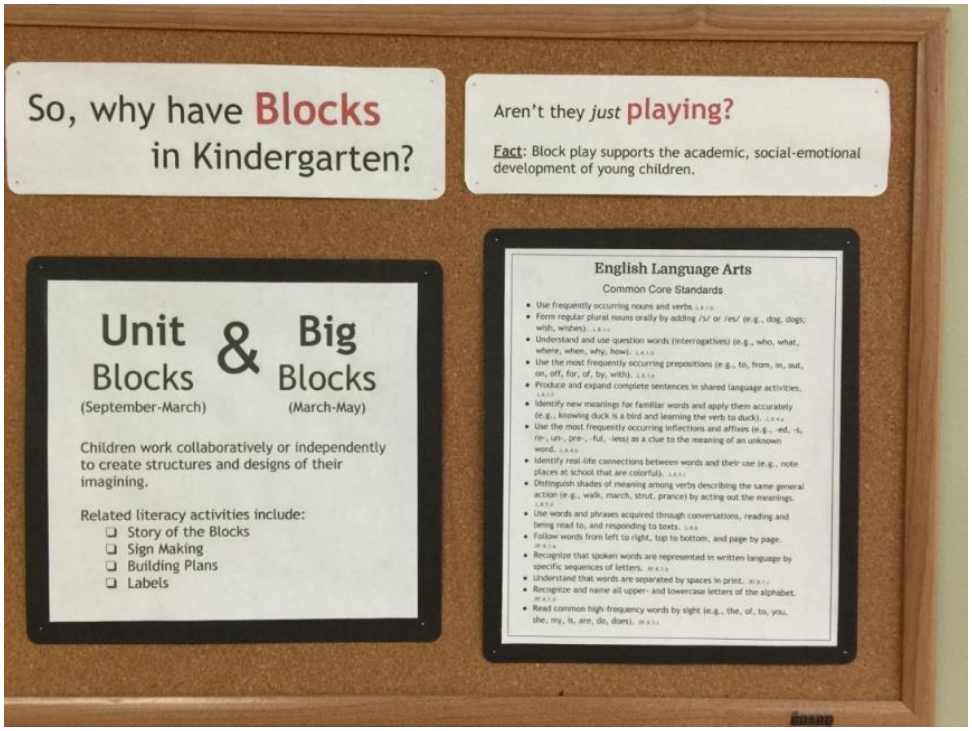

Figure 3 Why Play? Display with ELA Common Core Standards

Liz was deliberate about adding a writing/literacy component to each imagined space as an option for children. These occasions for demonstrating knowing will be dicussed in greater detail later in this chapter, in addition to how the imagined spaces were negotiated to provide literacy learning opportunities for children during work-time. See Figure 4 for an example of the environment scaffolding. Further, the relationships, between the direct instruction of CC.ELA Standards and the deliberate designing and

scaffolding of imaginative play environments with opportunities for literacy learning activities will be presented and tied to specific kindergarten ELA standards demonstrated throughout the play sequences, if any.

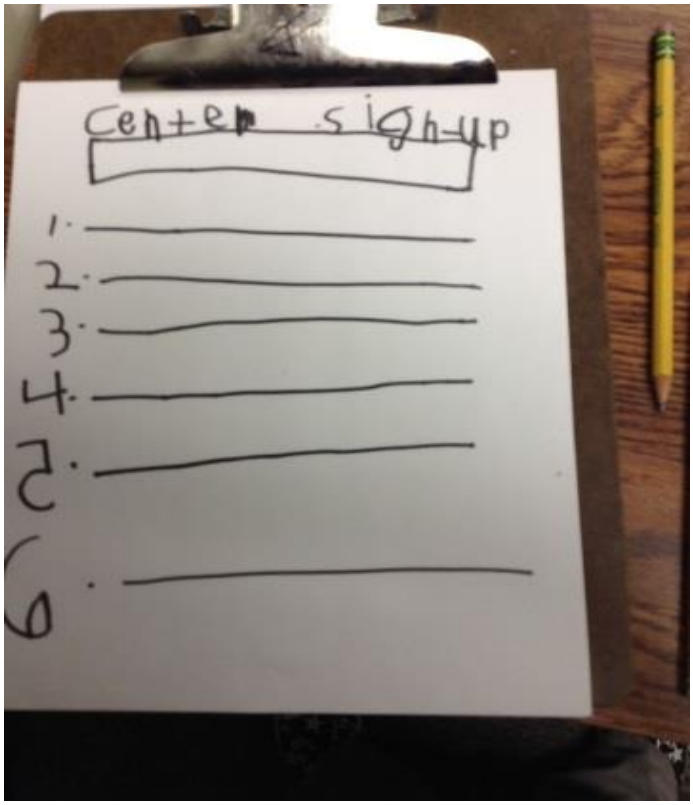

Figure 4 Environmental Scaffolding: Student created sign up sheet.

The physical layout of the kindergarten classroom at Hillview Charter School provided ample space for the children to learn and play. A modular unit adjacent to the school and between the school and playground served as the learning space for kindergarteners at Hillview, with two entrances and essentially two classrooms with an adjoining door and its own bathroom. The space was shared with an afternoon art enrichment class. Yet, both classes utilized both sides of the structure throughout the day. Though each class had their cubbies and designated rug for class meeting time, the

classes swapped spaces, depending on the schedule. The east classroom consisted of four tables and chairs for the "academic or standards" portion of the day. The children engaged in four learning centers daily. This side of the learning space included a designated teacher area with two teacher desks, file cabinets, teacher shelving and a classroom materials cabinet. The west classroom was the play space which included the following permanent areas: art center, dramatic play, blocks, writing center, bird observatory, library and puppet theater, manipulative area and an upright piano. (See Appendix D for classroom diagram). Both the east and west classroom had their own calendar area, library, children's cubbies and classroom meeting space (rug, white board).

Liz's classroom routine provided children with consistency; very seldom did the general schedule change. (See Appendix E for the classroom's daily schedule.) The children's day began with a morning meeting, which included a written morning message, a share time, calendar activities, counting, a short explicit teaching of a math or literacy concept, and an explanation of each center with a physical model of directions and expectations for each morning center. Every day the children particpated in 4 different learning centers, each about 10 to 15 minutes long. There was a parent volunteer every day at one center, which generally included a game or activty to reinforce a skill or set of skills taught explicitly by Liz a day or two previously. Liz also ran a center daily and this is where much of the explicit teaching of math, literacy skills, and science concepts (bird inquiry) took place. The remaining two centers were independent in nature, although one center generally had a parent volunteer to monitor. One was the technology center where children used ipads to practice/play specific learning games, with a focus on math or literacy. These ipads were loaded with teacher approved

games,with the majority of apps providing opportunities to practice math and literacy skills.

There were also two iPad applications which tracked student progress and provided data back to the teacher. On days when a tracking app was used, the children were assigned to a specific ipad and were required to log in. The last independent center generally consisted of a math activity using manipulatives (unifix cubes, dice, blocks, tangram patterns, etc.), a literacy activity (writing, drawing, phonics, rhyming games, etc.) or specific bird work (practice scientific drawings of parts of bird, their habitats, foods they eat, etc.). This center generally had a parent volunteer present to help monitor and assist students as needed. The center was always a practice of something the children had already been exposed to during small group or whole group instruction in previous weeks. An important feature of this kindergarten class included the EL bird inquiry. This focus on "What makes a bird a bird?" permeated all areas of the classroom. It is important to identify and speak to this unique characteristic, as it clearly influenced the social and official spaces of the classroom. Bird work often took place during large group instruction, small group learning centers and was embedded across the curriculum.

I collected field notes during my time in the classroom, but because I was a participant observer, when the children or teacher asked for my attention or help, I would assist where possible. Due to the IRB regulations, the scope of my research allowed me to only gather observational data during classroom teaching time. I kept a record of what actitivies were being explicitly taught or practiced in the four learning centers.

The Language of Play, the Creative Design of Play and the Transfiguration of Play

The following section provides an imagined space overview of each play area in the classroom where data was collected. A breakdown of how the official and unoffocial spaces are used and negotiated are also also provided in the analysis. This section includes thick descriptions of the negotiated imagined spaces and data gathered including, the number of children observed, what direct instruction took place prior to work time, how the space and materials in the play areas were negotiated, the type of play children engaged in, how or what are they played, the literacy learning activities observed, transcribed dialogue vignettes, creation and explanations of artifacts, CC.ELA Standards observed and details surrounding the zone of promixal development. The idea of animating objects and enacting identities through imaginary play provides a way for children to move through space and time (Kress, 1997). As children create artifacts during their play, they bring their own represenations and understandings of real world ideas, thoughts and inquiries into their created world of action and play. Moreover, a description of the literacy learning behaviors demonstrated are also dileneated as a means of providing a thick description of the context of this study. Finally, the Recontextualized space provides a picture of how children demonstrate their knowing through a variety of expressions. This notion of demonstrating knowledge is taken from the Reggio Emilia philosphy of teaching and learning. According to the Reggio Emilia experience, there are a hundred languages of children by which they can show, demonstrate and articulate their knowing (Edwards et al., 2012). This philosophy emphasizes achievement in terms of the children's efforts of personal expression and their abilities to reflect on their thinking through a variety of self-directed manifestations. These manifestations provide a way for

children to reconcile their questions, investigations and inquiries through their preferred process of expression.

Recontextualized Spaces: Literacy Learning and Ways of Knowing Overview

By observing, recording and evaluating the official, imagined and unofficial spaces that children engage in, I was able to better understand the various ways that children demonstrate their learning and understanding. By evaluating each "space" in semi-isolation, it allowed me to focus on the children's engagment and learning from a variety of vantage points. For example, I noticed and recorded the teacher's contributions through materials, instruction and activities; the environment and how its negotiation impacts play and learning; and then the kindergarten children themselves and their unique dialogue, imaginary play, creations of artifacts and the interactions between the official, unofficial and imagined spaces. Looking through these lenses individually provided an easier method to generate the"recontextualized space," (part of the unofficial space) or the ways the children demonstrated their "knowing" (artifacts and literacy learning activities), as well as identify potential MKO's (more knowledgeable others) and relationships between direct instruction and specific CC.ELA Standards demonstrated through play (the official space), thus providing information to formulate the findings and help answer the research questions.

This research study yielded an notable amout of data. In the process of distilling the data into manageable chunks, I decided that not every play interaction or play vignette would or could be explained in detail. I decided that two play vignettes from each play area would be chosen to highlight and discuss in detail. The deciding factor for whether a vignette was chosen or not was based on the fact, that I wanted each child to be

represented in the analysis of the data. There are some children who are represented in more than one vignette because of this reason. Nonetheless, each child is represented in these ten vignettes, while some have more prominent roles than others, this was an important factor for me when deciding which play interactions to share in more detail. Each play area provides an imagined spaced overview. The remaining individual vignettes includes an combination of the following elements, a description of the official space, the unofficial space including the literacy learning activities engaged in and enacted by the children, the verbal transcript of play dialogue, an artifact if present, a discussion about the recontextualized space and table identifying the CC.ELA Standards observed through language, play, or artifact, and identification of the MKO if applicable.

Block Area

Imagined Space

The block area within the classroom at Hillview Charter School provided a generous amount of space for the children to engage in construction play with the blocks and other materials available. Seldom was this area ever empty. The materials offered to children during play were central to creating the official space. In this classroom there were four, two feet units with two shelves where the blocks were stored. A variety of 14 different shaped blocks were provided for building in a variety of lengths, and sizes. Liz would often include and trade out other types of manipulatives for the children to use in conjunction with their block play. The actual building surface area provided to the children was approximately eight by six feet of building space. The block area had only one wall; on this wall was a window and a large bulletin board where the children would

display their "Story of the Blocks," a literacy learning activity available to children if interested in creating a story about their structure.

At the time the data was gathered the children were deeply engaged in their bird expeditionary learning inquiry. The children were engaged in bird work a minimum of three days a week. As a result, a variety of small stuffed birds were placed and available to children in the block area. Also offered in the block area was a basket of large plastic dinosaurs. Eleven of the 14 children were observed playing in the block play area at least one time during data collection, with five children being observed more than once during the course of this study. The children themselves, the activities they chose to engage in during "work time," and the ways in which they engaged in play and learning were all elements of the unofficial space. The block area setting also provided opportunities for the creation of a variety of artifacts, including building structures, making signs/labels/ and creating oral and written stories. In this setting the artifacts were creations constructed from the children's imaginations. The children were also provided with opportunities to practice learning literacy activities aligned with the CC.ELA Standards. For example, the block area included opportunties for labeling structures, making signs, creating building plans and an area designated for "Story of the Blocks", not to mention the oral language natural to play. The children would work on their structures and creations and then would request or be asked if they wished to write a story of the blocks. The children who built the structure, sometimes one child, sometimes a group of children, would dictate a story about their structure and a teacher/reseacher/parent volunteer would scribe their words verbatim on a poster size piece of paper. Often, if the structure was created by multiple children, as a group they would dicusss an appropriate title and the

sequence of the story; this often required several negotiations. Once a title was decided upon the children would each dictate a sentence or two, usually resulting in more negotiations. Often you would hear, "No that's not what happens next…," then the children would each propose their idea and decide on what in fact did come next. The scribe was there to record their story and be available for conflict resolution, if needed. The story would end when the children decided to end it or when there was no more room to write on the paper. Each child would then sign their names as the authors and would ring a bell in the class and exclaim loudly "Story of the Blocks!" All the other classmates would stop their play and go the block area where the child or children who created the structure would stand next to their creation as a teacher read the story aloud to the class. Classmates would clap, and then they were invited to ask questions; once the questions answer session was over, the children would return to their own play. The story of the blocks would be displayed on the large bulletin board in the block area. This simple idea provided students with a chance to build, create, narrate and share their interests with peers in a way that fostered pride while also giving the children the opporutnity to practice specific CC.ELA Standards through play and in an authentic setting.

Block Area Play Vignette #1: The Dinosaur and Bird Battle

Official Space

During the learning center time before "work time" the children engaged in a small group which consisted of a guided reading lesson. The book used was about looking up and seeing a variety of things in the sky. One of the highlighted objects in the sky was a bird. At the parent volunteer center the children worked on developing their

phonological awarenes as they played a game with letter dice to create and blend CVC words. The independent center consisted of children using number spinners and then representing the spinned number in a ten frame using counters. At the iPad, technology center the children could literacy a literacy app of their choice. Elements of negotiated play are evident in the choice of the play materials that Liz provided in the block area, for example, a basket of birds to serve as props as children enact their play. Further, the fact that children are given the choice and time to engage in free imaginary play with peers results in children having authentic play experiences to demonstrate their understanding of a variety of CC.ELA Standards, addressed later in the recontexulized spaces section.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

The literacy learning activities actively engaged in during the play vignette include: speaking, storytelling, constructing and imaginative playing. The following play sequence took place in the block area and included four boys, Luke, John, Henry and Carl as they engaged in cooperative-constructive play. Through this play sequence, John and Henry used the available materials (the stuffed birds intentionally placed in this area and dinosaurs) and used their prior knowledge to enact a battle between dinosaurs and a bird. The boys created their story simultaneously as they built their structure and practiced concepts explicitly taught during their learning centers. John and Henry utilized their whole bodies as they produced and acted out their story. They honed their physical development as they

Table 3 Dinosaur and Bird Battle Transcription

Luke	A real costume
John	[on other side of block area with a bird stuffed toy making noises and J moves it around] Ahhh-gg oooh hoo,
Luke to Henry	They had BoBo Phet there too. [adds second level to block structure]
Henry	[moves away]
Carl	[crawls into block area with a dinosaur in hand and approaches L's structure with the dinosaur]
John to Henry	How about they have a big battle the dinosaurs against birds?
Luke to Carl	Hey, you can't be in here cause you're in mail. [Carl was previously playing in the post office dramatic play area]
Carl	[makes a face at L, pretends that dinosaur is going to hit L's structure]
RSCHR	Hey boys, one fell one fell over here. [addressing a dinosaur that had fallen from the structure]
Henry	[now adding a roof to his two story block structure] Is that a camera? [points to the camera]
Henry & John	playing with a bird and a dinosaur making roaring noises [John is waving the bird over his head]
Luke to Henry	yes, it is.
Henry & John	[begin a battle between dinosaur and bird]
Luke	look and see what makes it.
John to Henry	How about that guy is XXXX and this guy is the leader?
Henry to John	This guy is the master of all guys.

Henry & John	[continue the battle.]
John	arrghh, chop, chop, chop.
Henry	rrrrrrr, pppst, rrrr, rrr no, no you are no match for me.
John	rhreeee. [moves bird]
Henry	rooooar, phshhh [lunges dinosaur towards J's bird, makes growling noises]
Carl	[moves over to watch the battle scene and knocks down Luke's structure.
Luke	Heyyyy.
Carl	[looks at Luke and smiles]
Luke	[begins to rebuild]
Carl	It wasn't my fault.
Luke	you did that though.
Carl	But I didn't mean too. [turns body away from Luke]
Luke	Yeah, I know you didn't mean to, but next time don't XXX
Carl	[takes a block car and moves toward one of the sides of Luke's structure.]
Carl	Hellooooo. [as Carl bumps the blocks]
Luke	Can you not knock anything over? [grabs at his blocks to stabilize them]

coordinated large and small motor muscles to lunge, swing, stand up, bend down, and build. They also used their senses including sight, hearing and touch to integrate and control their play. Further, this play sequence revealed Carl's and Luke's abilities to practice social development skills like negotiating, participating positively in group activities, recognizing their own behavior and its effects on peers, and using language to communicate and resolve conflicts. In addition, the freedom of choice in their play provided them with the liberty to initiate and complete activities as they desired. No one

told the children to use the birds and create this story and structure. Table 3 outlines the conversation and creation of the oral story created by the boys.

Creation of Artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. As Luke, John and Henry played through this sequence of a dinosaur and bird battle, they also simultaneously created a storyline and an artifact. They built a structure and added levels to it. This play series resulted in two artifacts, one with a physical component (the block structure) and, a second one that included the oral component (the story they created as they engaged in imaginative play, provided in Table 3). In this particular play vignette the oral and visual words were the chosen

Figure 5 Artifact: Dinosaur and Bird Battle Building in the block area.

Table 4 Dinosaur and Bird Battle: CCSS. ELA Standards Observed During Play

Speaking and Listening	Language
Comprehension and Collaboration Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.F
	Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. L.K.1D
	Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).

vessels of communication. The visual communication could be observed through the physical building of the block structure that served as the backdrop of the battle. Figure 5 shows the three dimensional artifact created by John and Henry as the setting for their battle. Later on in the play the physical building artifact becomes central to the play as the children shifted from a battle between animals to creating a prison for the animals, to plotting a jailbreak and ultimately to the destruction of the structure.

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

This cooperative constuctive and imaginative play sequence suggests that the participants exhibited an understanding and mastery of six CC.ELA Standards, combined under the "Speaking and Listening" and "Language" umbrellas. Specifically, standards within the "comprehension and collaboration and presentation of knowledge and ideas" subsection of speaking and listening were evident, in addition to the Language subsections "demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English and usage when writing or speaking". Further, this play sequence alluded to a potential relationship between John and Henry's imaginative play and the transference of knowledge and content which was explicitly taught during the small group guided reading center, in that information from the story about things in the sky were included in their imaginative play. However, this play may also have been inspired by the classroom bird inquiry or some other outside influence. During the battle, John's bird remained in the sky and dived toward the dinosaur when attacking. At one point the bird landed on land and the dinosaur attacked and the bird flew away to avoid its predator.

Zone of Proximal Development. There was no clear MKO (more knowledgeable other) during the dinosaur and bird battle play. The boys played cooperatively, adding elements to the storyline as a team. However, the environment provided children with materials related to previous learning as a choice during play. Liz provided a variety of stuffed birds in the block area should the children decide to include them in their play, along with other materials that were switched out during the year, in this case, she had provided dinosaurs. This play vignette provided information and that led to and supported findings one, two, four and five.

Block Area Play Vignette #2 The Story of the Blocks, The Parking Lot

Official Space

On this particular day, the children's learning center instruction included a literacy phonological awareness/phonics application, Starfall, at the technology center iPads. The application focused on tracing letters in the children's names, as well as identifying beginning sounds and corresponding letters of a variety of pictures. At the parent volunteer center, the children addressed envelopes with their addresses. At the literacy center the children engaged in a guided reading lesson with a book about counting raindrops. At the individual learning center, an activity called imagination kingdom was presented to children. The children were given mini-blocks, markers and paper and challenged to create a kingdom using the materials. One element of negotiated play was evident in the choice of the literacy learning opportunity of dictating a story of the blocks.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

The following play sequence took place in the block area and included the parallel imaginative play of one child, Chip. There were two other children playing in the block area, however Chip engaged in solitary constructive play. Once in the block area, Chip worked on building a structure out of a variety of blocks, he used wooden cars available in the the block area and pretended to drive around the base floor of blocks. He utilized large and small motor muscles to drive the car around his structure four times. Then he set the car aside and began to build another structure adjacent to the base floor of blocks. This structure was four standard rectangular blocks high, and shaped as a tall building with four walls. Liz noticed that Chip had been working hard on his structure; she

approached and asked him if he would like to do a 'story of the blocks.' Chip replied, "yes" and went in search of a sharpie. He returned with a red sharpie in hand. Liz asked him, "What is the title of your story?" Chip responded, "Chip's Parking Lot." Liz then said, "Tell me about it" (See Figure 6). Liz scribed Chip's story. Liz stopped once to read back what Chip has already dictated. Chip finished the story by saying, "The End." Then Liz handed the sharpie over to Chip so he could sign his name as the author of the story. Using a combination of upper and lower-case letters, Chip signed his name from left to right, demonstrating his understanding of print concepts. The literacy learning activities actively engaged in during the play vignette included: speaking, storytelling, constructing, imaginative playing and writing.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Chip created two tangible artifacts; the block structure and the dictated story of the blocks, both with literacy components (Oral: self-talk/play during construction and Oral/Written: narration of story and signing name). In this play vignette Chip utilized three literacy components to communicate, the visual (product design), oral (dictation of story) and written (signing his name).

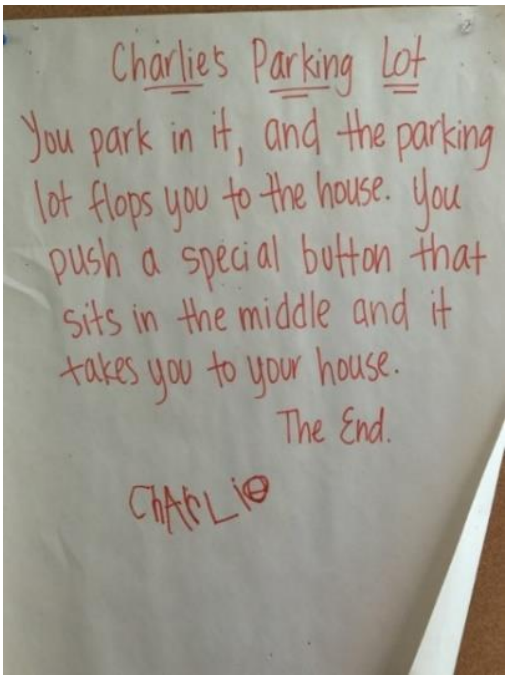

Figure 6 Artifact: Story of the blocks.

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

By participating in the Story of Blocks opportunity Chip created two physical artifacts, in addition to using oral and written language. to show his knowing and understanding. Through his engagement in five literacy learning activities (speaking, storytelling, constructing, imaginative playing and writing), Chip demonstrated comprehension and application of nine different CC.ELA Standards combined under four different umbrellas: Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Table 5 lists the CC.ELA Standards Chip demonstrated through his construction and narration of his story, "Chip's Parking Lot."

Zone of Proximal Development. During this play event Liz, the teacher, served as the MKO during the narration of the story. This was a solitary play event where Chip engaged in parallel play with peers. He was the sole creator of the structure and story. Liz

engaged with Chip to elicit a response from him and encourage him to think about a title and the story itself.

Table 5 Story of the Blocks: CCSS. ELA Standards Observed During Play

Reading	***Writing***	***Speaking and Listening***	***Language***
Foundational Skills	**Text Types and Purposes**	**Comprehension and Collaboration** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	**Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.**
CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.A
Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Print many upper- and lowercase letters
CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.B		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.		Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
			CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E

		Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with*).
		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.F
		Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.

The negotiated environment also served as the MKO; by providing opporutnities to engage in writing activities, the children were challenged to practice specific learning targets aligned with with the CC.ELA kindergarten standards.

Dramatic Play

Imagined Space: Post Office

Dramatic play was a very popular choice for children for work time engagment and participation. During the time in which data was gathered there were two different dramatic play environments: a veterinary hospital and a post office. Thirteen of the 14 children were observed playing in the dramatic play imagined space at least one time during data collection, with over half being observed two to four times during the course of this study. The imaginary play and dialogue observed in these imagined spaces were rich with vocabulary, dialogue, creating and interaction.

The post office theme in the dramatic play area included variety of roles. There were clipboards available for children to sign their names under desired roles. This ensured that all children who wanted an opportunity to be a postmaster or mail carrier

would have the chance to do so. At the beginning of work time each day, the teacher would announce who was next in line for a particular role. That child would decide to take it or pass if they would rather engage in a different area of the classroom, though this seldom happened. Liz would then mark off the child's name with a marker. The list was returned to the play area and remained visible and easily accessible to children, should they decide to add their name to the list.

First, children could choose to write letters and be customers of the post office. As a customer, they would create cards/letters, go to the post office, count out the appropriate amount of money (pretend coins) for postage for the their mail, approach the postmaster and request to buy a stamp, then drop off their mail in one of two classroom mailboxes. Secondly, the children could sign up for playing the role of one of two postmasters who charged classmates for stamps, verified correct coin amount and added postage stamps. Lastly, children could also sign up to be a "mail carrier." The mail carrier would dress up in the provided mail carrier coats and hats and, donned with an official mail carrier bag, would retrieve any mail from the classroom mailboxes and sort the mail into the appropriate child's personal mailbox located in the post office. Figure 7 illustrates some of the dress-up accessories offered to children to enhance their roles as mail carriers The individual mailboxes consisted of an over-the-door, plastic shoe holder adhered to the wall with each individual shoe pocket labeled with a child's name. The post office dramatic play area lasted for almost a month and all fourteen of the children were observed at least once in this imagined space during the course of data collection. The post office area served as the physical place for mailing letters, but children were encouraged to write letters in the other areas of the classroom. For example, envelopes

were provided at the writing center and in the art area. The writing center provided a list of student names next to photos of the children, in addition to words and phrases like, *friends,*and *I love you,* that children could copy and use in their letters to peers. The art area included drawing tools and stickers that the children could use in their letter making. In the post office, children were provided with props to enact what really happens in a post office. There was a table with various coins and a poster with the different ways to make 45 cents, the cost of a stamp. The postmaster also had a poster in order to match the amounts and make sure the customer had the correct amount of money to purchase a stamp.

Dramatic Play Vignette #1: Post Office, Signmaking

Official Space

Learning centers prior to work time included (a) direct instruction using ten frames and counters to create numbers visually, (b) Ipads with a literacy phonics game, where children were given a letter and they had to click on pictures that began with the letter sound, (c) at the parent volunteer math activity children were given a set of dice and a sheet with bubbles; they rolled the dice, added the dots and covered the corresponding number of bubbles, until all bubbles were covered, and (d) direct instruction in guided reading groups, which included a read aloud of *Ice Cream Scoops*, and explicit teaching of stretching and building CVC words using letter manipulatives and teaching children how to self-check by looking back at pictures/words in the story. The play space was negotiated by Liz in that she embedded writing opportunities to create signs to decorate the post office and provided novel writing tools.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

The following play sequence took place in the post office area and included creative arts expressive play of two children, Annie and Janet, and two adults, Liz, and a parent guest in the classroom. Janet and Annie participated in parallel expressive play. Once work time began and Janet and Annie are announced as the mail carrier and postmaster, respectively, they engaged in conversations with each other and the parent guest while they waited for classmates to write letters to mail. While they were waiting Liz suggested that the post office was in need of signs and decorations, and she let the girls know that she had purchased some special gel markers that show up well on black paper. The parent volunteer asked Annie if she wanted to make a postmaster sign. They took turns writing the letters and the parent guest sounds out the word for Annie. This play sequence provided Annie with the opportunity to develop phonological awareness skills by attaching letter sounds to letter symbols, while also developing fine motor control of the muscles in her fingers as she wrote letters. Janet decided she wanted to make a sign as well. Janet also engaged the fine motor muscles in her fingers and hand to draw a picture of an eagle and then sounded out the words, post office and then spelled "post ofis" on her sign. Both Janet and Annie engaged in a variety of literacy learning activities during this play episode including speaking, drawing and writing and creating (product design of the signs). The dialogue articulated in Table 6 between Janet, Annie and the parent guest demonstrates the girls' independent and collaborative efforts in creating signs for the post office.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Both Janet and Annie created one physical artifact each, a sign for the post office. Each artifact included oral and written components,first, an oral component is evidenced through their engagement in conversation with others, and self-talk as they sounded out or said letters to themselves; and second, a written product of letters/words on the signs (See Figure 8). All three modes of communication were employed to deliver the message of the artifact.

Table 6 Post Office: Making Signs Transcription

Guest to Annie	Do these face this way? [motioning to money trays]
Annie	No this way [turns trays around] , because we figure out what all the money is and then we put it in there [points to trays] So this is a penny [points] this is a quarter
Guest	oh this is nickel [points] this is a dime and this is a quarter. Ok so what do we do with the stamps?
Annie	we just wait.
Guest	until somebody comes to mail a letter.
Annie	Yup
Guest	So this is why people were putting their name on the list for, to do this?
Annie	points to the "mailboxes" on the wall [a hanging shoe holder, with names on the outside serve as the mailboxes]
Annie	See there's my name right there.
Carrie	[new child enters post office] XXX
Guest	Are you?
Carrie	what is this for? [pulls out some glitter markers from the box]
Guest	I don't know, just leave it in the box for XXX
Maddie	[walks up to the table]
Guest	yes?
Maddie	[looks in bag] we don't have mail
Guest	We aren't getting much mail yet?
Maddie	shakes head no.
Carrie	Well, we just started.

Guest	Ok well get rockin' and rollin' so we can have some mail.
Liz to Guest	Oh ok, so the mail carriers in the post office, if they get bored waiting for mail,
	they can decorate the post office. And those markers, I put paper out, and those
	markers are called gel markers and they show up really well on black.
Guest to Annie	Why don't you get up a couple pieces of paper and well do some stuff
	on the paper.
Liz	And this person drew a picture of the post office and XXX, you could think about that.
Annie	[gets up and then comes back and shakes head]
Guest	You don't want to make anything?
Liz to Annie	oh, you want to wait, you are ready for people to come. I see some kids writing letters, so you might have some customers soon.
Guest	gets up. Ok I will put those back.
Liz	But you can if you want, we don't have a sign for the postmaster.
Guest	Oooh
Janet	I am kind of bored right now, because there isn't really any mail. I think I will…XXX
Liz	Perfect. You could also write a letter if you want.
Guest	guest gets up from postmaster desk and gets a piece of black paper
Guest to Annie	Ok, let's make a sign. How about I do the P
Annie	Ok
Guest	Your turn to write. Ok you write an o [hands marker to A]

Annie	[writes the o on the black piece of paper]
Guest	Ok then I will
Janet	[J enters the PO with a black piece of paper] can I do an eagle?
Guest	oh sure, [moves box from table to make room for J]
Janet	[grabs a marker and begins to draw]
Guest to Annie	Ok let's do an S next. [G writes S] Why don't you do a T next.
Guest	Postmaster, I don't know if that is one word or two separate words.
Janet	I believe that is two separate words.
Annie	I will go ask Liz
Guest	Oh hold on, she's talking right now. [stops working on poster, waits for Liz]
Annie	[looking at the poster, follows word with finger] We got post.
Guest	yes, ok go ask her if postmaster is two words.
Annie	[gets up from the postmaster desk and walks toward Liz, then comes back]
Annie	XXX inaudible to guest (a question)
Guest	Just go say "excuse me Liz".
Janet	[working on poster] now I need some green. [Guest is holding the green in her hand, realizes it and hands it to Janet]
Guest	[watching Annie] Just say, excuse me T, points say it right now, excuse me.
Annie	walks back to the post office.
Guest	[calls out the teacher's name to get attention] Is postmaster two words or one word
Liz	one.
Guest	ok, [smiles]. Thanks. [proceeds to write the next letter] M

Guest to Annie	ok you do A, a lower case a. [hands marker to A] right here.
Janet	look I drew some people at the XXX
Guest	Perfect.
Janet	gets up.
Guest	Do you want to use one of those magnets Janet?
Janet	returns to table, no I think I am going to write. Kneels and begins to sound out post and then writes p/o/s/t. Sounds out office and writes o/f/i/s/. Then gets up.
Guest	sounds out postmaster to A. Focuses on m-a-s
Carrie	enters the PO. You guys.

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

Janet and Annie used their knowledge of phonics to demonstrate their knowing as they made signs for the post office while engaging in literacy learning activities including speaking, drawing and writing. Through their imaginative play, Annie and Janet practiced a variety of CC.ELA standards including skills in speaking and listening, language and reading categories. Further, they addressed eight standards in the following substandard areas: comprehension and collaboration, presentation of knowledge and ideas, command of the English language, print concepts, phonics and word recognition, and phonological awareness. Table 7 provides the specific ELA standards demonstrated by Annie and Janet during the highlighted play sequence.

Zone of Proximal Development. During this post office play, the parent guest functioned as the MKO for Annie during the sign making process. It can also be determined that Annie served as the MKO for the parent guest. Annie provided direction

and instruction about the materials in the play environment and how they were to be used and their function(s). The environment also served as the MKO for Annie, in that the materials available stretched her learning in terms of counting money, and following a series of complex which were required of the postmaster role.

Table 7 Post Office: Making Signs: CCSS. ELA Standards Observed During Play

Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language	Reading
Text Types and Purposes	Comprehension and Collaboration Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Foundational Skills Print Concepts Phonological Awareness Phonics and Word Recognition
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.w.k.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.B
Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.	Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequence of letters
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2
	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. L.K.1D	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3A
		Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what,	Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary

	where, when, why, how).	sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.

Note: **The ** on targeted CC.ELA Standards refer to standards demonstrated only by Janet. The remaining standards were observed by both Janet and Annie.**

Figure 7. Post Office Imagined Space.

Children were provided with dress up material (uniform and mail carrier bags), and post office materials (stamps, pretend money) to enhance a variety of roles they could pretend to enact.

Figure 8. Artifact: Post office sign making.

Janet and Annie use their knowledge of phonics by hearing sounds and identifying corresponding letters to create signs to decorate the post office.

Dramatic Play Vignette #2: Veterinary Hospital

Imagined Space: Veterinary Hospital

The veterinary hospital theme in the dramatic play included three main roles: the role of the doctor (veterinarian), nurse, and the role of the receptionist. There were clipboards available with patient intake forms, which included places to write the patient's name, the doctor's name, symptoms and problems, as well as the doctor's medical treatment. There was also an old typewriter on the receptionist desk with a crate labeled "patient files". Children could choose between typing or writing the intake forms. The "patients" could be found in a large basket filled with multiple animal stuffies, including a zebra, a large snake, a small eagle and cockatiel, llama, a large porquipine, and a gorilla. The hospital environment included a variety of doctor lab coats on a coat hook, a full length mirror, nurse/doctor scrubs, two exam tables, a basket with various medical instruments (stethescopes, bandages, tweezers, medical scissors, magnifying glasses, injection needles knee hammer and a variety of pretend animal food and medicine in the refrigerator), and two exam tables. It also included a wooden refrigerator to store medications and a washing station with tubs for washing and rinsing as well as pretend soap, shampoo and towels. (See Appendix F for examples of materials and dress up clothing provided in the veterinary hospital dramatic play area.) In addition to materials to enrich imaginative play, there was also a table with a chick incubator with eggs and information on the wall above the incubator providing non-fiction information about the life cycle of a chick. There were also supplies for children to investigate and document observations, including paper, pens, magnifying glasses and charts detailing dates and times the eggs were rotated. Liz often negotiated the space to reflect

instruction occuring during other parts of the day, in this case, the children's study of birds. The veterinary hospital setting invited children to create oral stories to match their play, in addition to both physical and written artifacts. In this setting the primary literacy attributes included written intake forms and oral dialogue between play partners. Also, the physical artifacts revealed themselves as a product of medical care/treatment (a bandaged wing of bird, patients wrapped in blankets and placed on exam tables, etc.).

Official Space

The learning centers focused on bird work, as the children worked directly with Liz to work on scientific drawings of their chosen bird for research. At the parent volunteer table the children played bird call bing and they were able to choose either a math or literacy Ipad game at the technology center. The independent math center consisted of unifix cubes in towers of ten, and children were asked to create a "teen city" where they would select a card numbered 1-9 and, then added that number of unifix cubes to create a "teen" tower. Then they would add the tower to a city they were building collaboratively (made to look like a city skyline).

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

The veterinary hospital created a space where children could engage in imaginary play and act out their ideas about what a veterinarian does by engaging with materials and drawing on prior knowledge and experiences. While playing in the veterinary hospital, Chip, Carl, Luke and Ellen engaged in a dialogue about several features and events that took place in a veterinary hospital, and they enacted probable scenarios including checking in patients, bathing patients, checking heartbeats, bandaging injured animals etc. The children took turns during conversations as they used medical

vocabulary and interrogatives. The particpants in this play sequence engagedin cooperative imaginary play and used all parts of their bodies as they moved around the imagined space, dressed-up, wrapped bandages (large motor muscles), in addition to, engaging in smaller details of the play (completing patient intake forms with various writing tools, using medical equipment, stethescopes, bandaids, thermometors etc.). As Chip initiated the check-in process for the snake he began to complete a patient intake form. He, looked at the paper and then sought help from peers, Carl and Luke. He asked his peers what he was supposed to do with the form. Initally, Luke and Carl informed him of the first steps of the process. Chip asked Carl for help with spelling the name of his patient, "Shake Snake" (pronounced Shaky Snake). Carl assisted Chip by sounding out the words and identifying some of the letters that Chip needed to write. Chip listened for the letters and then wrote them down, thus using letters and words to convey meaning. When Carl moved on from the play, Chip made his appeals for help to anyone who would listen. Meanwhile, Carl, Luke and Ellen animated their stuffed animal patients as part of their imaginary play. The literacy learning activities the children engaged in during this play sequence included speaking, writing, creating and imaginary playing. (See table 8 for a portion of the play conversation between Carl, Luke, Chip and Ellen)

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. The primary artifact created in this play sequence was the completion of a patient intake form for Shake Snake. This artifact revealed all three of the literacy components outlined. The oral, written and visual results of play were the chosen vehicles of communication and modes of articulating knowing. The visual word (product) was the medical document (patient in-take form) that informed and extended the play. The oral conversations with

peers during the process of filling out the form, the exchange of letter sounds, in addition to the writing component evidenced through the the corresponding letter writing provided examples of how children demonstrated their knowing.

Table 8 Veterinary Hospital: Patient Intake Form Transcription

Chip to Carl	Can I have some of that?
Carl	[shakes head no] This is mine
Luke	[from other side of play area] This is my pet.
Carl	This is my stuff. [moves toward exam table with arms full of bandages]
Chip	This is my pet. [snake]
Luke	[wearing doctor coat] I want to work it in here.
Chip	I need the doctor thing. [puts stethoscope around neck]
Luke to Carl	I'm using this. [grabs at doctor materials, puts stethoscope around neck]
	[Carl puts on blue doctor coat]
	[Ellen enters to dramatic play]
Ellen	I have a question. Do you guys have any soap? I need to wash. [has raccoon]
	XXX
Luke to Carl	Do doctors do it like this? [moves stethoscope]
Carl to Luke	They do this. they do it like this. [puts near ears]
Luke	When they're checking it
Carl	No look, this is not on my ears, it's right here. [turns around]
	[Chip checking the snakes heartbeat]
	RESEARCHER moves the camera to another angle to get all of the play area]
	[Child at the sensory table] You can video me.
RCHR	I can?
Chip	[moves toward the receptionist area of the vet area, then walks away]

Luke to Luke	Where are they? [talking about bandages]
	[Carl begins to bandage up pet bird]
Chip	[looks at Luke and Carl] Carl has one. Where are they?
Luke	They're in the yellow basket.
Chip	No, where's the yellow basket? [walks and looks at shelves]
Luke	Right there, the second XXX that's where I got it from.
	[Chip walks over to the patient records table]
Luke	I need two of these bandages.
	[Carl and Ellen are in the exam room]
Ellen	[leaves the exam room toward the bathing area]
Ellen to Chip	You are stepping on your patient.
Chip	oh, sorry. [moves toward receptionist desk and grabs an intake form]
	[from other part of the room] Who's stepping on the patient?
Ellen	[moves toward the basket with potential patients] A zebra. Seriously.
	Look at the zebra
Chip	Are you. Are you in here? [asking if Ellen signed up to be in vet hospital]
Ellen	Yeah.
	[break in video segments]
	[Carl leaves the exam room]
	[Chip has form on a clipboard and asks Luke for help]
Chip	What do you do here?
Luke	You write, you write your name right here [points to clipboard]
	and then you write the problems right here.

Carl	He’s not in dramatic play, Luke was already in XXx]
Chip	So I'm gonna write, [turns to Carl] How do you write shake snake.
Carl to Chip	[looks at CH clipboard and points] No this is patient, this is you, and XXX
Luke	This is my second time.
Chip to Carl	So this is patient?
Carl	yeah.
Chip	so this is how I write my patients name.
Carl	[nods head] that is where you write it
Carl to Chip	S- H [Carl says the letters out loud]
	[Chip begins to write on form.]
Carl	A
Chip	[repeats back] S- H
Carl	[sounds out word quietly to himself] C Shake Now a line [points to form]
Chip	what is a line?
Carl	It’s like [draws imaginary line on form to show Chip, Carl uses the line in place of a space.]
	[Chip writes the line]
Carl	Repeats the word shake to Chip.
Carl to Chip	S [Carl begins to spell the next word, snake]
Chip	S
Carl	N
Chip	N
Carl	A

Chip	N-A?
Carl	Yes
Carl	C
Chip	C
Carl	and an A, I mean E.
Chip	[writing]
Carl	Shake Snake. [walks away from receptionist desk]
Chip	Now what do….. [realizes the next line is his name, grabs pencil and begins to write] C H XXX There you go. [write his name]
	[grabs snake and begins to look at it.]
	[begins to sound out the problem] /D/ /i/ /a/ S [looks at form and
	frowns] No that's not right [begins to erase, looks at pencil with no eraser]
3:40	I need an eraser. [looks through cup with other pencils and begins to erase]
Chip	[to anyone outside of play area] How do you spell ANTS?
Liz	/a/ /n/ /t/ /s/
Chip	[writes an A] What?
Liz	Did you get your /a/. Stretch out ants a---n---t----s
Chip	N What else? What else? What else? What else?
	What else? [louder] What else??

Table 9 Veterinary Hospital: CCSS. ELA Standards Observed During Play

Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language	Reading
Text Types and Purposes	**Comprehension and Collaboration** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	**Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.**	**Foundational Skills** **Print Concepts** **Phonological Awareness** **Phonics and Word Recognition**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.B
Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.	Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequence of letters
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2
	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with*).	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.D	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3A

Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., *who, what, where, when, why, how*).	Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
	**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.2.D	
	Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.	

Note: **The ** on targeted CC.ELA standards refer to standards demonstrated only by Carl. The remaining standards were exhibited by both Carl and Chip.**

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

There were considerable meaningful interactions occuring during this play interaction between Chip, Ellen, Carl and Luke. Particularly, as Chip and Carl collaborated to complete a written artifact, the patient intake form. Chip demonstrated his understanding of print concepts and phonics (the letter symbol that coincides with the letter name). Carl exhibited his understanding of print concepts, including his recognition that spoken words are represented with written language and that words are separated by spaces. Further, Carl showed phonological awareness skills by isolating sounds (phonemes) in the words he was sounding out for Chip to write, in addition to providing Chip with the letter symbols for the sounds. The children also showed their ways of knowing not only through the written word, but in their imaginative play as well: through

their oral language (asking each other how to use medical instruments) and physical animations and enactments with their patients (using medical instruments to examine patients, using medical materials like bandages and injections to provide treatment, etc.). The literacy learning activities observed in this play sequence included speaking, writing, and imaginative playing. Eleven CC.ELA Standards were perceived as mastered during this play sequence and presented in Table 9.

Zone of proximal development. By reading through the transcription of Chip and Carl's verbal exchanges it can be clearly determined that Carl served as the MKO for Chip. Carl provided direction and phonics instruction to Chip as he pulled Chip along in his learning to write words. The environment also served as the MKO for the children in that the negotiated materials available stretched their knowledge and practice by adding a challenging writing component to the dramatic play environment.

Art Center

Imagined Space

The art area was seldom empty during the research study, perhaps because it was an area that provided autonmous creative thought and expression. This was an area that was well-stocked with artistic and creative materials. Many supplies permanantly resided in the art center, for example, paper, markers, scissors, ribbon etc. (Dee Appendix G for a list of materials permanately available in art area.) Liz would often introduce novel resources to keep child engagement consistent, and materials in the "beautiful junk" repository were often negotiated and exchanged based on direct instruction and child interest. Beautiful junk included a variety of new items like gems, stickers, wiki-stix, decorative paper, pasta, cotton balls, etc. Liz was strategic in her addition of a writing

component in the art area to supplement the artwork being created. The wall space in the art area was peppered with various frames in the designated "art gallery." This space was meant to encourage children to take pride in their work and display it for others to see while also providing opportunities to practicr language skills, like oral dictation, storytelling and writing. This was always presented as a choice and not an obligation. Ten of the fourteen children chose the art center for"work time" with four of this group of children being observed at least two times throughout the data collection period. It was noted from the video recording that more parallel and creative expressive and constructive play took place in this area, with the focus on fashioning works of art.

Art Area Play Vignette #1: Artist Statement, Waterpaint Heart

Official Space

During this data collection day, the previous learning centers consisted of the children working directly with Liz to investigate and complete CVC literacy puzzles. At the parent volunteer table the children created and decorated crowns. They were given the opportunity to choose either a math or literacy iPad game at the technology center. The independent center was supplied with watercolor paint trays and a variety of zentagle pages for the children to paint. Zentangles are miniature pieces of unplanned, abstract, black and white art created through a very specific method from an ensemble of simple, structured patterns called tangles on a 3.5-inch (89 mm) square paper tile (Farmer, 2010). Elanor extended this activity to her work-time, engaging in creative, expressive play in the art area. She included elements of zentangle in her final art piece through the repeated, abstract use of markings.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

Elanor engaged in parallel and expressive/creative play as she used watercolors to create a work of art. While creating in the art area Elanor used "waterpaints" to create a painting. There was one other child, Carrie in the art area also creating artwork. Elanor set up her materials, finding the watercolors, filling a small cup with water and getting a folded paper towel for cleaning her paintbrush. The video recorded data confirmed Elanor's engagement in speaking, painting, storytelling, imaginative playing and writing. As I entered the art area, Elanor began to tell me about her painting with no prompting. Elanor had completed most of her painting by then. Table 10 provides the transcription of the oral language Elanor used to tell me about her creation.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Elanor created two physical artifacts during her solitary creative, expressive play in the art area, including a physical watercolor painting and a written artist statement. The artifacts in Figure 9 include visual, oral and written components. (Oral: conversation with me, Visual: physical painting and Oral/Written: narration of artist statement and signing of name). Elanor employed all three methods of communication during the literacy learning activities of speaking, storytelling, writing, painting and creating. The visual word could also be observed through the product design of her watercolor painting.

Table 10 Artist Statement Waterpaint Heart Transcription

	[Elanor is using watercolors]
Elanor	Um, I made a crying heart and she's in a cinnamon swirl circle.
	She appears in a big circle when she's sad, it protects her from I don't know people so she's….. [shakes head]
RCHR	so she builds where when she's sad?
Elanor	in this big thing [makes circular motion around the circle] around her so no one can hurt her.
RCHR	Ohhh.
Elanor	[points to painting marks around the circle] And there's so much love going around and it's going in there to cheer her up, and that's it.
RCHR	that's pretty cool, it's a neat story.
Elanor	yeah, but you can video me making it.
RCHR	Do you want to do an artist statement about it or no?
Elanor	I'm not done with the artist statement but…
RCHR	Well the thing about the artist statement is that you hang it up in the gallery. Do you want to hang it up in the gallery?
Elanor	uh hum.
RCHR	and leave it there for friends to see?
Elanor	uh hum.
RCHR	ok, would you like me to get you an artist statement form?
Elanor	uh hum [still adding details to painting]
RCHR	ok.

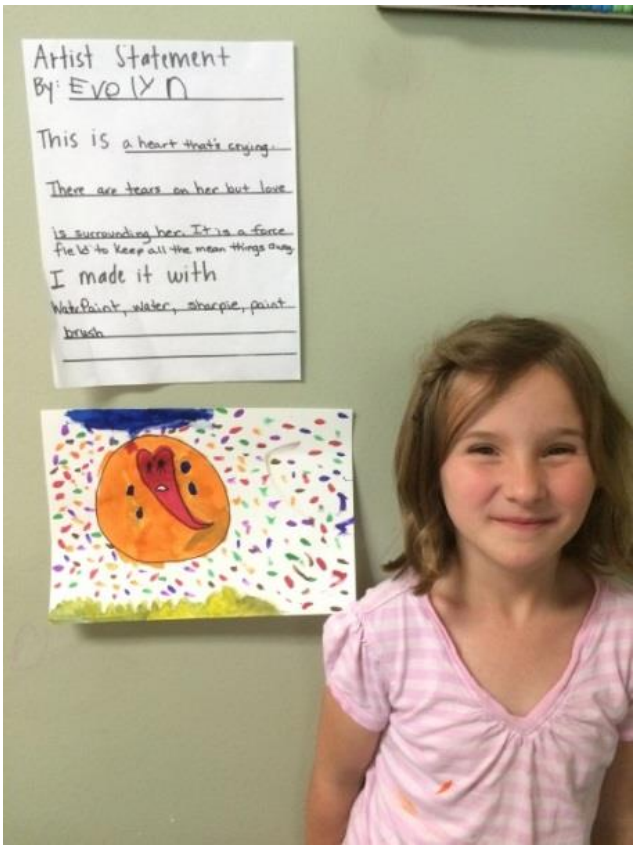

Figure 9. Artifact: Artist Statement, Waterpaint Heart.

Note: **Bold-type face indicates writing prompts provided on the artist statement. "This is a heart that's crying. There are tears on her but love is surrounding her. It is a force field to keep all the mean things away. I made it with waterpaint, water, Sharpie, paintbrush.**

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

Elanor created two physical artifacts, in addition to using a visual product (Waterpaint Heart) and oral and written language through her engagement in five literacy learning activities (speaking, storytelling, painting, creating and writing). Table 11 outlines Elanor's knowing (comprehension and application) of nine CC.ELA Standards combined under four different umbrellas: Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, and Language.

Table 11 Artist Statement Waterpaint Heart: CCSS.ELA Standards Observed During Play

Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language
Foundational Skills	**Text Types and Purposes**	**Comprehension and Collaboration** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	**Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.**
CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.A
Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Print many upper- and lowercase letters
CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.B		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.		Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.

	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1A.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Turn-taking and multiple exchanges.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with*).
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.F
	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.	Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.

Zone of Proximal Development. I served as the MKO during the narration and scribing of the artist statement. Elanor engaged in independent parallel creation and her imaginative storytelling was a solitary endeavor as the lone creator of the artifacts. I engaged with Elanor to elicit responses from her. The negotiated environment also served as the MKO by providing a choice and opportunity to write about her painting. Elanor was challenged to practice specific learning targets aligned with with the CCSS.ELA kindergarten standards in the areas of reading, writing, language, speaking and listening.

Art Area Play Vignette #2: Artist Statement, Faces Project

Official Space

The learning centers on this day consisted of bird work, including working directly with Liz to draw the eyes and beak of independent researched birds. At the iPad center, the children engaged in a literacy app targeting sounds within words (medial vowel sounds). At the parent volunteer center, the children wrote letters to parents inviting them to their Exhibition Night (some vocabulary was provided: *Exhibition Night, cafeteria, You are Invited*, etc). The independent math center was a roll and record math activity utilizing dice, markers and a record sheet. The art imagined space was negotiated in that Liz, had recently added some blank masks and new artist statement forms to the area.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Liteacy Learning

Carl used a variety of art materials to create a portrait of his dad. In this creative, expressive play sequence there were three other children present at the art table, John, Chip, and Carrie. Initally, the children engaged in parallel play. However, as the play sequence unfolded, their play transformed into creative expressive play whereby the work of peers influenced creativity. This type of play provided opportunities to express feelings and ideas by engaging with materials. While Carl worked on creating his face project, he used the paper materials available to enact and create the face by manipulating various pieces of paper until reaching his desired facial features. The children worked their fine motor muscles in this area as they sifted through small pieces of paper, cut, glued, drew and arranged art materials. Carl's peers noticed and watched as he completed his project. John, Chip and Carrie then began to create their own versions of faces.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Carl's creative expressive play resulted in two physical artifacts during his time in the art center (a physical paper and Sharpie face project, and an independently written artist statement). The artifacts in Figure 9 validate the three artifact components under analysis, visual, oral and written (Oral: conversation with a variety of peers, Visual: physical face project and, Written: independent writing of artist statement and signing of name). Figures 11a, 11b and 11c show the face project artifacts inspired by Carl and created by three of his peers, Chip, Carrie and John. All three types of communicating knowing were observed in this creative, expressive play sequence. The visual word can be seen through the individual product design of the face project artifacts that inspired, informed and extended the expressive play. Carl was the only child to create an artist statement. Table 12 follows the dialogue between Carl, Chip, Carrie and John and the process involved in creating the face project artwork.

Figure 10. Artifact: Artist Statement, Dad.

Note: **Bold-type face indicates writing prompts provided on the artist statement. It is called dad, I made it with papr-gloo-sharpe by Carl**

Table 12 Artist Statement Faces Project Transcription

Carl	Oh my goodness. [takes black strip of paper and paces it on blank paper]
Carl to John	Oh, look it, eyebrows [Carl places eyebrows on paper]
	[John watches Carl. Carl puts black strips back into the beautiful junk, and begins to look through other choices. Carl finds a pieces and says,
Carl	Ooohhh [Carl watches another child enter the art area, the child looks at
	Carl and asks "Are there any more of these?" Holds up a stencil. Carl points
	to the wall with hooks where more stencils are hanging.]
	[Carl gets up and hands stencils to nearby teacher, then sits back down and
	begins to work on project.
	[Carl selects 2 brown squares, grabs a glue stick and begins to sing to
	himself]
Carl	Monster High…monster high…. (singing)
	[glues down brown squares]
Carl to John	Look at this, XXX, why am I used to my neighbor? My neighbor, my neighbor.
	[Carl sorts through beautiful junk looking for paper]
Carl to John	I was about to call you Noah.
	[Carrie enters the art area]
	[Carl moves black strip of paper around page, trying to find the right place
	for the mouth.]

	[John is drawing a picture of a person's body on top of a square]
	[Carrie grabs a piece of paper and the oval stencil and sits down]
	[Carl glues down mouth, puts lid back on the glue stick]
Carrie to Carl	Carl, do you know the thing you did? The sign?
Carl	[nods head yes]
Carrie to Carl	I finished it.
Carl	Thank you.
Carrie	[Traces a large oval on her page] I know.
Carl to Carrie	Watch this Carrie. [drops the glue stick onto table from about a foot above,
	then smiles.
	[John watches Carl and smiles.]
	[Carrie ignores Carl]
	[Chip enters the art area, Carl watches Chip and pushes down on the two
	glued items]
Chip	XXXX
	[Carl reaches across the table and grabs the sharpie sitting in front of Chip]
	[Chip leaves the art area]
	[Liz enters the art area with sign]
Liz to Carl	Do you want to hold this? Your clean nature sign?
Carl	shakes his head no
Liz to Carrie	Do you want to hold this? I need one kid to hold this.
Carrie to Liz	Yeah.

Carrie to Carl	Save my spot.
	[Carrie exits the art area with Liz, John also leaves the art area]
	[Chip re-enters the art area]
Chip to self	I'm going to grab more paper. [gets two pieces of paper from bookcase]
	[Carl is using a sharpie to color in eyeballs on the square eyes of his
	project.]
Chip to Carl	What are you making?
	[Carl adds eyebrows to his eyes and ignores Chip]
Chip to Carl	I'm going to try and make that guy. [gets up to get materials from bookcase]
Carl to Chip	The stuff is in here.
	[Carrie returns to her Saved spot and watches Carl and Chip]
Carl to Chip	[hands brown squares] You need this [black strip] then you just need a
	sharpie.
	[Carrie moves her paper and gets up quickly]
Carrie	I'm going to try and make it too.
	[Carrie leans over to Carl's project and looks closely.]
	[Carl draws eyebrows and adds eyelashes to his face project with a sharpie marker.]
Chip to self	And then you need some glue.
	[Carrie gets up to look for paper pieces]
	[Carl draws a large mouth with big teeth.
Chip to self	Where's the glue stick? [scratches head as he looks for glue]
	[Carrie chooses two brown squares out of beautiful junk]

Carrie to Carl	Is he sticking his tongue out?
	[Chip finds a glue stick and returns to table]
Carl to Carrie	Look he has double teeth. [Carl adds eyelashes to the other eye]
	[Carl looks at Carrie and Chip and makes a big toothy smile]
Carl to all	Oh now I need my nose. Do you want to know how I draw my nose?
	[Chip and Carrie stop to watch]
	[Carl draws the letter c for the nose. Carrie smiles at Carl]
	[John re-enters the art area]
Carl to all	Oh guys….
	[draws a big circle around face, then adds a tiny stick body]
	[Carl adds a thought bubble by face's mouth, and writes the word "hi" in it.
	[Carl gets up with face project in hand and leaves the art area, walking
	toward Liz]
	[Chip finishes his face project and begins a new one. John begins to make a
	a face project too, and Carrie continues to work on her face project]
	Carl waits for Liz to finish conversation, asks for an artist statement and
	[Carl completes it independently.]

Table 13 Artist Statement Faces Project: CCSS.ELA Standards Observed During Play

Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language
Foundational Skills	**Text Types and Purposes**	**Comprehension and Collaboration** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	**Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.**
**CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1	**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.A
Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Print many upper- and lowercase letters
**CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.B		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.		Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.

		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1A.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
		Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Turn-taking and multiple exchanges.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with*).
		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5	
		Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.	.

Note: **The ** on targeted CCSS.ELA standards refer to standard demonstrated only by Carl. The remaining standards were exhibited by all four children (Carl: 10 standards; Carrie, Chip, John: 6 standards each).**

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

Carl, Chip, Carrie and John created a total of four physical artifacts. In addition to using visual products (Faces Project paper artwork), they all also used oral language to demonstrate knowing through their engagement in five literacy learning activities (speaking, constructing, creating drawing and writing). Carl, however, was the only child to complete an artist statement. Table 13 outlines CC.ELA Standards combined under four umbrellas: Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, and Language. All of the

listed standards were communicated as ways of knowing during their creative play sequence, however, the standards under reading and writing were only demonstrated by Carl.

Zone of Proximal Development. Carl served as the MKO to Chip, Carrie and John during the creative play time in the art center. The children initially engaged in independent parallel play, creating their own designs. Carl's engagement in his face project stimulated his peers, Chip, Carrie and John, to challenge themselves and also to create face project artwork. Carl provided his knowledge to his peers. The negotiated environment also served as the MKO, by providing artist statements to accompany expressive play Carl was able to show his knowing of specific kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, in the areas of reading, writing, language and speaking and listening.

Figure 11a. Artifact: Faces Project.

Carrie implemented some of Carl's creative choices in her design. For example, she used paper, but not in the same way as Carl. She did, however, imitate Carl's creative strategy for the eyes by employing eyelashes. Carrie is missing the thought bubble with writing, and the body.

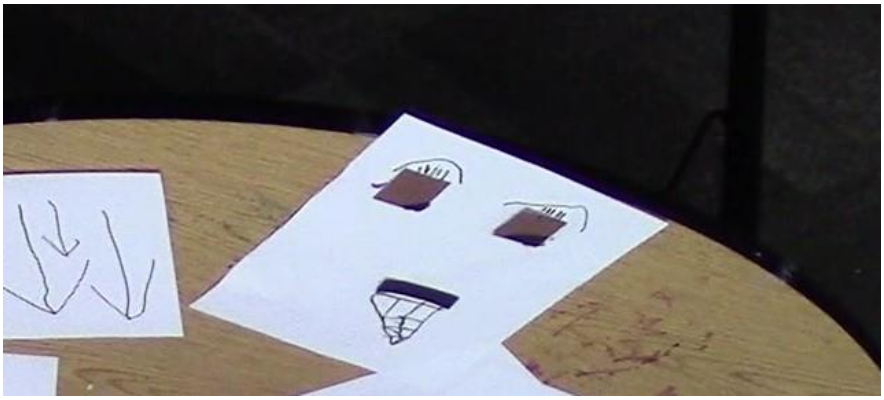

Figure 11b. Artifact: Faces Project.

Chip's face project is the one that most closely resembles Carl's inspiration piece. They shared similar design attributes, varying in size. Chip's face does not have a circle around the facial features, is missing a nose and the thought bubble with writing and the body.

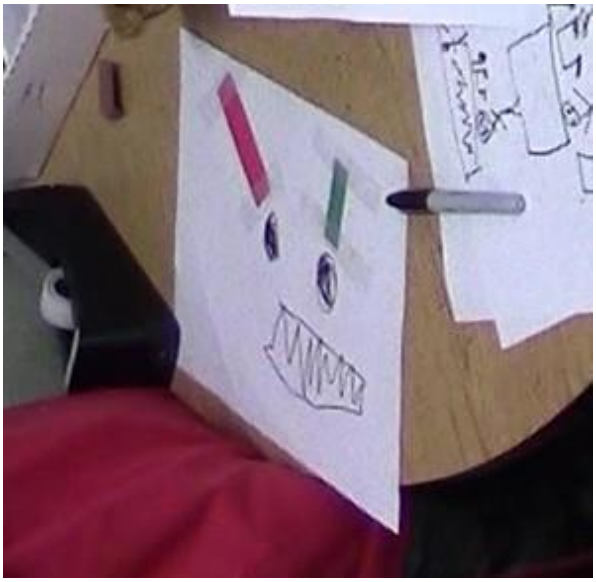

Figure 11c. Artifact: Faces Project.

John's face project is most dissimilar of the three projects. He implemented only a few of Carl's creative choices in his design. For example, he used paper, but not in the same way as Carl. He did, however, imitate Carl's creative strategy for the mouth by retaining the use of large mouth with teeth. John's is also missing the thought bubble with writing and the body.

Manipulative Area

Imagined Space

The manipulative area provided a rich environment for creating and constructing with a variety of materials. This play enviroment proved the be the area where communication through the written word was less common. However, it also proved to be one of the richest areas in terms of oral language and visual constructions. This environment was consistently negotiated by Liz and the children, as play materials would interchange often, which allowed children to truly be imaginative in their play. There was much animation and enactment of materials as children transformed objects into props

and characters in their imaginative play. The manipulative area also doubled as the rug area for morning crew meetings. A bookcase adjacent to the art area housed a variety of manipulative toys, including containers with Legos, small musical instruments (egg shakers, triangles, tambourines), Lincoln Logs, puzzles, tangram blocks, camping figures, larger Duplo blocks, and a white board with Expo markers. Also available to children in this area were larger musical instruments; five ukeleles hung on the wall within the children's reach. During the data collection period, ten of the fourteen children were observed and recorded playing in the manipulative area.

Manipulative Area Play Vignette #1: Bird of Imagining and Mirrors

Official Space

On this particular day the learning centers consisted of the children working directly with Liz to dictate characteristics about a bird of imagining they had created earlier in the week. (Appendix H provides an example of a bird of imagining.) At the iPad center the children played the Starfall Literacy application for iPads, focusing on letter sounds. This application was intuitive and encouraged children to explore letters by clicking on any letter of the alphabet; the app targeted the alphabetic principle and allowed children to play with and explore the relationship between speech sounds and the corresponding letter symbols. At the parent volunteer learning center the children sorted pictures by beginning sounds. At the independent center, the children played Chutes and Ladders in which they practiced one to one correspondence while counting spaces.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

Luke used colored tangrams to create a bird of his imagining, he also utilized small mirrors and experimented with placing the mirrors in different places and

orientations. As part of the children's inquiry into birds, they were often challenged to think about birds from a variety of perspectives. Luke further used his experience with his first creation of a bird of imagining as a springboard for creating another bird of imagining using the colored tangrams. His connection between direct instruction with Liz and the transference of knowledge to his play was clearly observed in this play sequence. Other classmates, Carrie and Carl created different images with the tangrams. Luke used the tangrams in an experimental fashion. He then decided to make a bird. He carefully chose varied colord tangrams to represent parts of the bird's body. For example, he used hexagonal, yellow and red quadrilateral tangrams to represent the body, he chose blue, diamond tangrams for feathers and thin, white diamonds as the bird's legs. The configuration and manipulation of the tangrams animated his imaginings into a visual product.

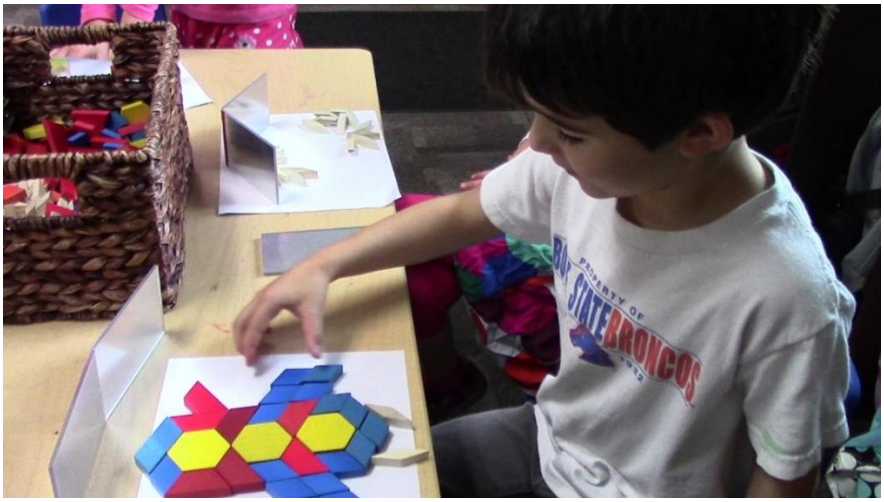

Figure 12. Artifact: Bird of Imagining.

Luke used a variety of tangrams to create a bird of his own imagining during work time. Luke also explored the relationship between his creation and the two-way mirror.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the oral, written and visual word. Luke's physical artifact was a tangram-constructed bird of imagining and is shown in Figure 12. This play sequence included both oral language and a tangible visual as the primary modes of communicating knowing (Oral: verbal exchanges with peers and adults during construction, and Visual: constructed bird of imagining with tangrams). Luke used the visual and oral word to communicate. Table 14 follows the dialogue between Liz, Luke, Carl and the reseacher. It specifically provides Luke's explanation of the mirrors impact on his bird of imagining.

Table 14 Manipulatives: Bird of Imagining Transcription

Liz	We just built birds, and then he built this bird. [Liz points to bird that Luke is building.]
RSCHR to Luke	Is that what you built?
Luke	Yeah
RSCHR	Wow, tell me about your bird.
Luke	Umm It really looks like a bird [lines tangrams up]
	But there are parts here that are falling off.
RSCHR	And, what does the mirror do to it?
Luke	It kinda looks, kinda funny [adjusts the mirror]
RSCHR	Oh but what is that, that is called in there? [points to reflection] What does it do? Does it reflect it?
Luke	No it doesn't.
RSCHR	Oh it doesn’t reflect what you drew/did in here [points to the mirror]
Carl	It does reflect it.
Luke	It shows it but it doesn't look like the same thing. Well it does, but it has two or three pictures of it.
RSCHR	Oh.
Luke	but connected.
RSCHR	So it multiplies the pictures too?
Luke	Yeah

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

Luke demonstrated his knowing and understanding through his verbal language and the creation of a three dimensional product (Bird of Imagining). Luke engaged in two literacy learning activities during this play (speaking and constructing). (Table 15

identifies eight kindergarten CC.ELA Standards under two ELA umbrellas: speaking and listening and language.)

Zone of proximal development. In this play sequence three MKO's were observed during Luke's narration of his created artifact; the bird of imagining. Carl served as one MKO

Table 15 Manipulatives: Bird of Imagining: CCSS.ELA Standards Observed During Play

Speaking and Listening	Language
Comprehension and Collaboration Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1A.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.D
Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Turn-taking and multiple exchanges.	Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5
Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.	With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

when he challenged Luke's answer to one of my questions, creating a cognitive break and further extending his response to reconcile the cognitive disruption to his thinking. Luke engaged in independent parallel play as he created his bird of imagining and his verbal

explanation was a collaborative endeavor even though he was the lone creator of the artifact. I engaged with Luke to elicit some responses from him and provided additional vocabulary related to his creation. The negotiated environment also served as the MKO, by providing the choice to use the tangrams and mirrors, Luke was challenged to practice and extend his learning from earlier small group work, as well as, work on and demonstrate specific learning targets aligned with with the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, in the areas of language, speaking and listening.

Manipulative Area Play Vignette #2: WordWorld

Official Space

On this particular day learning centers included math games on the iPad. At the parent volunteer table, the children created addition number sentences using two dice. The independent center consisted of the children drawing two different types of bird feet in their bird journals (i.e. grasping, swimming, climbing). This drawing was used as a post assessment to evaluate the children's understanding of a previous whole group lesson on the characteristics of the various types of bird feet. Liz introduced the ©2007 WordWorld magnet toys and engaged in a blending and segmenting phonemes literacy lesson at her center. The children were introduced and exposed to the magnetic toys during a direct instruction lesson with Liz during the daily learning center time. The toys were then set out during work time and available for children to explore and play with and included a bee, cat, cow, pig and bug.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacating Literacy Learning

The following play sequence took place in the manipulative imagined space on the large meeting rug. The manipulative area provided a space where children could engage in imaginary play and enact their thoughts, ideas and stories using a variety of play materials. At the center of this play scenario was the animating and enacting of the ©2007 WordWorld magnet toys. Based on a PBS preschool television show, ©2007 WordWorld, the magnet toys are the characters in the show and the bodies are made up of the letters that spell the word they are (See Figure 13). There were four boys who engaged in parallel and cooperative imaginative play in the manipulative area, Carl, Chip, Luke and Henry. In this particular play vignette, Luke and Chip created an imaginative play scenario where they were pretending to capture a ship/jet created by Luke. This sequence included big body play as the boys moved freely about the rug area pretending to fly ships. There was a lot going on in this play sequence. Henry and Carl, played with the magnetic WordWorld toys, taking them apart and putting them back together. Initially their play was parallel in nature and then became cooperative. At one point in the play sequence, Carl focused on putting magnetic letters from the different animals together to create new words. It was during this parallel play that Carl extended his understanding of blending and segmenting presented earlier by Liz.

Figure 13. Example of ©2007 WordWorld Magnetic Toy

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. In this particular play vignette the oral and visual word were the means of communication. The visual word could be observed through the WordWorld toys and the combination of individual magnetic letters put together, in addition to the Lego creations constructed to develop and extend the play sequence. The dialogue provided in Table 16 explains the process of how the WordWorld materials were used to create new words, and how they were central to the children's imaginative play. Carl created one visual artifact with the magnetic ©2007 WordWorld magnetic letters, a new word using a combination of magnetic body parts. In addition, the oral literacy component presented through the play can be observed through the self-talk and cooperative play dialogue during the play sequence.

Figure 14. Artifact: WordWorld, Carl's C-E-I (pronounced key-I)

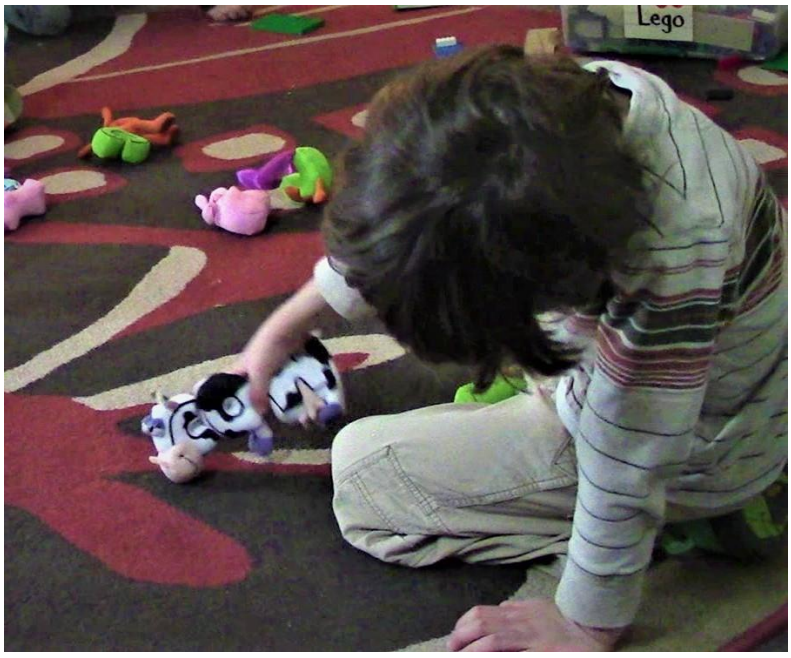

Figure 15. Artifact: Word World, Henry-Cow

Table 16 Manipulatives: Word World Transcription

Carl	I made a cee, this is called a cee, [drops the new creation]
Chip to Luke	buddy help. Buddy help.
Henry	[continues to put word world animals together]
Chip to Luke	pretend I catched on your ship. Buddy help. Buddy help!
	buddy help. Help buddy. Buddy help. Help.
Luke	[flies Lego jet toward Chip and lets Chip land on it]
Chip	pretend you saved my ship and I drop on your ship.
Luke	[flies jet away]
Chip	no my doesn't have guns, it doesn't have guns.
Luke	mine does and mine can shoot you
Chip	mine only has lasers
Luke	[bends down and takes something out of Legos] Hey I found the '
	perfect guns, you can go like this.
Chip	I need to throat. I have to throw up.
Henry	I have an idea. I'm going to make a monster.
	May day may day may day may day. [moves jet toward the ground]
Chip	I feel like I'm sick.
H	[stops and looks up at CH] I have a cold.
RSCHR	What have you been doing, to make you feel like you are getting sick?
Chip	I feel like I'm sick, because I like, I'm I've been like, I've been like
	tired and stuff. The tired makes me sick.
Luke	Tornado jet mode. Tornado mode!!

Carl	[sitting and trying different combinations of animal letters]
	[gets up and takes letter combination to RSCH] Carl sound outs
	creation] C E I , C E I. (key i)
Chip to RSCHR	Only water helps me get, like, the sick away.
RSCHR	Ok, well, what do you think you should do?
Luke to Chip	Get some water from a water bottle.
Chip	I already have a water bottle.
Luke	[continues to fly jet around making propeller noises, flies in front of camera
	sets down jet, and puts some Legos together and holds in front of
	camera.]
Carl	[enters the manipulative area, drops his animal letter creation and
	says] It's the end of the C E I. [then knocks off the C]
	Now it’s a E I!
	[then knocks off the I]
	Now it’s a E. Waaa ,waaa waaaa
Chip	I'm better.
Carl	[grabs the C and A and puts together, reaches over Henry] I need the T
	[puts together] Meow, meow.

Henry	*[drops the bug letters and reaches for the cow] I watch moooovie*
	time. I’m going to watch a movie.
Luke	*[gets up and Carl with bee follows] Force shield around my ship.*
Carl	[lunges bee at ship and breaks a piece off]

Luke	aaaahhh. [picks up piece and puts back together]
	may day may day may day
Carl	[chases after Luke and ship and lunges toward it, knocks it out of
	L's hand and it crashes to ground and breaks]
Luke	Heyyyy. ggrrrmmmmmmmm. [holds hands to side and shakes] .
	I don't like you much.
Carl	[picks up the pieces of his bee]
Henry to Luke	I remember when you did that to me and a I didn't trust it.
Luke to Carl	[bends down and picks up the pieces of jet]
	I'm gonna build a fence around it. Don't ever do that ever again.
Carl to Luke	XXXXX
Carl to Henry	I'm going to sting you. Hi ya! Ohhhh! [throws the bee and it breaks
	apart, goes to pick up the pieces]
Henry	he died. [grabs the cow] and I'm alive. It didn't hurt.
	He didn't get to sting me…yeah. [puts the cow back together and moves it in walking fashion]
Carl	[moves toward Luke] Hey where's that boy, I'm going to get him.
	Where's that boy?
Luke	[looks around at Henry and smiles]
5:52	
Carl	[goes back toward Luke and breaks the bee] oh no my body got
	destroyed. Buzz. [knocks another letter off] ahhhhhh
	nooooo.

	[gets up and stings Henry's cow]
	Ah, I got him.
Henry	Oh it doesn't hurt.
	[Carl picks up part of the cow and tries to put on the bee]
Henry	ahhh the other part of the…[Carl tries to take it back and Henry moves it out of reach]

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

This play sequence was packed with an abundance of language between peers. Luke, Henry, Carl and Chip engaged in conversations that demonstrated their knowing and understanding of language skills. Carl specifically used his imaginative play to show his understanding of letter sound/symbol relationships, through his verbal self-talk and the three dimensional new product, an animal using magnetic letter body parts of various animals(CEI). All four children engaged in three literacy learning activities during this play (speaking, constructing and imaginative playing), though their constructing resulted in different products that become central to their imaginative playing. For example, Luke and Chip built spaceships using Legos, as they played cooperatively with each other, yet engaged in parallel play with Carl and Henry. Also Henry's artifact was the result of using the WordWorld magnetic letters to create the intended animal, a cow. What was interesting about this play sequence was that it provided an example where children took what was presented in earlier direct instruction during small learning groups and then used those skills of segmenting and blending phonemes in their play. Further, Carl's CEI creation demonstrated how he took those skills taught in islolation and

Table 17 Manipulatives WordWorld: CCSS.ELA Standards Observed During

Reading: Foundational Skills	Speaking and Listening	Language
Print Concepts	Comprehension and Collaboration	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1A	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.
Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1A	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
Phonological Awareness	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2A	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1.B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
**Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).	Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2B		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.f
Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2E	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.2.d
Add or substitute individual sounds (phonemes) in simple, one-syllable words to make new words.	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.
Phonics and Word Recognition	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3a	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	
Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.		
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3b		
Associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings		

(graphemes) for the five major vowels.	

Note: **The ** on targeted CCSS.ELA Standards refer to standards demonstrated only by Carl during this play sequence. The remaining standards were exhibited by all four children.**

extended the principles through his imaginary play. Table 17 identifies seventeen kindergarten CC.ELA Standards under three ELA umbrellas: reading, speaking and listening and language which were observed through the play sequence.

Zone of Proximal Development. The environment served as the MKO during this play sequence. By providing the WordWorld magnetic toys during work time, the children were invited to explore and practice phonological awareness skills, in addition to, provided opportunities to engage in language literacy learning activities.

Writing Center

Imagined Space

The writing area invited children to write, draw and create in a print and literacy rich environment. This play enviroment proved the be the area where the greatest mode of communication was through the written word and visual constructions. This enviroment was consistently negotiated by Liz and the children, as writing tools and materials would interchange often. This allowed children to truly be creative in their communication and expressive, constructive and imaginative play. In this area there was minimal enactment and animation of materials observed. These processes were observed through the imaginative creative word/stories the children created. The area itself consisted of a small table which seated three children comfortably. On the wall next to the table was an alphabet consisting of 4x6 artistic images of objects beginning with the

corresponding sound of the indivdual letters. The alphabet displayed both upper and lowercase letters, in addition to some frequently used words (See Appendix I for examples of the writing area environment.) There was also a hundreds chart on the wall next to the writing center. The table was organized in a way that provided easy access to a variety of writing tools, as well as visual directions for creating individual books. (See Figure 17 for an example.) Two caddies with six sections stored a variety of colored pencils, thin markers, lead pencils, Sharpies, hole punches and scissors. Also available to children in this area were transparent tape, staplers, broad tip markers, a class list of names, a paper holder on the wall and two tabletop frames with common sight words and an alphabet (making it easier to track letters when writing). During the data collection period twelve of the fourteen children were observed and recorded playing and creating in the writing area.

Figure 16. Writing area example of how to make a book.

Writing Center Play Vignette #1: Bookmaking, Ginger's Bird Story

Official Space

The learning centers and direct instruction that took place on this day included iPad choice of either a math or literacy application at the technology learning center. The teacher directed learning center with Liz consisted of the children writing letters to their bird buddies thanking them for their help with their bird research throughout the school year. Liz created a list of words and phrases with the children that they might use in their letters, for example, *Dear, thank you, bird(s), I had fun, you helped,* etc). At the parent volunteer center the children played a game of environmental Jenga, where they tried to free Jenga and make pairs of enviromental pictures located on the blocks, rather than continue to build the Jenga tower. At the independent center the children were provided with paper, markers, crayons and colored pencils and were asked to create a birthday card for the teacher they share the classroom space with. They were provided with a list of birthday related words they might use in their card creations (for example, how to spell *Happy Birthday, cake, years old,* the teacher's name, etc.). The imagined space was negotiated based on these learning centers in the following ways: blank cards and envelopes were made available in the writing area and a list of children's names with corresponding bird buddy names were placed in the writing area. Also, Liz introduced a new writing tool to writing center: brightly colored chisel tip markers.

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

Based on the video recording Ginger, Addie, Ellen were the primary children engaged and seated in the writing imagined space, creating pictures and books. However, during the course of the video recording, Carl, Chip, Rachel, Sarah, Janet and Maddie

also entered the writing area to retreive materials, ask questions, and/or just observe the three main children in the writing area. The primary type of play observed during this play vignette is expressive/creative play where each child is creating their own artifact in a parallel fashion. Ginger, Addie and Ellen communicated verbally with each other, asking questions and making comments on each other's work. Five literacy learning activities were observed during this data collection period, including speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing and creating. An extract of dialogue from the play sequence presented in Table 18 provides a variety of excerpts throughout the play sequence that illustrated the storymaking process of authoring and illustrating a book.

Table 18 Writing Center: Bookmaking, Ginger's Bird Book.

5:48vid1	
Ginger	yeah.
Ginger to Ellen	I know how to spell help.
Ellen	How
Ginger	/h/ /h/ /h/ /e/ h /e/
Ellen to Rschr	wait how do you spell help? [gets up from writing area and heads to other table]
Rschr to Elanor	/e/
Elanor	A
Rschr	/e/
Elanor	E
Ginger to Ellen	told ya.
Rschr to Elanor	Then what do you hear next?
Ginger	goes back to stapling her book
Ellen	returns to writing center, picks up a black colored pencil
Ginger	hey that's mine I was using it.
Ellen	There's much more
Ginger	No there's no black ones.
	[Ellen takes a colored pencil out of the caddy and places in front of Ginger]
Ginger	that's brown.
Ellen	OH [puts the colored pencil back] Can't you use a marker?

Ginger to children on rug	ha, ha you guys are missing. Oh yeah, missing work time, Cuz you remember in crew before centers you were like XXX
	[Ginger sits back down and turns attention to stapling her book]
	[Ellen traces the heart with a sharpie]
18:47vid1	
Ginger	see look points to word on the marker and sounds out, while following along with finger] /sh/ /r/ /p/ /r/ /e/
Annie to Ginger	Can you get that basket down from the top of xxx
Ginger	[begins to sound out the title of her book] /s/ /s/ writes the letter s, /t/ /t/ writes the letter t, /o/------- writes o, /r/------writes r, /e/ writes e. Of /u/---------- writes a u, /v/----------, writes a v. Says the out loud, then spells from memory. XXXX can't her but write the letter B, /r/--- write an r, XXX writes a d.
6:02vid2	[Ginger grabs the purple marker]
Ellen	Um, I was just about to use that.
Ginger	I needed it back. [giggles]
	[Ellen folds arms and sits back in chair]
Ginger	sorry.
	[Ellen get up and walks to other area]
Ellen	Sarah can I have that? [pointing to purple marker]
Rschr	Everyone is using it. Not quite done yet.
Ellen	But I was using it first and then Sarah stole it.
Sarah	No I didn't.
Rschr	Did she ask to use it?

Ellen	no she didn't.
Ginger	[gets up from the writing table] Yeah, she asked me.
Sarah	I asked, I asked Ginger.
Rschr to Elanor	Can you give that to Ellen when you're done with it? The marker. When you're done.
Rschr to Ellen	She'll bring it to you k.
	[Ellen returns to the writing table and sits down]
Ellen to Annie	[holds up paper to Annie] look at my heart. [points to the marker in Ginger's hand] That's purple.
Ginger	[puts the lid on the purple marker and sets it down]
Ellen	[picks up the purple marker and exclaims] Yes!
	[girls continue to work on drawings]
Sarah	[enters the writing area and reaches for a pink marker]
	Can I use this?
Ellen	Yeah, but it doesn't work very well, just saying. I mean it works.
Ginger	[writes the following words] th Brd ws
Annie to Ginger	Can I use this red?
Ginger	I need it. But Yeah, just for one minute xxx and like xxx
Ellen	Actually a minute is 60 seconds
Sarah	[enters the writing area and stands next to Ginger]
Ginger	You mean they’re the same? Actually, just three minutes, three seconds.
Sarah	[tapping Ginger's shoulder] After you're done can I use that? [gestures to blue marker in Ginger's hand]
Ginger	one…..two…. Three….
Ginger	[looks at Sarah]

Sarah	Can I use that when you're done?
Ginger	nods head yes, Sarah leaves the writing area.
Annie	[puts the lid back on the marker and hands it to Ginger] Here you go.
	Can I use this pink?
Ginger	yeah.
Annie to Ellen	I want yours exact like mine [traces a heart from the stencil]
9:28vid2	Substitute Teacher and guest partially block the camera and have a conversation
Ellen	[Ginger is sounding out a word] uh What? [watches Ginger as she sounds out the word stortd (started)]
Ginger	[adding words to her illustrations add the word] /s/ /t/ /or/ XXX
Ellen	[leans over to see Ginger's paper and says] started?
Annie	Can I have that? [Takes purple marker out of Ellen's hand]
Ellen	Hey, you took that from me.
	XXX inaudible
Annie	Here just for one second and I'll give it right back.
Elanor	Enters the writing area and hands another purple marker to Ellen.
Ellen	Oh thanks
Ellen to Annie	Annie, you can use this [hands to Annie, camera blocked]
W Tchr	[Begins the clean-up music] Alright get going kids.
Ginger	[at writing center, begins to write words faster.]
	/g/ /o/ /t/
	[Ginger places the lid on the marker and stands up with book.
Ginger to Rschr	Ginger shows her book to the Rschr

Rschr to Ginger	Do you want to leave it here and finish it and then I'll take it from you.
Ginger	um,
Rschr `	Are you done with it?
Ginger	I'm all done with it but this time I want to bring it home and not get lost.
Rschr	Ok you're going to finish it at home then?
Ginger	Yes
Rschr	ok
Ginger	But I don't have any black sharpies.
Annie	Can you save this for me Miss Rschr
Rschr to Ginger	You know you could do it in pencil and when you come back
Rschr to Annie	Can you put it in your cubbie?
Annie	No, then I'll forget.
Ginger	Alright, and then I'll do it in markers
Rschr	when you get back
Annie	[stands there a for a few moments, then leaves the writing area]

Note: **The time stamps in the table indicated the time marker in the video, as well as which video the data came from.**

Creation of artifacts. Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Ginger, Annie and Ellen used all three literacy components as a means for communcation through this expressive/creative play: visual, oral and written. The oral word was demonstrated through the dialogue between and among the three girls being observed. The visual modes of communication were the illustrations they drew and colored in their respective book/pages. The written word was also found on the physical artifacts each child created.

As the primary authors of their own work the children were observed situating their imagination and storymaking on paper, through illustrations and words. (See Figure 18 for an example page of a book page.) Ginger created one physical artifact, a book; Store uv the Brd or Story of the Bird. Ginger employed all three literacy components to arrive at the final product (Oral: self-talk inlcuding sounding out words and conversations with peers; Physical: the design of the illustrations in her book; and the Written: the written narration of the story, written phonetically).

Figure 17. Artifact: Ginger's Bird Book

A page from Ginger's bird book, the written story and corresponding illustration. "Th brd ws co hape it stortd to seing that it got cat" (The bird was so happy it started to sing that it got caught).

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

This play sequence was overflowing with language and communication. Ginger, Ellen and Annie engaged in conversations that demonstrated their knowing and understanding of language, writing, and phonological awareness skills. Ginger specifically used her expressive/creative play and made a book (complete with cover,

title, and illustration on the pages) to communicate her understanding of letter sound/symbol relationships and understanding of story and text structure. In her verbal self-talk she sounds out words phonetically and adds

Table 19 Writing Center: Bookmaking: CCSS.ELA Standards Observed During Play.

Reading: Foundational Skills	**Writing**	**Speaking and Listening**	**Language**
Print Concepts	**Text Types and Purposes**	**Comprehension and Collaboration** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	**Conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.** **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1
Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1A		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1A	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.A
Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.		Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).	Print many upper- and lowercase letters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K1B		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1B	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.B
Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.		Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K1C		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.E
Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.		Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with*).
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K3		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.F
Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words		Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.	Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
CCSS.ELA-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K3A		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.2C
Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most		Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).

frequent sounds for each consonant.		
		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5A
		Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).

Note: **The ** on targeted CCSS.ELA standards refer to standard demonstrated only by Ginger during this play sequence. The remaining standards were exhibited by all three children.**

words to match her illustrations. All three children engaged in three literacy learning activities during this play (speaking, writing, drawing, creating and imaginative playing and they craft their stories), though their creative process resulted in different products all three communicated their knowing. For example, Ellen and Annie created single pages in their book, while Ginger almost completed a whole story about a bird. Though there was much dialogue during this data collection period, the girls' creative expressions were independent in nature, even though they each often stopped and watched what/how their peers were creating. What was interesting about this play sequence was that earlier in the day, during learning centers the children were invited to write letters to their bird buddies. This ever prevalent focus on birds was still being transferred to other environments and the children's play. This data collection series also took place after the children's culminating bird activity; their bird exhibition night. Thus, indicating that the children continued to apply what they had learned throughout the school year to their play and creations. Table 19 identifies twenty Common Core ELA kindergarten standards under

four ELA umbrellas: reading, writing, speaking and listening and language which were observed through the play sequence.

Zone of Proximal Development. Ginger served as the primary MKO to Ellen and Annie in terms of reading foundational skills, as she had significantly more confidence in her writing skills and ability to stretch sounds within words. The children initially engaged in independent parallel, expressive/creative play, creating their own designs and illustrations for their individual books. Ginger's enthusiasm and concentration on making her book encouraged Ellen and Annie to add more details and words to their respective pages. Annie wrote the word "hen" on her page and Ellen wrote the word "brd" (bird) on hers. The negotiated environment also served as the MKO, by providing visuals with the required steps on how to make a book, bookmaking materials (paper and staplers) and a variety of common and new writing tools in the environment invited the children to engage in creative/expressive play and write stories.

Writing Center Play Vignette #2: Labeling Work, Ellen's FLAWr

Unofficial Space: Animating and Enacting Literacy Learning

Ellen engaged in parallel and expressive/creative play while drawing and labeling a flower at the writing center before moving on to the art area to use watercolors to paint her flower. Ellen stopped in the middle of her drawing and decided to label her work; she took a pencil from the writing tool caddy and wrote the sight word "the" from memory. She left a space and then began to sound out the the word "flower" writing the corresponding letters she heard from stretching the sounds, /f/ /l/ /a/ /w/ /r/. She writes all the letters in upper case, except for the r. Then she finished her drawing and took her drawing to the art center. There was one other child in the art area, Annie. Ellen set up

her materials, finding the watercolors, filling a small cup with water and then began to paint. Ellen engaged in the following literacy learning experiences; speaking, drawing, painting, and writing. As I entered the art area, I asked Ellen if she would like to complete an artist statement, to which she shook her head no. (Table 20 provides the data collected; both by field notes and oral transcription of video.)

Table 20 Writing Center: Labeling work, Ellen's FLAWr Transcription

Ellen	Ellen is at the writing table and drawing a picture of a flower. with seven large petals and one leaf on the stem.
	She draws the stem and four petals, and then she stops drawing and grabs a sharper pencil from the writing tool caddy.
	She writes the sight word, the, from memory.
	Ellen begins to label her drawing. And begins to sound out the word, writing the corresponding sound she hears as she stretches the sounds.
Ellen	She begins with /f/ and writes an upper case F, /l/ and writes an upper case L, /a/ and writes an upper case A, /w/ and writes an upper case W, and /r/ and writes a lower case r.
	Ellen goes back to drawing her flower. She finishes adding the remaining three petals and the leaf on the stem.
	[Ellen puts away her pencil and gets up from the writing center with her drawing and walks to the art area.] She places her drawing on the table next to Annie, goes to the bathroom to fill a small cup with water and returns to the art area to place it on the table. She retrieves a watercolor set from the shelf in the art area, sits down and begins to paint her flower]
Rschr	[enters the art area]
	I like the way you wrote what that was on there. Are you going to make an artist statement and put that up in, on the gallery?
Ellen	Ellen uses the pink paint to color the petals of the flower.
	[looks at the rschr and says] um…no.
K1child	Hey what about me? Why don't you ask me?
Rschr	Well because I work with K2 so I only have permission to record them.
Annie	yeah and me too.

Creation of artifacts: Play and the Oral, Written and Visual Word. Ellen used three literacy components as a means for communcation through her expressive/creative play: oral, visual, and written. The majority of the oral language in this play sequence was in the form of self-talk. Ellen communicated her learning and knowing through her visual and written artifact; the drawing, painting and writing (lableling) in her artwork. Ellen's attempts at spelling "flower" demonstrated her ability and knowledge of the phonological awareness skills and phonics concepts including the relationship between letter sounds (phonemes) with letter symbols. (See Figure 19 for Ellen's FLAWr) Ellen employed all three literacy components to arrive at the final product (Oral: self-talk inlcuding sounding out words; Physical: the design of her flower (creating, drawing and painting) ; and the written word labeling her work, written phonetically).

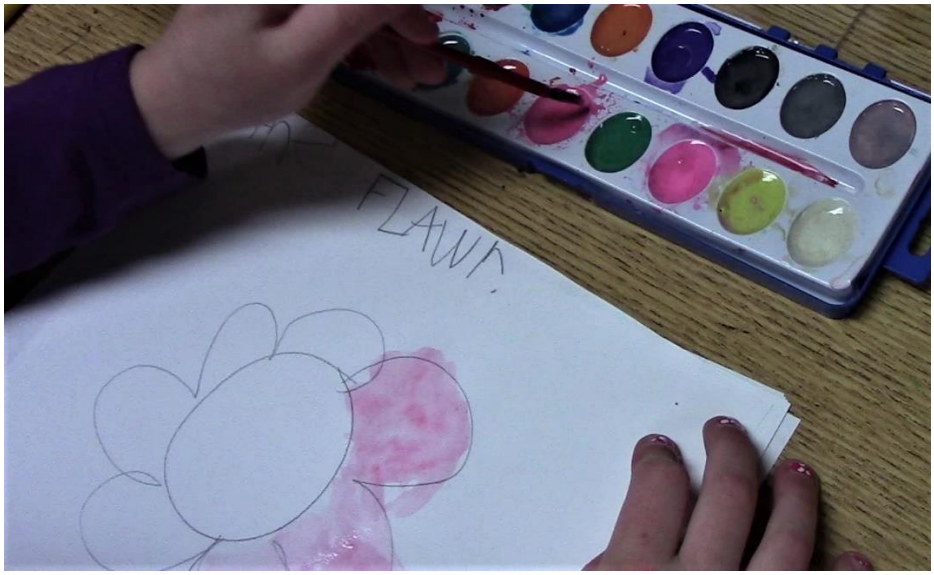

Figure 18. Artifact: Ellen's labeling of story.

Table 21 Writing Center: Labeling work, Ellen's FLAWr, CCSS.ELA Standards Observed

Reading: Foundational Skills	Speaking and Listening	Language
Print Concepts Phonological Awareness	Comprehension and Collaboration	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1A	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1.
Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2A		CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.2.d
Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).		Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.3a		
Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.		

Recontextualized Space: Ways of Knowing

The writing center during the data collection process was rarely empty. Ellen showed her understanding and knowing of letter sound/symbol relationships when she labeled her drawing. She produced one physical artifact and used visual, oral and written language to articulate her knowing. During this expressive/creative play sequence, Ellen created a piece of artwork that began in the writing area which demonstrated her understanding of letter sound/symbol relationships through her verbal self-talk as she sounded out words phonetically. Through Ellen's engagement in four literacy learning activities (speaking, drawing, creating and writing), she demonstrated comprehension and application of six different CC.ELA Standards combined under three different umbrellas: Reading, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Table 21 lists the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards Ellen demonstrated through her expressive/creative playing.

Zone of Proximal Development. Due to the nature of the expressive/creative play and the type of play in which Ellen engaged (parallel), there was not a peer or teacher who served as the MKO. However, the negotiated environment created by Liz, did serve as an MKO in Ellen's playing and learning. For example, the negotiated writing area was well stocked with a variety of writing instruments and the social space, including routines and expectations, allowed for Ellen to extend her learning because she was free to move materials from one area of play to another.

Summary

This chapter presented the six findings uncovered by this research study. Findings were organized by research questions and corroborated by the play vignettes. Data from video recordings, transcriptions, coding, literacy learning activities, artifacts and

negotiated play revealed the ways in which children practiced and demonstrated mastery of kindegarten CC.ELA Standards. As part of ethnographic study, extensive samples of dialogue, play interactions, photos and descriptions of artifacts, and matrices of data were included in this chapter. By using the children's own words and reporting objectively, I aimed to build the confidence in the readers that what they are reading accurately represented the reality of the kindergarteners situated in this bounded case study and that the findings were corroborated by the relationships between and among data presented. This was one of the ways I attempted to preserve the trustworthiness and credibility of this research study.

CHAPTER V: EXAMINING NEGOTIATED PLAY AS KNOWING

"The playing adult steps sideward into another reality; the playing child advances forward to new stages of mastery."

– Erik H. Erikson

Introduction

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to uncover and describe the relationships between and among negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning, and practice/mastery of CC.ELA Standards for kindergarten students at a public expeditionary learning charter school, in a Pacific Northwest Metropolitan city. Negotiated imaginative play, defined as the mutual relationship between the direct instruction of CC.ELA Standards and the deliberate designing and scaffolding of imaginative play environments with literacy learning activities/opportunities directly attached to kindergarten ELA standard for children to practice and its ongoing negotiation based on student interests and academic needs, was a central tenet to this research study. By using Vygotsky's social constructivist theory as a basis for analysis and synthesis, I attempted to present learning and knowing through the eyes of kindergarten children. By providing play vignettes, I endeavored to present the ways in which the children co-constructed knowledge through social interactions while actively engaging in the learning process through literacy learning activities. In addition, analyzing the physical and literacy components of created artifacts provided information

on the various ways children exhibited their understanding and knowing of some of the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment is a way for educators to gain information on children's progress toward mastery of content, and provides an opportunity for children to showcase their learning in a relaxed, non-timed setting. Authentic assessments can sometimes contain elements of a portfolio (multiple artifacts demonstrating growth, or isolated pieces indicative of understanding and/or mastery of a skill or specific content). According to Wiggins (1989), authentic tests (assessments) "are enabling - constructed to point the student toward more sophisticated and effective ways to use knowledge" (p. 711). They are a culmination of the student's own research or created product, for which "content" is to be mastered as a means, not as an end (Wiggins, 1989). Chapter four provided the analyses of imaginative play scenarios which extended children's literacy learning and delineated in more detail through the play vignettes, if and how negotiated imaginative play could provide a path for children to practice and meet CC.ELA Standards, by using play as a form of authentic assessment. Chapter four provided the thick description of the kindergarteners' imagined, unofficial and official spaces. This chapter will focus on the organization of the data analysis, present each finding in detail, outline the procedures for analysis and synthesis, in addition to presenting the interpretations resulting from the findings and ending with a discussion summary.

Data Analysis Organization

The conceptual framework served as the analytic method for exploring and examining the data. Key codes were derived from theory, the research questions, and gathered from the intial read of the data. By using research questions and identifying big ideas during the first read through of the data, I was able to organize it into manageable chunks, code data and then place coded data into categories. A list of apriori categories were used as an initial way to sort the data, and then sub-categories were created concurrently during the coding process. By using he iterative process of re-reading and revising, adding and eliminating coding schemes, the data was filtered and condensed to schemas that provided pertinent information to draw from to formulate findings.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides a deconstruction of the findings, looking at each finding individually and addressing the ways in which the data supported them. Once the findings are presented in isolation, a multi-layered approach of analysis is presented looking at the emerged patterns across the findings as well as across the children (cross-case analysis).

Finding 1: Children appeared to demonstrate knowing in numerous ways through literacy learning opportunities and activities.

One of the overriding and primary findings in this study was that children engaged in multiple literacy learning activities which allowed them to demonstrate their knowing. By analyzing, animating, and enacting sections of the ten vignettes presented in chapter four, the children in this study engaged in speaking, storytelling, writing, drawing, painting, constructing creating and imaginative playing. These literacy

learning activities provided an avenue for children to demonstrate their knowing, their meaning making, and understanding of ideas, language and concepts. Through the artifacts created and their dialogue with peers and teachers, the children were able to project and articulate their understanding through multiple modes of expression, including constructing with blocks, orally telling a story, or painting a picture and writing/dictating a corresponding artist statement. Each play vignette provided evidence to support this finding. In each vignette the children demonstrated their knowing verbally through language (storytelling, speaking, imaginative playing) as well as concretely, as evidenced through the creation artifacts through their play. Further, the verbatim transcription of the play dialogue between and among children substantiated this finding. Also, the analysis of any created artifact also served to validate this finding because the very act of creating an artifact required the child to engage in at least one literacy learning activity. The data supporting this finding helps to provide information that can be used to answer both research questions. Negotiated imaginative play takes into account not only what skills have been explicity taught through direct instruction, but then negotiates the play space to encourage and invite children practice what they know through play. By negotiating the play space and providing a sundry of materials for open exploration, children automatically self-selected the areas, items, objects, and materials they were drawn to and and engaged in the literacy learning activities that naturally streamed from play.

Finding 2: Negotiated play and embedded literacy learning experiences likely helped children practice and demonstrate mastery of some kindergarten ELA standards.

The second finding emanated from the Recontextualized spaces of the play vignettes, in addition to analyzing the official and unofficial spaces in relation to each other. This section was more subjective in nature, as I had to analyze the dialogue, interactions and artifacts, compare them to the direct instruction that took place that day, and decide which, if any, CC.ELA Standards were demonstrated through the children's interactions with each other, the materials, and the classroom environment which may have impacted the created artifacts. Nonetheless, this data analysis yielded significant information to adequately answer research question two. This idea of providing children with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowing through literacy learning activities is an authentic way to assess what they know, without them really knowing that they are being assessed, thus providing a more accurate measurement. The artifacts that children create independently demonstrate an ownership of their knowledge. Simply by analyzing the artifact, much information can be obtained; if you add the language and interactions that took place while the artifact was under creation or construction, a more comprehensive picture of what the child knows emerged. Formulating this finding was clearly more subjective in nature, as I was required to review the transcribed dialogue of the play sequence in addition to any created artifacts and then review each kindergarten CC.ELA Standard and decide if that standard was indeed observed through an oral, written or physical form of communication.

Finding 3: Based on the the highlighted vignettes, all 13 of the 14 children appear to have demonstrated practice and/or mastery of a combination of at least 6 CC.ELA Standards in the areas of Foundational Skills, Writing Languaage and Speaking and Listening categories from a total of 24 standards.

This finding was taken directly from the aggregate data in the Recontextualized space, ways of knowing analysis section in chapter four. This was one of the quantifiable parts of this study. Though some children demonstrated practice and/or mastery of more kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, the majority of children demonstrated their knowing of some standard through negotiated imaginative play. By analyzing the children's play and any artifacts created through a self-selected and initiated process, the children's knowledge could be measured authentically. Thus, this data supports the finding, as well as provides considerable information that could be used to answer the second research question.

Finding 4: During imaginative play peers and the environment seemed to serve as the more knowlegeable other by fostering and challenging learning.

Analyzing the enviroment and the ways in which it was negotiated substantiated the information used to formulate this finding. For example, each of the ten play vignettes addressed whether a More Knowledgeable Other was present during the play sequence and if and how they influenced the play itself and subsequent expressions of learning and knowing. In some cases other children served as the MKO's by stretching and challenging their peers' learning, for example, helping a peer sound out or spell a word during play. However, in most of the cases the negotiated enviroment served as the MKO. Simply negotiating the space and providing thoughtful and intentional materials

provided avenues for children to play with items related to information, ideas or concepts taught or discussed in other classroom settings. For example, by having stuffed birds in the block area, children were given props that might influence their play in a way where they could practice information learned from their bird inquiry.

Finding 5: CC.ELA Standards in the the areas of Infomational Text and Literature were infrequently observed during imaginative play.

The lack of all the CC.ELA Standards being observed, as practiced or mastered in this research study, raised the issue of how and why some literacy learning activities lend themselves better to the practicing of some standards and not others. This finding was supported though the evaluation of the data in the recontextualized space and ways of knowing sections in chapter four. By looking at only these sections of the ten play vignettes, it was easy to deduce that not all areas of the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards were represented in the children's play. This finding also proved important because it forced me to look at the why behind this data. While Liz provided and negotiated the environment for children to engage in literacy learning activities that were creative in nature, either literacy based (oral and writing based) or design/construction based, there were few opportunities for children to engage interactively with literature and informational texts. There could be a number of reasons for this, including the lack of reading materials present in the different play areas for children to interact with, the fact that children often engaged in areas of the classroom that offered sensory and tactile experiences or even that the library was not an area that was observed as part of this research study.

Finding 6: Literacy learning activities enacted during play are context-specific and require intensive attention to oral language and self-selected created artifacts.

The analysis process itself led to this final finding. The manner in which the data was collected, organized, and analyzed led to information used to formulate this final finding. By analyzing each play vignette and looking at the play sequence from various perspectives and angles proved to be labor intensive. Each vignette addressed the imagined space which included an overview of the imagined spaces and the number of children observed in the play sequence. Next, the official space was identified and included what took place during Liz's direct instruction during learning centers prior to work time. Then the unofficial space, with multiple subcategories were presented, which provided information about the type of play, the literacy learning activities observed, the oral transcription that took place during the play, the creation of any artifacts and their physical and or literacy components, and then the recontextualized spaces where the literacy learning activities were revisited and analyzed in relation to the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards and compiled in tables, as well as the identification of any MKO's (more knowledgeable others), thus requiring rigorous attention to many potential influencing factors.

These findings shaped a story of the unique bounded context, including its culture (social space), imagined space (environment) unofficial and official spaces (negotiated play). The task that came next was the reassembly of these slices of negotiated play, interaction, knowing and classroom culture in a way that demonstrated the convergence of these learning constructs and the importance of such convergence.

Procedures for Analysis and Synthesis

Before examining the patterns and themes among the findings, a review of the analysis and synthesis of the data is warranted. The first step in the analysis process to was to select the play vignettes to be analyzed in deeper detail. I selected two play sequences from each play area, though each imagined space had a minimum of at least six play sequences from which to choose (some imagined spaces had more). The selection of which vignettes to include in the analysis process was based on ensuring all the children were represented in at least one of the highlighted vignettes. This protected the credibility of the study ensuring that data was not skewed by overrepresentation of certain participants. Once this selection was made I provided a thick description of the imagined space where children played. This was followed by a discussion of the official space and specifically, what direct instruction took place during the learning centers preceding free play time, in addition to how the space and materials were negotiated for that particular play space. The next step in analysis was to review the data and isolate the ways in which children animated and enacted heir knowing, for example, the type play they engaged in, the literacy learning activities observed, and the dialogue/transcript of their play. Following this, I analyzed the play sequence for any artifacts that may have been created, taking into account how the children used the oral (language), written (letters/words) or visual word (drawings, paintings, structures etc.) to demonstrate their knowing through play. The final step in the analysis was the synthesis. This included reweaving these individual parts and deciding which literacy learning activities aligned with which kindergarten, CC.ELA Standards, while also evaluating how children demonstrated said standards through the literacy learning activities, language dialogues

and artifacts created. In this re-contextualized space, ways of knowing section, the data in some instances revealed ways in which peers and the environment served as the more knowledgeable other in the children's learning and knowing.

Patterns and Themes

As I worked on coding the data into chunks that made sense and seemed to contribute to the constructs being researched, I observed repeated patterns of children "doing." These doings later became the literacy learning activities and artifacts in the conceptual framework and, upon further analysis, became the ways in which children demonstrated their knowing. Reaching a point where findings could be suggested required a closer look at the individual vignettes and attention to the patterns present and/or repeated within and among them. From the suggested findings five themes surfaced, language, creation/construction, independence, environment and communication of knowing. A solid thread in the findings was this idea of language. Oral language was a factor inherent to all the proposed findings. A second pattern was the creation or construction of an artifact(s). This was particularly significant in addressing the relationship between the three main constructs and specifically being able to address the CC.ELA Standards. Independence was another element observed among the suggested findings. The fact that the children self-selected what imagined space to play in and what to engage in or do in each area was relevant to all the findings. A fourth pattern which was identified in the findings related to the classroom environment and its negotiation. The last pattern that appeared significant in the findings was the idea of "doing" and how that later transferred into the children's way of communicating knowing. These patterns proved to be significant because they provided individual

strands of observations that were later weaved together to create a tapestry showing the complex interconnectedness of knowing and learning. This is important and meaningful for practioners in the field who grapple with whether imaginative play and Common Core standards can exist in a harmonious relationship. These identified patterns are important because alone they only provided one interpretation of how children learn and demonstrate understanding, but when taken together, they provided a more comprehensive understanding of how the patterns and main constructs converged and overlapped to reflect how learning manifested through imaginative play in a negotiated environment.

There are decades of research that address the role of language in children's play, literacy development, and learning (Barrett-Tatum &McMunn, 2015; Weisberg et.al, 2015, Bergen, 2002; Bodrova, 2008; Elkind, 2007; Vygotsky, 1933). As a result, some of the findings in this study are not surprising, in fact, they are supported by previous research. What made this research study different and relevant to current kindergarten teaching practices is that it concentrated on looking at learning through a multifaceted lens and from the perspective of the child. How did they demonstrate their knowing? For example, at the outset of this study, one of my main goals was to find a way to articulate that play does not need to be abandoned in kindergarten classrooms because of Common Core Standards and its corresponding accountability measures. Thus, the creation of one of the initial research questions, how can Common Core English Language Arts Standards be measured through play? However, by investigating current qualitative approaches and processes and the reading of related literature, I realized that effective qualitative questions were developed and refined throughout the stages of a reflective

inquiry journey (Agee, 2009). Further, Flick (2006), noted that "reflecting on and reformulating the research questions are central points of reference for assessing the appropriateness of the decisions you take at several points" (105). Initially, I had no idea what to call what I observed until I created the term, negotiated imaginative play. However, through the data collection, coding, and analysis, this idea, later woven into a mindset and potential teaching practice, emerged through the synthesis of data. It appears that negotiated imaginative play has the potential to become a recursive teaching practice and mindset whereby children learn, practice and demonstrate understanding of CC.ELA standards through imaginative play in the negotiated social, unofficial and imagined spaces of a classroom, rich with literacy learning opportunities.

Synthesis and Interpretations

The following section, in essence was my effort to offer a discussion that streamlines my data, my analysis, synthesis, and my interpretations in a coherent fashion, while also comparing these interpretations from this bounded context to the current research base and movements occurring within the education field, particularly kindergartners, imaginative play and CC.ELA Standards. Subsequently, the following section is outlined to organize these goals in a systematic approach, by including a discussion of the significant patterns and themes among the findings, why these patterns are important, meaningful and potentially useful, what are the ambiguities and inconsistencies, what story do the findings tell, how are they connected to and supported by current and previous research. Then I conclude with a systemic synthesis of how this analysis of parts converged to generate an understanding of how kindergarten children express knowing and why is this important to the field.

As the data was synthesized, certain groupings and patterns began to emerge and subcategories for the conceptual framework were developed. These separate categories, used to organize and analyze the data, provided important information pertinent to the study, but the synthesis of the categories revealed intersections between, within and among the data and exposed the interconnectedness of the primary constructs of this study. The data analysis suggested relationships that answer the research questions, (1) In what ways does negotiated imaginative play provide opportunities for children to practice literacy learning skills and (2) How can kindergarten Common Core English Language Arts Standards be measured through negotiated imaginative play? The findings which surfaced from this research study suggested children demonstrate their knowing in many different ways. For example, negotiated play is one way children demonstrate practice and mastery of some of the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, while some were not present at all, and lastly, that peers and the environment can serve as the more knowledgeable other fostering and challenging learning.

In ethnographic studies, research questions often ask first for a description of the core values or behavior of the culture group; this was provided by the play vignettes presented in chapter four, a small cross-section of all the data gathered (Creswell, 1994). The behaviors in this case study included the literacy learning activities and creation of artifacts by the participants, in addition to negotiated play, and the teacher behaviors (direct instruction, scaffolded play environments). A recontextualization of the isolated constructs ensued from the reiterations of data combing. Putting these elements back together into a more integrated whole relied heavily on the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, which was me. As a result, this potential subjectivity in the

analysis challenged me to revisit my biases and assumptions. Attempting to derive understanding of the children's experiences, presented as themes in this study, proved to be an exercise in "problem posing" by asking myself why and why not repeatedly, in an effort to exhaust the possibilities that might explain the findings. This engagement in critical inquiry permitted a means for trying to understand the experience of the children (Freire, 1996).

Further, I was challenged to also revisit the limitations of this research study. First, the research study was small, including only fourteen children and one teacher, though the data from the play sequences was rich, it still only provided information for this bounded context. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the implications that can be drawn from this research study are limited to the experiences of this specific group of children. Secondly, none of the children m*et al*l of the CC.ELA Standards. This could be in part to the fact that only a cross-section of the data was presented, or that, in fact, there were not opportunities provided to children in which to demonstrate or practice knowing of certain standards. As was the case for the fifth finding, CC.ELA Standards in the areas of informational text and literature were seldom observed, and there were limited opportunities where the space was negotiated to provide practice in these skills.

When deciding how to present my interpretations based on the findings, I found myself grappling with a way to organize and present them in a coherent manner. The two research questions were significantly satisfied by findings presented and discussed earlier in this chapter. The two principal findings in this study suggested that children are able to demonstrate their knowing in numerous ways through a variety of modes of communication, and that negotiated imaginative play appeared to provide children

opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of some kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. This perceived relationship between negotiated play and kindergarten CC.ELA Standards, and the five patterns that emerged from the findings, provided the springboard to deliberate their implications on and within the field of education. I decided to organize my interpretations by unpacking the patterns through the following analytic categories:

1. The relationship between the imagined space (the imaginary play space where children engage in imaginary play and dialogue situated in classroom play environments) and the official space (the official classroom space including activities, materials and instruction provided by the teacher). Research Question 1
2. The Unofficial Space (the activities, routines, artifacts and concerns that children share in with classmates) and their convergence with negotiated play and kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. Research Question 2

The aforementioned analytic categories are directly aligned to each of the research questions in this study. These same analytic categories were used to code data. As part of my analysis I looked for patterns which connected the analytic categories to each other, i.e. were these patterns only visible in one space. As I present my interpretations, a secondary level of analysis is provided through theory and research, in that these themes and patterns are compared and contrasted to the literature in the field.

This discussion takes into account the literature on imaginative play and children's literacy learning, as well as Common Core Standards. The implications are

intended to increase the understanding of a blended approach to teaching kindergarteners and advocate for the return of play as a means of authentic assessment of knowing.

Analytic Category 1: The first research question sought to determine the ways that negotiated imaginative play might provide kindergarten children with the chance to practice literacy learning skills. The children indicated through their play and the collected data, that a negotiated play environment provided opportunities for them to engage in oral language exchanges including singing, speaking, storytelling and imaginative playing. Thus, oral language and the opportunity to use language is one way for children to demonstrate their knowing and often the first way they choose to do so. Think of any group of kindergartners and the first thing that comes to mind is chatter and the desire to share and communicate. What they think, what they like, what they did over the weekend, what they KNOW. Research supports that oral language is a precursor to more developed literacy skills (Seefelt & Wasik, 2006; Snow & Resnick, 2009). When children engage in play with others, there is an inherent need to communicate, whether it is to inform, request, decide, negotiate, problem solve, or create imaginary scenarios; oral language is a child's go-to method to communicate with peers. As children communicated with their peers in a play setting, the back and forth nature of play often extended the dialogue and children could work together to create and build more organized play plots and scripts while also using and teaching each other vocabulary, as supported by research (Johnson 1998). Thus, the relationship between the imagined space and the official space is important in answering the first research question. For example, by providing children a play environment where they had choice, more authentic engagement and interactions ensued. There was no pressure to perform, they

were given independence and freedom to engage in learning and playing on their terms, and were intrinsically motivated to participate. Because the children in this research study were provided with choice during their work time, the activities they chose to engage in were driven by their individual interest.

Analytic Category 2. When children are given freedom to create without intrusion or explicit guidance from adults, they create from their minds and their internal motivations. This type of communication is genuine and opens the window on a child's meaning making process. The philosophies surrounding the concepts of the communication of knowledge, the impact of the environment and the making of artifacts can also be seen in previous and current research (Edwards et al., 2012). This research study confirms similar investigations conducted by researchers adhering to the Reggio Emilia philosophy of learning (Biermeier, 2015; Schroeder-Yu, 2008 & Robson & Mastrangelo, 2017). The Reggio Emilia principle stresses the environment as the third teacher, after the teacher himself/herself and peers (Robson & Mastrangelo, 2017). Further, children in Reggio environments are accepted as individual who speak their ideas, knowing and learning through hundreds of languages (Edwards et al, 2012). Though much of the research focusing in the Reggio approach is targeted to preschool age children, there appears to be more public schools using elements of this approach (Robson & Mastrangelo, 2017).

By evaluating the different spaces impacting the study (the social, imagined, unofficial and official), the story of the children's engagement, knowing and learning revealed the ways in which they met and intersected. The imagined, unofficial and official spaces appeared to work collectively in order to create multiple learning

pathways. The children appeared to have an ownership over their learning by means of the freedom to independently choose what areas of the environment to visit and which literacy learning activities to pursue as an avenue for communicating knowing. Further, the data suggested that negotiated play could be used as an authentic assessment method for measuring progress and mastery of some kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. Further, in current years some researchers have advocated for the return of play to kindergarten through a concept called guided play (Weisberg et al., 2013). While this shift in the field is exciting, there continues to be very limited research looking at how play can be used as an authentic assessment for meeting kindergarten Common Core standards. Nonetheless, this data proposed that literacy learning skills were present when a negotiated space was provided to children.

As supported through the research, when sensory and kinesthetic properties are offered during the learning process they contribute to synaptic brain connections and help transfer knowledge and information from short term memory to long-term memory by providing sensory anchors in the brain, making retrieval easier and faster (Driscoll, 2005). This is significant to the field because the reality is that teachers are held accountable for teaching the Common Core Standards. However, the ways in which teachers provide opportunities for meaningful learning while still measuring progress or mastery of said standards does not mean that play in kindergarten needs to be abandoned in favor of didactic strategies. Rather, teachers can confidently stand on decades of research regarding the importance of play, while finding a balance between teacher-led instruction and authentic meaningful practice

CHAPTER VI: NEGOTIATED PLAY AS A SIGN OF COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

It is a happy talent to know how to play.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Conclusions

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to discover and describe the relationship between negotiated imaginative play, literacy learning, and practice/mastery of CC.ELA Standards for kindergarten students at a public expeditionary learning charter school in a Pacific Northwest metropolitan city. This research supports and is supported by decades of research that legitimizes the importance of play in a child's learning. Further, this study argued that negotiated imaginative play, is not only important for a child's cognitive, literacy and socio-emotional development, but when the play environment is deliberately constructed, negotiated and paired with standards based direct instruction, it can serve to provide children with opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of some of the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards through child directed, experiential engagement. In the following paragraphs, at least one conclusion is provided for each finding and tied to actionable recommendations.

Recommendations for Teachers

The first finding of this research was that children appeared to demonstrate knowing in numerous ways through literacy learning opportunities and activities. A conclusion drawn from this finding was that when children are provided with

opportunities to engage in unstructured play and self-select what to engage in, a more authentic assessment of their knowing can be determined. An understanding of what children know manifests in a variety of ways. When educators and adults assess authentically through the lens of corporeal expression (speaking, singing, storytelling and imaginary playing) in addition to physical expression (writing, drawing, painting, constructing and creating), they can have a better understanding of how children make meaning based on their choices and interests. Thus, I recommend that kindergarten teachers attempt to arrange their daily schedules to provide time for children to engage in unstructured play while having access to a negotiated environment where materials are thoughtful and deliberate.

The second finding that emerged from the data was the idea that negotiated play and embedded literacy learning activities likely helped children practice and demonstrate mastery of some kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. Contributing to this second conclusion was the awareness that negotiated play required the ongoing mediation between what was taught in isolation, the scaffolding of the environment to provide genuine practice determined by the child, and the informal identification of the needs (CC.ELA Standards) and interests of the children. What I now know to be true about negotiated play from the research is that a solid and thorough knowledge of the CC.ELA Standards is a necessity for teachers in order to make this on-going mediation viable, purposeful and meaningful to children's learning. Therefore, I recommend that educators interested in using negotiated play as a form of authentic assessment intentionally reflect on their instructional methods and contemplate ways that children can practice skills/concepts taught in isolation through literacy learning activities.

The third finding indicated that thirteen of the fourteen children in the study demonstrated practice and or/mastery of a combination of at least six CC.ELA Standards from three areas. The main conclusion drawn from this finding was that though not all CC.ELA Standards were measured, the data which was collected, analyzed and synthesized provided information that negotiated play offered an avenue for assessing the practice and, in some cases, mastery of some of the kindergarten CC.ELA Standards. As a result, I recommend that teachers attempt to negotiate the play environment and provide literacy learning activities tied to specific CC.ELA Standards, skills and or concepts in multiple imagined spaces.

The fourth finding addressed the idea that play peers and the environment seemed to serve as the more knowledgeable other by fostering and challenging learning. The environment that was created and constructed for children in this study was a valuable vehicle for children's learning and for their demonstration of knowing. Through the on-going negotiation of the environment, teachers can tap into children's interests and create opportunities for children to practice their knowing in a variety of ways, through various types of communication in multiple play settings alongside and with peers. Therefore, I recommend that educators interested in negotiated play learn to see and apply their classroom environment as the third teacher and delve into the research and literature related to this topic including Montessori and Reggio Emilia.

The fifth finding which emerged from the data was that CC.ELA Standards in the area of Informational Text and Literature were infrequently observed during imaginative play. I concluded that some of the CC.ELA Standards were more difficult to present as opportunities for practice in the negotiated environment. Further, some children didn't

prefer some areas of the negotiated play environment and so when given a choice seldom chose to participate in the literacy learning opportunities tied to specific CC.ELA Standards. Thus, I recommend that further investigation into ways that the CC.ELA Standards in this area could be negotiated into the environment, to provide opportunities to practice and interact with informational text and literature in ways that encourage the use of literacy learning activities.

The final finding revealed that literacy learning activities enacted during play were context-specific and required intensive attention to oral language and self-selected created artifacts. This labor intensive, authentic assessment process has the potential to deter educators from utilizing negotiated play as a means for evaluating children's knowing. Based on what I now know on this end of the research, my conclusions are two-fold. Yes, the process required time and intellectual muscle, but the reality of the situation is, as with most things, that with time, it became easier. Second, the feasibility of teachers in the field being able to listen in on children's conversations during imaginative play is nearly impossible; however, setting up a recorder in an area is possible. Therefore, I recommend that teachers begin by assessing one area at a time until the process begins to feel natural and then negotiate other areas. I truly believe that once a teacher has experienced and observed children's knowing in these ways, the more they will begin to look at assessing children based on their self-selected creations. The excitement of witnessing a child transfer knowledge and apply it to a more meaningful, personal experience is, in my opinion, the definition of learning and knowing.

Recommendations for Further Research

I recommend further studies to be conducted in an attempt to add to the limited research addressing the constructs in this study. This recommendation stems from a desire to gain understanding of, if and how negotiated play can provide authentic assessment of CC.ELA Standards in other settings. Therefore, the following should be considered: (a) based on the limitations and to account for my bias in this study, multiple studies and multiple sites should be conducted to assess whether similar findings would be validated, and (b) further studies using the same criteria should be undertaken in a variety of settings, for example rural and/or urban sites.

A second recommendation for further research is aimed at ways that I can extend this research further and provide practical ways for teachers to engage in negotiated play as a means of authentic assessment of children. This research study was in-depth and intense. However, I do believe that there is hope for distilling the steps and providing strategies and tools to help educators through the assessment process. Further research would center on creating an assessment tool aimed at guiding teachers through how to authentically assess negotiated play.

A final recommendation is aimed at the research community. This study looked through the lens of children's literacy learning activities and their relationships with kindergarten ELA standards. I encourage other researchers to use this research study as a model to replicate research looking at other domains of learning, including Common Core math standards, science standards and social studies standards in play based settings. I believe that negotiated play provides a reflective process for researchers and teachers alike to authentically assess children's learning and knowing across content

areas. Further, the overwhelming research supporting play as a vehicle for learning, for children, needs to no longer be ignored. Finding a balance between direct instruction and child-directed play is possible; they need not be divorced from each other.

Researcher Reflections

Presenting the analysis and subsequent interpretations uncovered a variety of issues which require attention. The need to address the human factor influencing the study, which was me, is important to report on. While this can be both the greatest strength and a significant weakness, I would be remiss if I didn't highlight the subjective nature of this research study, and open recognition that other researchers' stories could and would, likely be different based on the biases, assumptions, meaning making of the data and the contexts. The process of undertaking this ethnographic study challenged and stretched me personally, intellectually and professionally. In my attempt to introduce the readers to the kindergartners at Hillview Elementary School, I watched as this group of amazing children and their personalities bubbled up through play and transformed before my eyes. In my own journey alongside these creative minds, I came to have a better understanding of children's play and their manifestations of knowing. My passion clearly colored this research, but I am undoubtedly a better mother, educator and human being as a result of this experience with fourteen of the most spirited, innocent, remarkable children and their teacher. There is clearly more to be done in this area of research; no teacher should ever feel they have to compromise what they know is good for children with what they are required to do.

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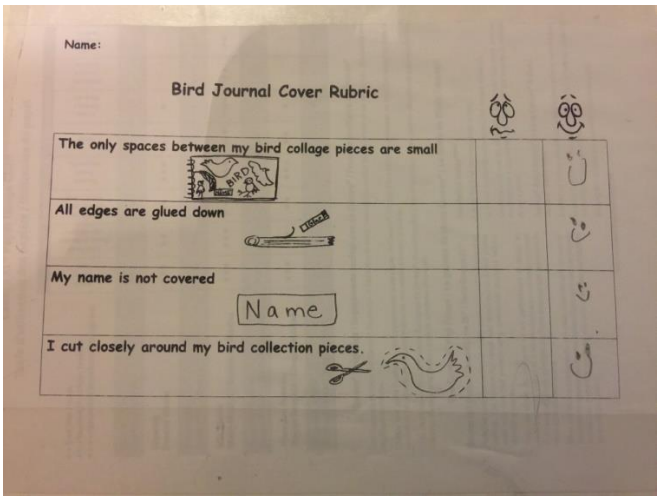
APPENDIX A

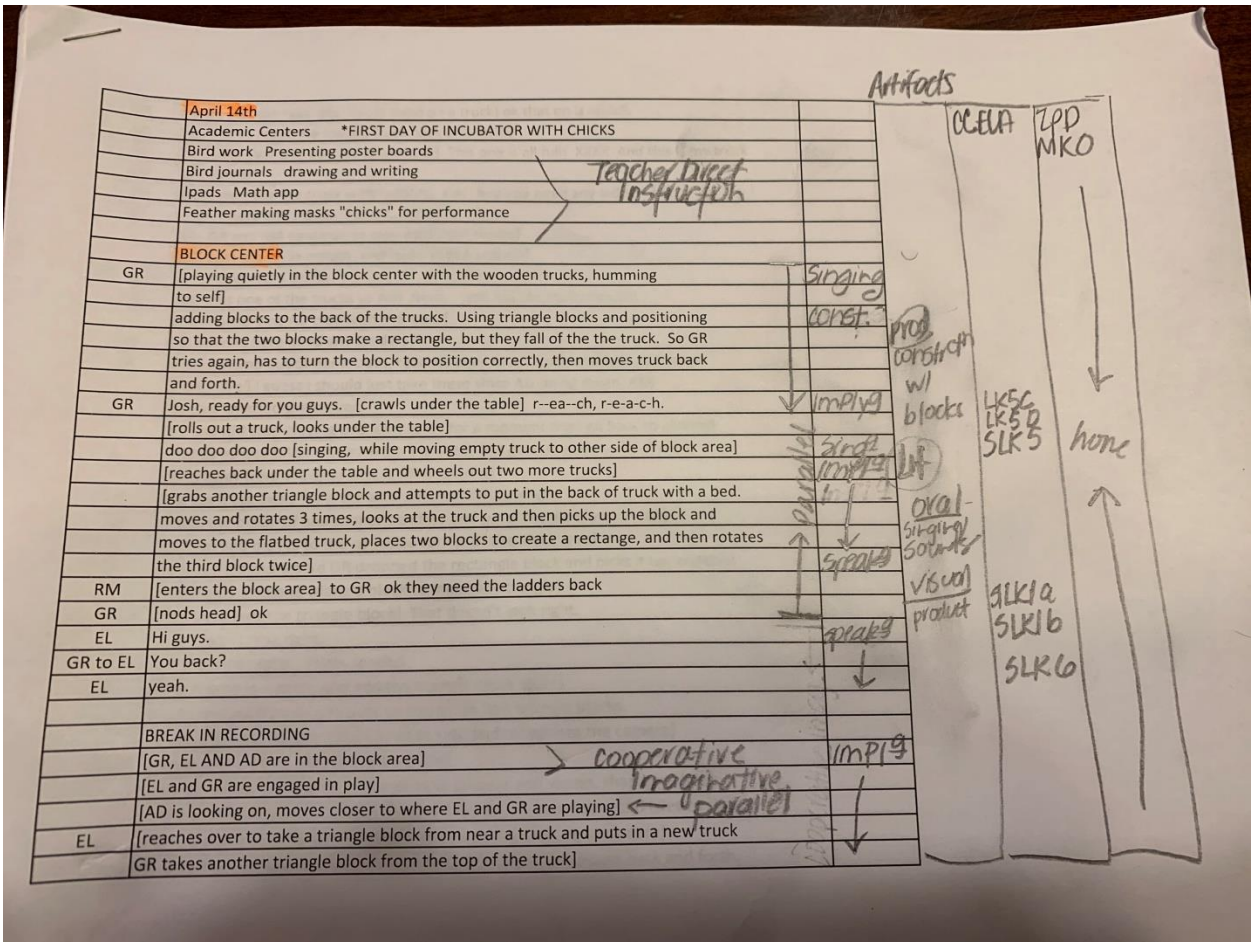
Examples of Student Generated Bird Research


Hawk
A Safe Haven For Birds Year 'Round
WATCH BIRD FAMILIES NEST & GROW!


Name:
Bird Journal Cover Rubric
The only spaces between my bird collage pieces are small
All edges are glued down
My name is not covered
Name
I cut closely around my bird collection pieces.

APPENDIX B

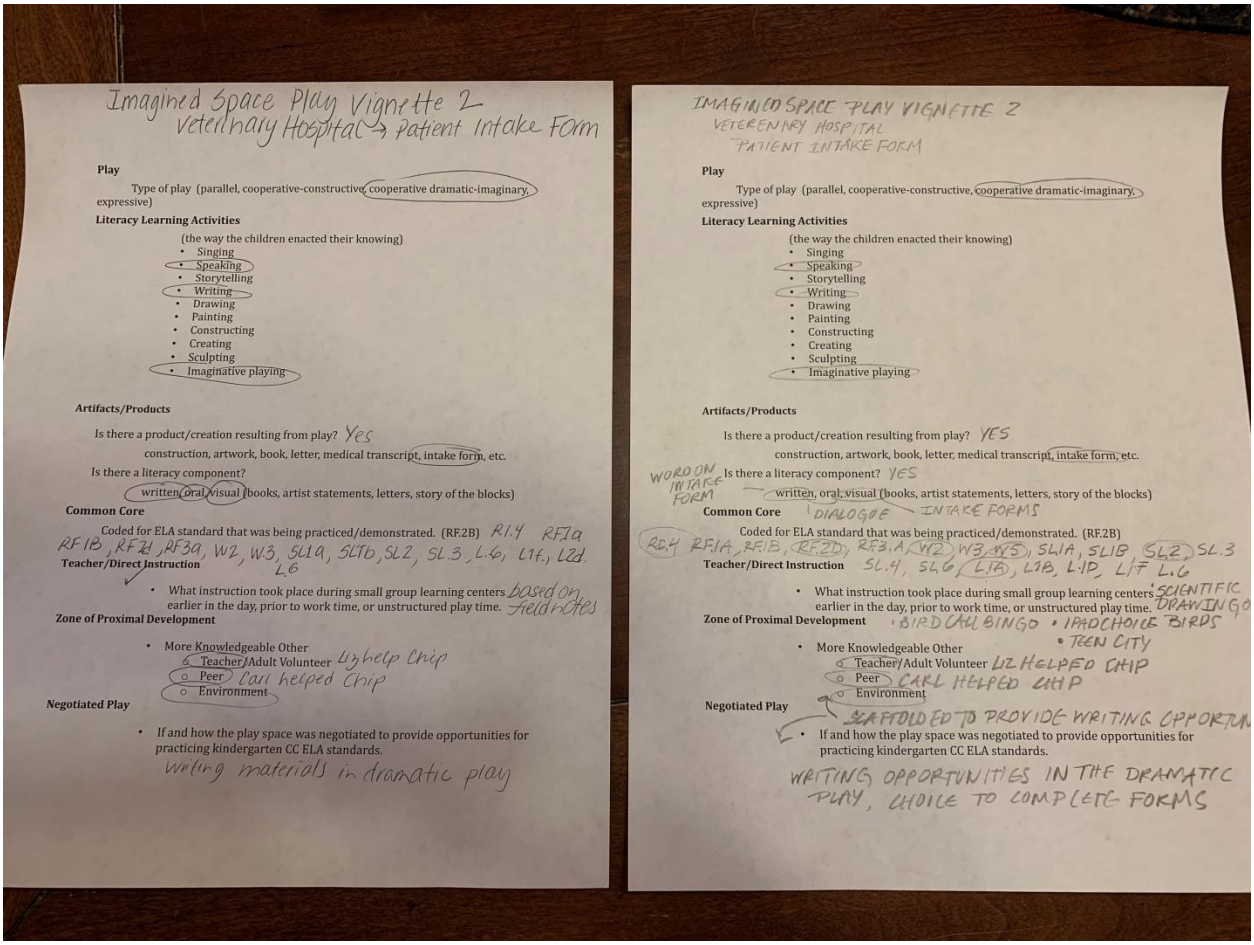
Example of First Cycle Coding



	April 14th
	Academic Centers *FIRST DAY OF INCUBATOR WITH CHICKS
	Bird work Presenting poster boards
	Bird journals drawing and writing
	Ipads Math app
	Feather making masks "chicks" for performance
	BLOCK CENTER
GR	[playing quietly in the block center with the wooden trucks, humming
	to self]
	adding blocks to the back of the trucks. Using triangle blocks and positioning
	so that the two blocks make a rectangle, but they fall of the the truck. So GR
	tries again, has to turn the block to position correctly, then moves truck back
	and forth.
GR	Josh, ready for you guys. [crawls under the table] r--ea--ch, r-e-a-c-h.
	[rolls out a truck, looks under the table]
	doo doo doo doo [singing, while moving empty truck to other side of block area]
	[reaches back under the table and wheels out two more trucks]
	[grabs another triangle block and attempts to put in the back of truck with a bed.
	moves and rotates 3 times, looks at the truck and then picks up the block and
	moves to the flatbed truck, places two blocks to create a rectange, and then rotates
	the third block twice]
RM	[enters the block area] to GR ok they need the ladders back
GR	[nods head] ok
EL	Hi guys.
GR to EL	You back?
EL	yeah.
	BREAK IN RECORDING
	[GR, EL AND AD are in the block area]
	[EL and GR are engaged in play]
	[AD is looking on, moves closer to where EL and GR are playing]
EL	[reaches over to take a triangle block from near a truck and puts in a new truck
	GR takes another triangle block from the top of the truck]

APPENDIX C

Comparison of Codes Between Coders



Imagined Space Play Vignette 2
Veterinary Hospital → Patient Intake Form

Play

Type of play (parallel, cooperative-constructive, cooperative dramatic-imaginary, expressive)

Literacy Learning Activities

(the way the children enacted their knowing)

- Singing
- Speaking
- Storytelling
- Writing
- Drawing
- Painting
- Constructing
- Creating
- Sculpting
- Imaginative playing

Artifacts/Products

Is there a product/creation resulting from play? Yes

construction, artwork, book, letter, medical transcript, intake form, etc.

Is there a literacy component?

written, oral, visual (books, artist statements, letters, story of the blocks)

Common Core

Coded for ELA standard that was being practiced/demonstrated. (RF.2B) RI.4 RF1a RF1B, RF2d, RF3a, W2, W3, SL1a, SLTD, SL2, SL.3, L.6, L1f., L2d. L.6

Teacher/Direct Instruction

- What instruction took place during small group learning centers earlier in the day, prior to work time, or unstructured play time. based on field notes

Zone of Proximal Development

- More Knowledgeable Other
  - Teacher/Adult Volunteer Liz help Chip
  - Peer Carl helped Chip
  - Environment

Negotiated Play

- If and how the play space was negotiated to provide opportunities for practicing kindergarten CC ELA standards.

writing materials in dramatic play

IMAGINED SPACE PLAY VIGNETTE 2
VETERENARY HOSPITAL
PATIENT INTAKE FORM

Play

Type of play (parallel, cooperative-constructive, cooperative dramatic-imaginary, expressive)

Literacy Learning Activities

(the way the children enacted their knowing)

- Singing
- Speaking
- Storytelling
- Writing
- Drawing
- Painting
- Constructing
- Creating
- Sculpting
- Imaginative playing

Artifacts/Products

Is there a product/creation resulting from play? YES

construction, artwork, book, letter, medical transcript, intake form, etc.

WORD ON INTAKE FORM

Is there a literacy component? YES

written, oral, visual (books, artist statements, letters, story of the blocks)

DIALOGUE INTAKE FORMS

Common Core

Coded for ELA standard that was being practiced/demonstrated. (RF.2B)

RI.4 RF.1A, RF.1B, RF.2D, RF3.A, W2, W3, W5, SL1A, SL1B, SL2, SL.3 SL.4, SL.6, L1B, L1B, L1D, L1F L.6

Teacher/Direct Instruction

- What instruction took place during small group learning centers earlier in the day, prior to work time, or unstructured play time. SCIENTIFIC DRAWING

Zone of Proximal Development • BIRD CALL BINGO • IPAD CHOICE BIRDS • TEEN CITY

- More Knowledgeable Other
  - Teacher/Adult Volunteer LIZ HELPED CHIP
  - Peer CARL HELPED CHIP
  - Environment

Negotiated Play

SCAFFOLDED TO PROVIDE WRITING OPPORTUN

- If and how the play space was negotiated to provide opportunities for practicing kindergarten CC ELA standards.

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DRAMATIC PLAY, CHOICE TO COMPLETE FORMS

APPENDIX D

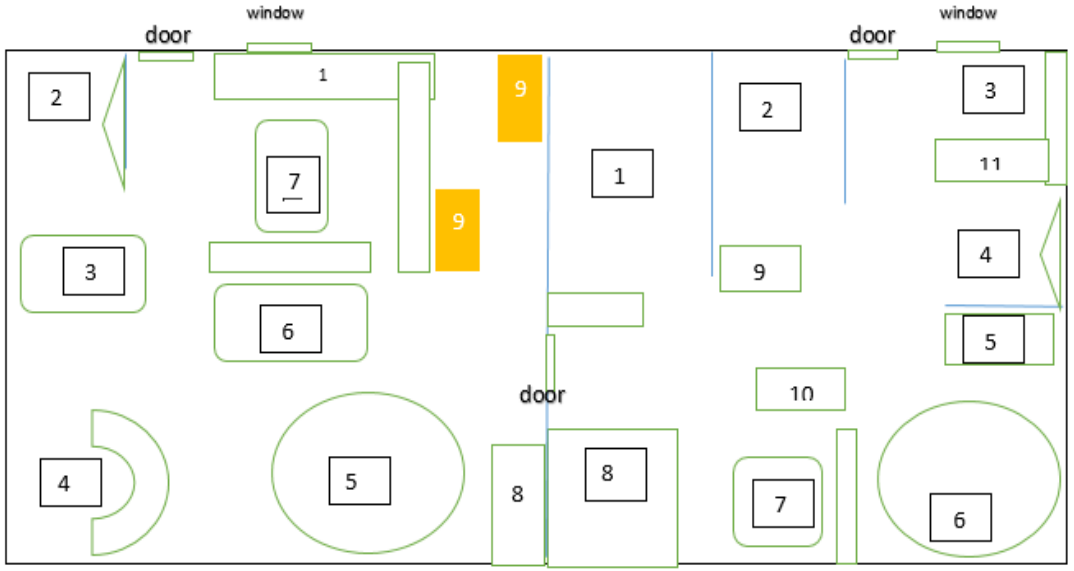
Classroom Diagram

Left Side-Academic Learning Centers

1. Cubbies
2. Library
3. Technology Learning Center (iPads)
4. Literacy Learning Center
5. Rug Area-Community Meeting
6. Independent Learning Center
7. Parent Volunteer Learning Center
8. Supply/Teacher Closet
9. Teacher's Desks and Work Area

Right Side- Play Area

1. Dramatic Play
2. Block Area
3. Bird Observatory
4. Library
5. Writing Center
6. Manipulative Area
7. Art Area
8. Bathroom
9. Upright Piano
10. Extra Table
11. Cubbies



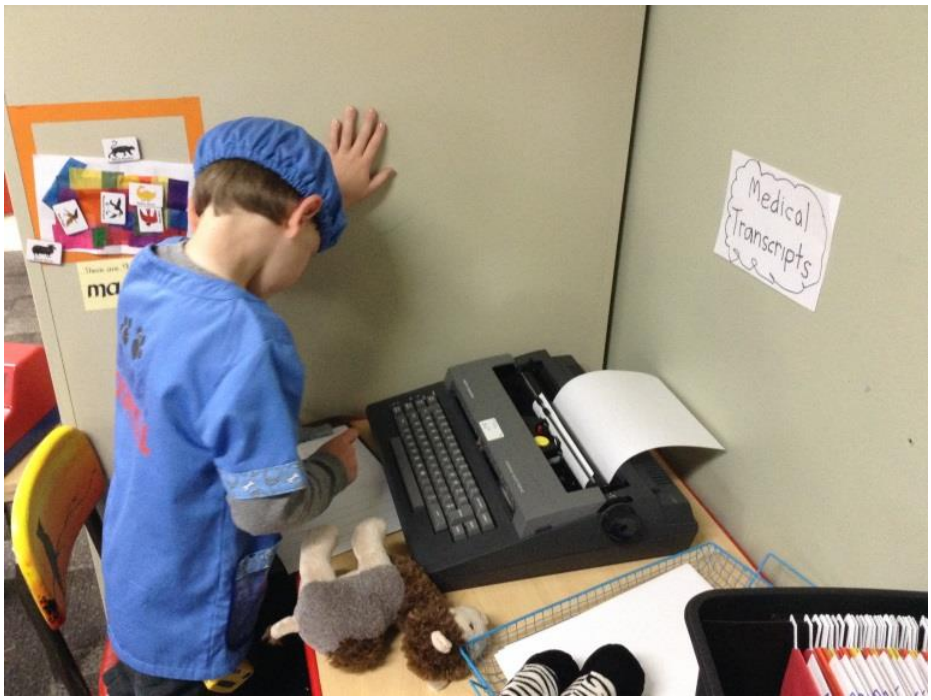
APPENDIX E

Daily Class Schedule

12:15 PM	Class Meeting
12:30 PM	Learning Centers
1:30 PM	Worktime
2:30 PM	Snack
2:45PM	Recess
3:10 PM	Closing Meeting
3:15 PM	Dismissal

APPENDIX F

Veterinary Hospital Imagined Space Materials and Dress-Up Clothing


Medical
Transcripts


Patient
files

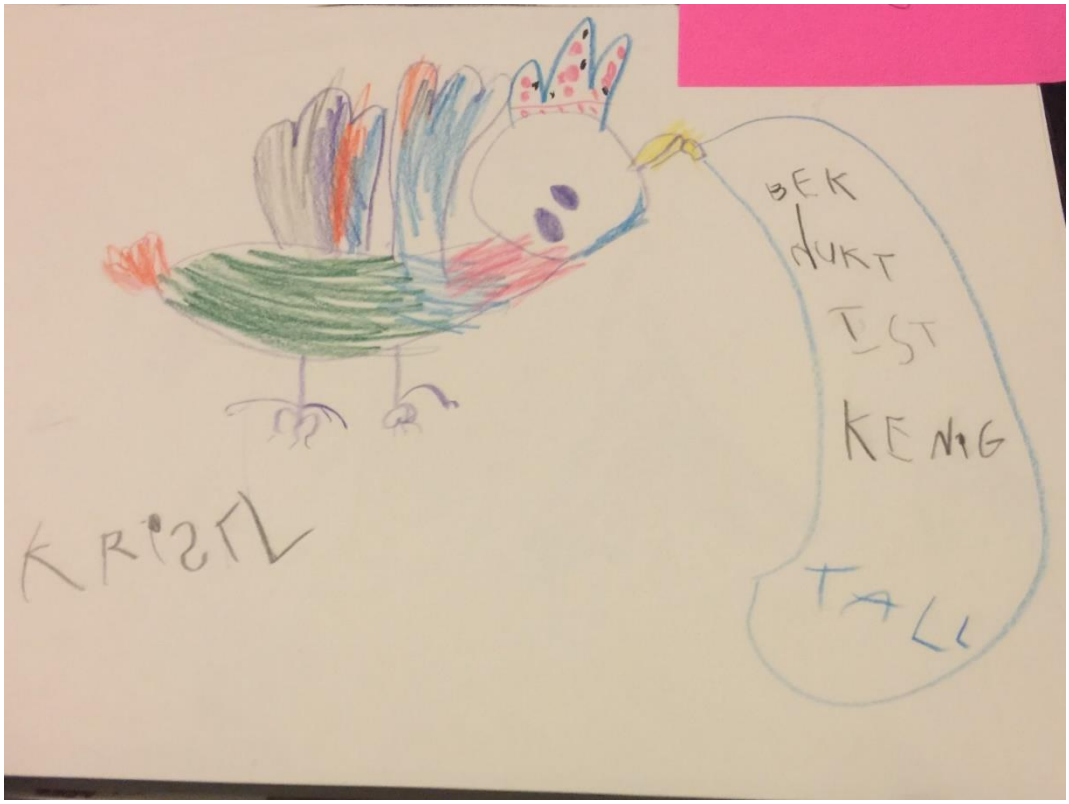
APPENDIX G

List Of Permanent Materials Available In Art Area and Beautiful Junk Examples

Paper (blank white, colored construction, decorative)
Markers (regular, Sharpie)
Scissors (regular, decorative)
Ribbon, String
Pencils (regular lead, colored)
Crayons
Glue (liquid and sticks)
Tape (clear and masking)
Magazines (variety)

APPENDIX H

Example Of Bird Of Imagining During Learning Centers


BEK
DUKT
TIST
KENG
TAIL
KRISTL

APPENDIX I

Examples of Writing Area Environment


Aa
Bb
Cc
Dd
Ff
Gg
Hh
Ii
is
Kk
Ll
Mm
Nn
love
Pp
Qq
Rr