

Implementing co-teaching with paraprofessionals to provide pre-Kindergarten students with special rights access to dual language

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The purpose of this study was to examine how paraprofessionals and other service providers participate in co-teaching with a certified special education pre-Kindergarten teacher during dual language (DL) instruction. The study took place in two DL special education preschool classrooms located in an urban public school district in the southwestern US. The district enlisted paraprofessionals as lead Spanish instructors when the lead teacher was not bilingual in Spanish and English to implement the DL programme effectively. Participants were one special education teacher, two paraprofessionals and one teaching artist, who participated in a year-long professional development programme to employ drama strategies to develop children's Spanish and English literacy skills and promote inclusion. Findings indicated that the participants utilised multiple co-teaching models to collaborate and meet the needs of their students during English and Spanish instruction. Through co-teaching, all educators had opportunities to take lead and supporting roles in instruction.

Key words: co-teaching, dual language, special education, preschool, paraprofessionals

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Dual language programmes have been growing rapidly across the US due to increasing populations of English Language Learners (ELLs) in schools, their propensity to help ELLs reach English proficiency at a faster rate, and the desire to make English-speaking children more competitive in a global market by learning another language (Steele et al., 2017). As these programmes grow in popularity in the US and across the world, the need for qualified teachers who can instruct in multiple languages also increases. This study draws upon relevant literature conducted in US schools to contextualise some of the challenges faced by US dual language (DL) teachers when attempting to meet the diverse needs of all their students including the increasing ELL population. In the US in particular, administrators often report challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified DL teachers (Howard & López-Velásquez, 2019). Additionally, some teachers report larger class sizes which cause a new set of logistical issues as a result of DL programming. Moreover, they contend with the need for additional resources, professional development (PD) in ways to promote language and literacy in both languages, and additional support staff (Howard & López-Velásquez, 2019). Thus, in order to implement DL programming, some districts must seek alternative options to address these challenges. Developing paraprofessionals as co-teachers under the supervision of a certified classroom teacher has the potential to alleviate some of these challenges in US schools.

Co-teaching to support dual language learners with special rights


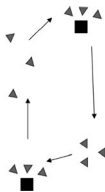

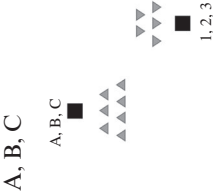
Originally, Cook and Friend (1995) defined co-teaching as ‘two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space’. These professionals do not necessarily have to be certified teachers. They may be occupational therapists, paraprofessionals (that is, teaching assistants who provide educational supports to classroom teachers in many national contexts), or any adult providing additional support in the classroom. We will be using the term ‘students with special rights’ (Farrand, 2015, 2018) instead of ‘students with disabilities’ to represent the use of person-first language and as a way to inclusively represent diverse groups of students with disabilities as well as students that are culturally and linguistically diverse. Cook and Friend’s co-teaching models were specifically developed to provide improved instructional supports to better serve students with special rights alongside their general education peers by providing teaching support from both a certified special education teacher and a certified general education teacher in an inclusive classroom setting. Thus, co-teaching often becomes associated with this singular configuration, even though Cook and Friend’s definition validates co-teaching

among professionals with various roles and responsibilities. Consequently, Honigsfeld and Dove (2010; also see Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018) expanded on existing research in co-teaching to consider how English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers and other certified teachers or specialists (for instance, speech language pathologists; reading specialists) could engage in co-teaching to support the needs of English learners alongside their English-speaking peers. Hatheway and colleagues (2015) recommend this type of integrated co-teaching among ESL teachers, special education teachers, bilingual teachers and general education teachers combined with DL instruction as an effective method for meeting the diverse needs of students in today's schools. Unfortunately, many schools lack the resources to implement this traditional co-teaching model successfully (Chitiyo, 2017) because budget restrictions often prohibit the hiring of two or more certified teachers for one classroom. Instead, school districts throughout the US frequently hire paraprofessionals to support students in pre-Kindergarten classrooms and to reduce some of the burdens placed on teachers (Ratcliff et al., 2011) (pre-Kindergarten in the US context is voluntary education provided to children prior to entering Kindergarten; students are typically three to five years old). Consequently, paraprofessionals with little training frequently assume significant roles in supporting students' social and instructional needs in the classroom (Sharma & Salend, 2016) and often co-teach in various forms within the classroom. However, little research conducted in the United States exists on the role of paraprofessionals as co-teachers in inclusive classroom settings, even though they assume some of the co-teaching responsibilities represented in different co-teaching models.

Different co-teaching models

Cook and Friend (1995) first proposed five different models of co-teaching to support students with special rights, namely: (1) one teaching, one assisting, (2) station teaching, (3) parallel teaching, (4) alternative teaching, and (5) team teaching. Later on, they added a sixth model referred to as one teaching, one observing (Friend & Cook, 2017). Alternatively, Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) observed seven different co-teaching models to support English learners: (1) one group: one lead teacher and one 'teaching on purpose'; (2) one group: two teach the same content; (3) one group: one teaches, one assesses; (4) two groups: two teach the same content; (5) two groups: one preteaches, one teaches alternative information; (6) two groups: one reteaches, one teaches alternative information; and (7) multiple groups: two monitor/teach. Although the titles of these models differ, they are almost identical in how educators carry out these co-teaching models. Table 1 shows

Table 1: Alignment between special education and ESL co-teaching models

| Friend and Cook (2017) | Dove and Honigsfeld (2018) | Description | Visual |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| One teaching, one assisting | One group: one lead teacher and one 'teaching on purpose' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teacher delivers the main content instruction. • Another teacher supports the students during instruction. |  |
| Station teaching | Multiple groups: two teachers monitor and teach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both teachers deliver different content in small groups. • Students rotate to learn about different aspects of a topic. |  |
| Parallel teaching | Two groups: two teachers teach the same content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both teachers deliver the same content or focus on different perspectives on the same content. • The students are divided into two groups to lower the student-to-teacher ratio. |  |
| Alternative teaching | Two groups: one preteaches, one teaches alternative information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teacher preteaches vocabulary and other information in a small group prior to whole-group instruction to support students with limited background knowledge. • Another teacher provides regular instruction to the large group. |  |

(Continues)

Table 1: (Continued)

| Friend and Cook (2017) | Dove and Honigsfeld (2018) | Description | Visual |
|--|---|---|--|
| Two groups: one reteaches, one teaches alternative information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teacher reteaches vocabulary and other information in a small group after whole-group instruction to support students who need additional practice. Another teacher continues to build upon previous instruction in a large group. | <p>4, 5, 6</p> <p>■</p> <p>▲▲▲</p> <p>▲▲▲</p> | |
| Team teaching | One group: two teachers teach the same content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both teachers deliver the same content together. Teachers alternate instructing the whole class at the same time. | <p>■</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> |
| One teaching, one observing | One group: one teaches, one assesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teacher delivers the main content instruction. Another teacher observes, monitors and assesses student progress and understanding during the lesson. | <p>1, 2, 3 repeat 1, 2, 3</p> <p>1, 2, 3 repeat 1, 2, 3</p> <p>■</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> <p>▲▲▲▲▲</p> |

the alignment between the most recent models provided by Friend and Cook (2017) and Dove and Honigsfeld (2018).

In this article, we aim to examine further Friend and Cook's original description of co-teaching to focus on the role of paraprofessionals in supporting co-teaching for dual language learners with special rights. Since paraprofessionals often take on responsibilities similar to those of teachers (Brown & Stanton-Chapman, 2017), we seek to contribute to the current literature on co-teaching by providing insights into the myriad of ways paraprofessionals engage in co-teaching with a certified special education classroom teacher, specifically when they receive guidance and support from the district, lead teacher and PD. Biggs and colleagues (2019) emphasise that teachers must develop a 'balanced leadership' style which values open communication, cultivates collaborative relationships, and fosters professional growth through ongoing coaching to support paraprofessionals in developing their skills as educators. Unfortunately, teachers in US schools rarely receive sufficient training in how to develop and work with paraprofessionals through their pre-service teacher preparation programmes or their ongoing in-service PD. Thus, teachers in US schools often feel ill-prepared to work with paraprofessionals (Berry et al., 2011; Biggs et al., 2019), even though other countries have addressed this problem. Moreover, paraprofessionals often feel ill-prepared to work with students with special rights because they rarely receive formal training in teaching practices, child development (Brown & Stanton-Chapman, 2017) and evidenced-based instructional strategies (Brock & Carter, 2015).

Pre-service teacher preparation programmes and in-service PD should provide additional training and resources to guide teachers and paraprofessionals in developing professional skills, navigating power dynamics, and creating positive working relationships to support pre-Kindergarten students in the classroom (cf. Brown & Stanton-Chapman, 2017). For instance, Brock and Carter's (2015) study found increased implementation fidelity when special education paraprofessionals were provided with structured PD. Moreover, Biggs and colleagues (2019) identified 10 competencies that support the teacher and paraprofessional collaboration: (1) knowledge of appropriate roles, (2) knowledge of paraprofessional backgrounds, (3) assertive communication skills, (4) collaboration skills, (5) coaching skills, (6) organisational skills, (7) conflict management skills, (8) being open-minded, (9) being respectful, and (10) being personable. Ultimately:

‘When teachers [and paraprofessionals have the skills and resources necessary to] collaborate and form high functioning teams, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and their collective efficacy – their effectiveness – is increased’. (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019, p. 405)

Purpose of the study

This qualitative study examines how one certified pre-Kindergarten special education teacher, two paraprofessionals and one teaching artist implemented various co-teaching models to support all students in developing English and Spanish literacy skills when their district adopted a DL model for pre-Kindergarten classrooms (described below). When their district adopted this model, the district had very few certified bilingual teachers, so the district decided to have paraprofessionals serve as lead Spanish language instructors in instances where the certified teacher was not bilingual. Since little is known about how paraprofessionals serve as co-teachers in special education DL classrooms in the US, the purpose of this study was to investigate the co-teaching models present in this unique special education DL pre-Kindergarten classroom. Additionally, we aim to discuss potential implications for pre-service teacher preparation programming and in-service PD. We posed one main research question: how do paraprofessionals and other service providers participate in co-teaching with a certified special education pre-Kindergarten teacher during DL instruction?

Method

Setting

The setting for this study was an urban public school district in the southwestern US serving students who spoke various home languages, though English and Spanish were the most common. The school district had a 20-year history of DL in grades from Kindergarten to 6th grade (ages three to 12 years), and extended DL programming to pre-Kindergarten in 2016–2017. This was the second year that the school district was providing a DL option for pre-Kindergarten that included DL special education classrooms. This study was implemented in one morning and one afternoon preschool classroom for students with special rights, specifically speech and communication delays, and their peers without disabilities. Pre-Kindergarten students in these classrooms ranged from three to five years old. The morning classroom was made up of five students (two boys and three girls) and the afternoon classroom had seven students (five boys and two girls). Eighty percent or more of the students in each class were identified as having communication delays. There was one peer model in each

classroom. Most students spoke either English or Spanish as their primary language, with some students having an additional home language, such as Arabic.

Participants

Participants in this study included one special education teacher with over 40 years of experience, Sarah, and two paraprofessionals, Camila and Natalie, who had little formal training as educators prior to the study and had been paraprofessionals for less than five years (all names used in this article are pseudonyms). This teaching team was unique in that they identified positive experiences with DL instruction during lead teacher and paraprofessional focus groups the previous year. Many of the other teaching teams identified a large number of challenges with this teaching model, which impacted delivery of DL instruction. The participants for this study were invited to participate to further examine their positive outlook and delivery of DL instruction for students with special rights. The lead teacher and the paraprofessional who served as the Spanish lead instructor had worked together the previous school year. Since Sarah only knew English when the district implemented DL for all, one of her paraprofessionals, Camila, who was fluent in Spanish and English, was told by the district that she would take on more of an active teaching role during instruction on the Spanish days with the support of the lead teacher. Natalie was fluent in English and had basic fluency in Spanish. Thus, the special education teacher created lessons in English which her paraprofessional taught in Spanish. The lead teacher was an active co-teacher during Spanish instruction and also modelled being a Spanish language learner alongside her students. Sarah, Camila and Natalie took time throughout the day and at the end of each day to identify observations about student progress and used this information to inform future lessons.

One female teaching artist, Tracy, was assigned to support the educators in the study for the entire school year. Tracy was fluent in English and Spanish. She had professional theatre training and previous experience collaborating with early childhood teachers using the Early Years Educators at Play (EYEPlay) PD model (Kilinc et al., 2016). The teaching artist participated alongside the educators during the implementation of the model lesson and team lesson (described below). She also collected observational data during all drama lessons implemented in the classroom that she would then use for reflection sessions with the educators.

EYEPlay PD programme

Teachers and paraprofessionals received support from the EYEPlay PD programme. EYEPlay is an evidence-based PD approach which supports early childhood educators in using drama strategies as tools to develop children's English and Spanish literacy skills and to cultivate inclusive classroom environments that foster learning for all students (Kilinc et al., 2017). Educators receive year-long PD that includes an 'in-service', as well as planning and reflection lessons with teaching artists. An in-service is a PD event where all participants receive training from the PD providers in a large group setting. Each classroom is paired with a teaching artist to support them with applying the drama tools using lessons that pair a curricular objective (vocabulary development, speaking and communicating, and story comprehension) with a drama strategy (pantomime, character development, group story building) (Kilinc et al., 2017; Kilinc et al., 2016). The EYEPlay lesson structure follows an 'I do' (model lesson), 'we do' (team lesson) and 'you do' (solo lesson) unit structure (Farrand et al., 2019; Kilinc et al., 2016). Model lessons are implemented by the teaching artist to scaffold learning for the educators and provide opportunities for the educators to observe and assist during the lesson. Then, the educator and teaching artist jointly teach the team lesson, which promotes co-teaching strategies, so that the educator has the opportunity to implement collaboratively the drama strategies they have observed and been learning about during PD. Lastly, the educator leads a solo drama lesson, with the teaching artist available to provide assistance as needed, but the teaching artist tends to take more of an observer role.

Data collection

Video recordings were made of instruction in both Spanish and English in the morning and afternoon classrooms during one unit of the EYEPlay model. Videos were collected of instruction in each language of the drama lessons for the unit, as well as videos in both languages of instruction without drama. The non-drama lessons were captured at the same time of day as the drama lessons to identify instructional practices in the classroom during the same approximate period, as well as before or after drama instruction. All of the educators were present in every video of classroom instruction that was collected. The teaching artist was present in all videos that contained drama instruction. Observational field notes were written each day by the authors after video-recording of classroom instruction.

The teacher and paraprofessionals participated in a focus group to reflect on their experiences of co-teaching and supporting their students with

improved outcomes during year one and year two of the DL programme. The focus group also served as a form of member checking for the researchers to discuss their observations of co-teaching, planning and collaborating during DL instruction. The educators were asked questions about how they designed language instruction and responsibilities (for example, 'How do you divide responsibilities during Spanish and English language instruction?'; 'How do you lesson plan for a DL special education classroom?'), successes and challenges (for example, 'What are some successes and challenges of DL instruction during year one and year two?') and strategies that have supported students (for example, 'What drama strategies have been helpful with supporting your students during language instruction?'; 'How do you incorporate IEP [individualised education programme] goals into your DL instruction?'). Additional questions were asked about how they communicate with families (for example, 'How do you communicate with families about DL and drama instruction?') and advice for other paraprofessionals (for example, 'What advice would you give to a paraprofessional for taking on more of a leader role during instruction?').

Data analysis

Case study analysis was used to investigate how these special educators made meaning of their lives in this particular special education classroom environment (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) as they explored co-teaching to best implement DL programming for students of varying needs. Data came from video recordings of classroom instruction, observational field notes and audio-recorded focus group interviews with the participants to triangulate the data and further capture the complexity of this teaching team (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

Qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the video data of DL instruction. The authors wanted to examine how the co-teaching models identified by Friend and Cook (2017) were being utilised by the educators and teaching artist during instruction in the two languages. The authors began by creating a co-teaching coding sheet to record which models were being implemented during instruction, who took what role during instruction, where in the classroom it happened, and a brief description of the instruction. The authors used the definitions of the co-teaching models from Friend and Cook (2017; see Table 1) as a reference for determining the model or models being used during instruction. One goal was to see whether educators took on different roles during instruction in a different language. Another goal was to see whether multiple co-teaching models were used by the educators during DL instruction.

Next, the authors individually coded each video using the co-teaching coding sheet. The authors' coding sheets for each day of video instruction were compared to look for agreement and disagreement. The authors agreed on all of the co-teaching models identified in each of the videos, per their records on the co-teaching coding sheets.

Findings

One or more co-teaching models were used in every video of DL classroom instruction. Of the six co-teaching models identified by Friend and Cook (2017), four models (one teaching, one assisting; station teaching; team teaching; and one teaching, one observing) were used by the educators and teaching artist, and two models (parallel teaching and alternative teaching) were not used. A combination of two or more of the co-teaching models, described below, was used in every video of DL classroom instruction, except one. Below we discuss the ways in which each educator and the teaching artist participated in various co-teaching models to deliver instruction aligned with best practices for teaching dual language learners with special rights.

One teaching, one assisting

The co-teaching model identified as one teaching, one assisting (Friend & Cook, 2017) was observed the most during DL instruction. This model was used for instruction in both languages and for instruction with drama practices and without.

During circle time instruction, Sarah served as the primary instructor on English days, and Camila served as the primary instructor on Spanish days. Natalie supported in an assisting role on both days, and Sarah and Camila switched days based on the language of instruction. Even the teaching artist occasionally served as a lead or assistant teacher to model teaching and learning strategies for the teachers and support co-teaching. Customarily, the lead instructor would sit in front of the students to guide educational activities. Those assisting would sit with the students and act as language models, support specific IEP goals, and redirect student behaviour.

Even though Sarah and Camila led most lessons, Tracy, the teaching artist, also acted as lead instructor on occasion. One day she conducted a model drama lesson (Kilinc et al., 2016) to demonstrate how Sarah, Camila and Natalie might incorporate drama into future lessons with their students to promote literacy. She began by leading the class in a drama song. Then, Tracy led the class in a picture walk of a book about snow. The picture walk

provided Tracy with an opportunity to highlight images on selected pages in the book that she could use to assess prior knowledge, connect with key vocabulary, and explore through active and dramatic strategies. Periodically, she stopped and asked the students questions about the book and had them pantomime putting on winter clothing items. Sarah and Camila pantomimed along with students while Natalie gathered additional supplies.

Station teaching

Station teaching (Friend & Cook, 2017) was used as a co-teaching model during both English and Spanish instruction and each time was during non-drama instruction.

Although we expected Camila would take on a lead teacher role during Spanish instruction, we were surprised to find that Natalie also took on the role of lead teacher a few times during English and Spanish instruction. Natalie typically took on a more integral role during station teaching activities. Even though the majority of the station activity centres were student selected and directed, Natalie tended to lead the more structured craft centre. Here she would deliver a structured lesson to each student, so they could complete their craft. This lesson often incorporated the colour, letter and shape of the week, so Natalie could conduct informal assessments of student knowledge while students worked on their crafts. Even though Natalie did not consider herself a fluent Spanish speaker, Sarah acknowledged Natalie's ability to use cross-linguistic transfer (that is, the ability to transfer language skills from one language to another) to support students in speaking Spanish: '*Natalie can speak more Spanish because she's a French major*' (focus group transcript, 23 January 2018). Because Natalie was able to draw upon her French language skills to support her Spanish, she was able to lead the craft centre in the language of the day on both English and Spanish days. For example, Natalie led a sugar skulls craft session in Spanish. She began by reading a brief description of Día de Muertos. Then she explained how the students would make the craft, modelled how to make it, and supported each student with naming colours and counting in Spanish as they used finger-paint to make designs on their skulls.

During station teaching, Sarah and Camila typically supported students in their chosen centres and conducted informal assessments of language and IEP goals during these activities. However, sometimes Sarah or Camila would direct more structured activities. The teaching artist did not participate in station teaching. On the same day the students worked on their sugar skull craft activity, Sarah assessed students' knowledge of Spanish colours

using a matching activity. She placed colour-coded notecards of the Spanish colours on the table and asked students to place objects of the corresponding colours on the appropriate notecard. Because Sarah knew very little Spanish, the structure and language simplicity of this activity allowed her to teach in Spanish. It also provided her with one-on-one opportunities to work on specific oral language skills connected to student IEP goals. Meanwhile, Camila supported students in the free-choice centres in which more language variation was likely to occur. When students chose to build houses out of magnetic blocks, Camila was able to support students in further developing their Spanish vocabulary in a more organic way.

Despite their varying degrees of Spanish language proficiency, all of the educators participated in co-teaching in Spanish because they collectively valued the benefits of *'giving them [students] as much opportunity to speak in whatever language'* (focus group transcript, 23 January 2018). Additionally, they recognised many of the benefits that have made DL programming grow rapidly across the US, such as increasing the English proficiency of English language learners and making children more competitive in the global market (Steele et al., 2017): *'It's such a benefit to be able to speak in two languages...[in] society this day'* (focus group transcript, 23 January 2018). Moreover, this teaching team's commitment to co-teaching so students can access the benefits of DL programming influences student outcomes. For instance, Sarah even shared that one student:

'has a very hard time saying words, and we've just noticed ... how he changes when he knows he can say the Spanish word easier ... I see him talking more this year in a way you can understand him'. (focus group transcript, 23 January 2018)

The teachers identified that students utilised both languages to communicate with their peers and teachers and were able to feel confident in sharing as they were developing their oral language skills.

Team teaching

Team teaching (Friend & Cook, 2017) was used as a co-teaching model in both English and Spanish instruction, and each time it was used was during drama instruction.

Since Camila was new to teaching in a lead role, Camila and Tracy often team-taught lessons together. As paraprofessionals, Camila and Natalie

benefited from the opportunities provided through the EYEPlay PD because they were invited to participate alongside the lead teacher, other teachers and paraprofessionals in PD sessions. The collaboration between Camila and Tracy, specifically, emphasises the effectiveness of on-site coaching using the team teaching model. During the lesson, there was a seamless transition between one instructor and the next. Camila was able to support Tracy with incorporating additional Spanish words into the lesson, and Tracy supported Camila's ability to engage students through multiple modes. Additionally, Sarah and Natalie were able to create and supply concrete tools and resources to help students enter into imaginative play.

During one team-taught lesson about tools, Camila and Tracy used a paper toolbox filled with tools to learn the Spanish names of tools and how to move them. Camila and Tracy would alternate modelling for students what tool to use and how to use it, and then would invite students to use the tools with them. Sarah and Natalie supported students with retrieving the appropriate tools from their paper toolboxes and completing the actions. All educators played an active role which lowered the student-to-teacher ratio (Cook & Friend, 1995; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Friend & Cook, 2017; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010).

One teaching, one observing

The one teaching, one observing model (Friend & Cook, 2017) was used once during a drama lesson in English. This example extended Friend and Cook's (2017) definition to focus not just on student observation, but also on teacher observation. Tracy came to observe and sometimes participate in a drama lesson about going to a pumpkin patch. Although she did observe the student responses to instruction, her primary purpose was to observe Sarah and Camila's drama teaching and provide coaching feedback to improve instruction. Tracy would occasionally step in and model using specific vocabulary with movements, sounds and images to show the teachers and students how to connect the different modes of communicating with the language and literacy skills of the lesson. After completing the 'I do, we do, you do' EYEPlay cycle (Klinic et al., 2016), Sarah and Camila were incorporating more physical responses, gestures and visuals than ever before, so students could respond through multiple modes. The educators were observed collaborating with students and modelling different ways that they could communicate to create meaning.

Discussion

Findings indicate that the special education teacher provided a supportive mentoring environment for developing the skills of her paraprofessionals, allowing

for various types of co-teaching to take place within the classroom. During stations and free play, the special education teacher and both paraprofessionals would support instruction simultaneously. However, during language instruction, the language lead (that is, the special education teacher for English and the paraprofessional for Spanish) would deliver instruction while the other educators participated as models and provided additional instructional supports for students. Through this decision, the district aimed to alleviate some of the challenges cited in the literature as reasons for not implementing DL (cf. Howard & López-Velásquez, 2019) or co-teaching (cf. Chitiyo, 2017). Unlike many other educators in their district, this teaching team embraced the challenges of their changing roles because they believed DL would support their students. Their 'let's just do it' attitude provided opportunities for students to respond in whatever language was easiest for them (focus group transcript, 23 January 2018). As DL special educators, they recognised the benefits of providing students with more opportunities for students to express themselves through language and multiple modes of response and embraced co-teaching as a method for supporting students in getting access to more language.

The various models of co-teaching allowed each educator in the teaching team to draw upon their own skills, knowledge and backgrounds to collectively serve dual language learners with special rights. Sarah's knowledge of her paraprofessionals' skills, strengths and backgrounds assisted her in identifying appropriate roles and responsibilities during instruction and guided her in providing necessary coaching supports to further their practice. Not surprisingly, Biggs and colleagues (2019) identified knowledge of appropriate roles, knowledge of professional backgrounds, and coaching skills as key competencies in building teacher–paraprofessional partnerships. Through different models of co-teaching, Sarah could structure her daily lessons to highlight the strengths of each member of the teaching team and provide everyone with a chance to take a lead and supporting role at different times. In addition, all of the educators maintained open communication and shared ideas to collaborate on instruction and planning to best meet the needs of their students (cf. Kirkpatrick et al., 2019).

Through the implementation of various co-teaching models, the educators were able to model and promote active student engagement for students with special rights and their peer models. Student engagement with drama to support teaching and learning during the co-teaching lessons encouraged the students to make meaning using their bodies, images and words. Of one student Natalie said:

'He just loves to get up there and act out so even though he doesn't have a lot of words either, he'll get up and you know be very expressive with his body. Anytime we do anything dramatic.'

Here Natalie explains how one boy with a communication delay uses the drama strategy of pantomime to demonstrate expressive language and communicate with his peers and teachers. By incorporating drama practices into DL lessons, the collaborative teaching team was able to create an imagined space:

'where all children can have equitable access to communication tools, not as people who too often may be considered "other" than the norm, but as valued equal participants in a world where a person's strengths, rather than any impairments, come to the fore'. (Edmiston, 2007, p. 340)

Since paraprofessionals often receive little training in best practices in teaching and supporting students (Brown & Stanton-Chapman, 2017), the opportunity to receive PD and on-site coaching from a teaching artist allowed them to hone their skills as educators. Brock and Carter (2015) found that special education paraprofessionals improve their practice when they receive structured PD with coaching and modelling. The PD throughout the school year and onsite coaching, modelling and co-teaching by a teaching artist supported the paraprofessionals and lead teacher in honing their teaching skills, collaborating, and implementing new teaching practices to promote language development for students with special rights and peer models. Through their willingness to participate actively and learn from the PD and teaching artist, Sarah, Camila and Natalie demonstrated open-mindedness to the new ideas, feedback and coaching that Tracy could provide (cf. Biggs et al., 2019). Additionally, the drama lessons created an inclusive environment in which students could demonstrate their knowledge through multiple modes of response, and provided students with opportunities to embody their learning (cf. Kilinc et al., 2017).

This research has implications for how pre-service and in-service courses and PD are designed to promote the use of co-teaching to support teaching and learning in DL settings for students with special rights in the US and abroad. It is essential that educators, paraprofessionals and other service providers are given opportunities to plan and reflect on their backgrounds, strengths, and teaching and learning experiences to better inform future lessons and support improved outcomes for students with special rights. In addition, teaching and learning activities that utilise various models of co-teaching allow educators, paraprofessionals and other service providers to collaborate,

model and actively participate alongside their students to meet the individual needs of each student. Paraprofessionals and other service providers can take on more active roles to support language development for DL learners with special rights when they are provided with meaningful PD and collaborative opportunities to implement co-teaching.

Conclusion

This case study examined how educators in one south-western school district in the US implement DL pre-Kindergarten programming for students with special rights. In order to implement DL programming effectively, the district enlisted paraprofessionals as lead Spanish instructors when the lead teacher was not bilingual in Spanish and English. The teaching team presented in this article embraced this challenge and implemented co-teaching practices with the support of a teaching artist and the EYEPlay PD programme to ensure all students, regardless of ability or language background, could have access to more language. Video data and observational field notes revealed that the teaching team incorporated four different models of co-teaching: (1) one teaching, one assisting, (2) station teaching, (3) team teaching, and (4) one teaching, one observing. Through co-teaching, all educators had opportunities to take lead and supporting roles in instruction. Additional analysis of focus group data demonstrated how educators regularly collaborated and reflected on their teaching to improve instruction for students with special rights in all languages.

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