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# **The Role of Language Learning Progressions in Formative Assessment for English Language Learners**

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**Roundtable on Learning-Oriented Assessment**

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Project is part of a larger effort to improve the assessment of the English language proficiency of preK-12 English language learners

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# Overview

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- Dynamic Language Learning Progression (DLLP)
- Assessment Perspective
- Developing the DLLP
- Trying It Out with Teachers

# Dynamic Language Learning Progression

# New Standards

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- Challenge of new content standards for ELLs
- Integrate language and content
- Content standards do not identify intra-grade development of language
- Less attention paid to linguistic content

# Dynamic Language Learning Progression

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- Provides empirically validated description of expected tendencies in how student language becomes more sophisticated over an extended period of time
- Supports teachers' understanding of language development
- Used to inform instruction and formative assessment

# Why Dynamic?

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1. Describe multiple dimensions influencing development
2. Capture multiple pathways to development
3. Permit educators to query a database for comparison



# Assessment Perspective

# Two Views of the Learner

Past-to-Present:  
Retrospective



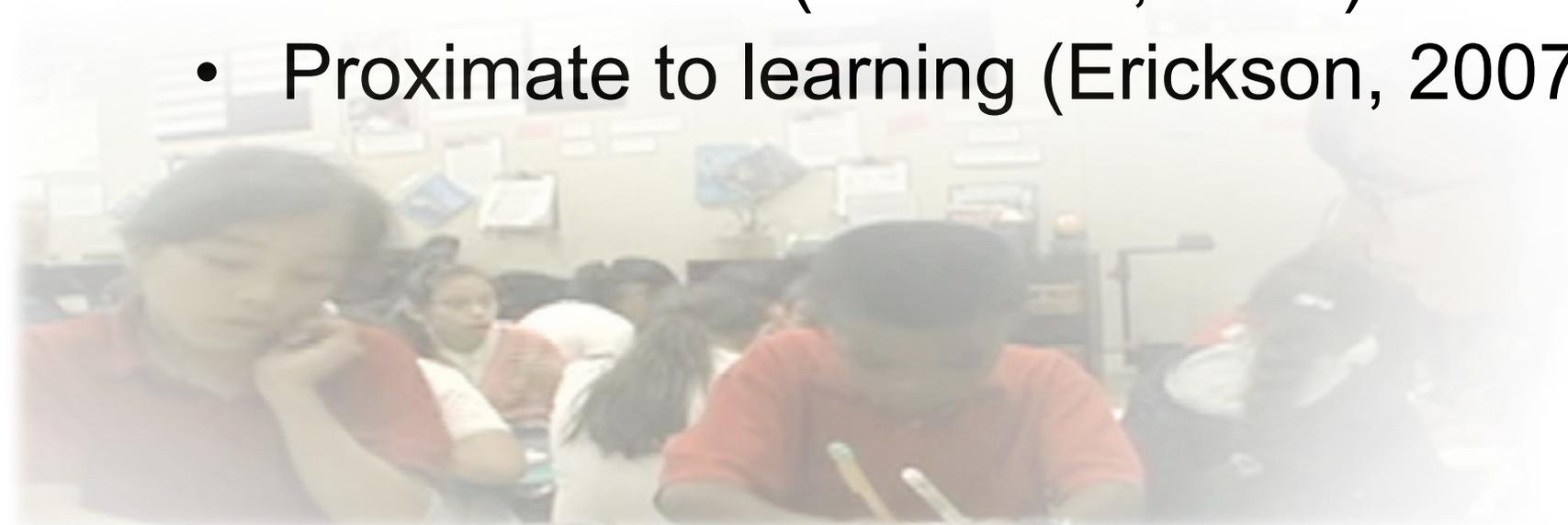
Present-to-Future:  
Prospective

*(Heritage, 2013)*

# Assessment Perspective

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- *Assessment for Learning* (Gipps, 1994)
- Assessment as a teaching and learning process
- Assessment in the flow of activity and transactions in the classroom (Swaffield, 2011)
- Proximate to learning (Erickson, 2007)



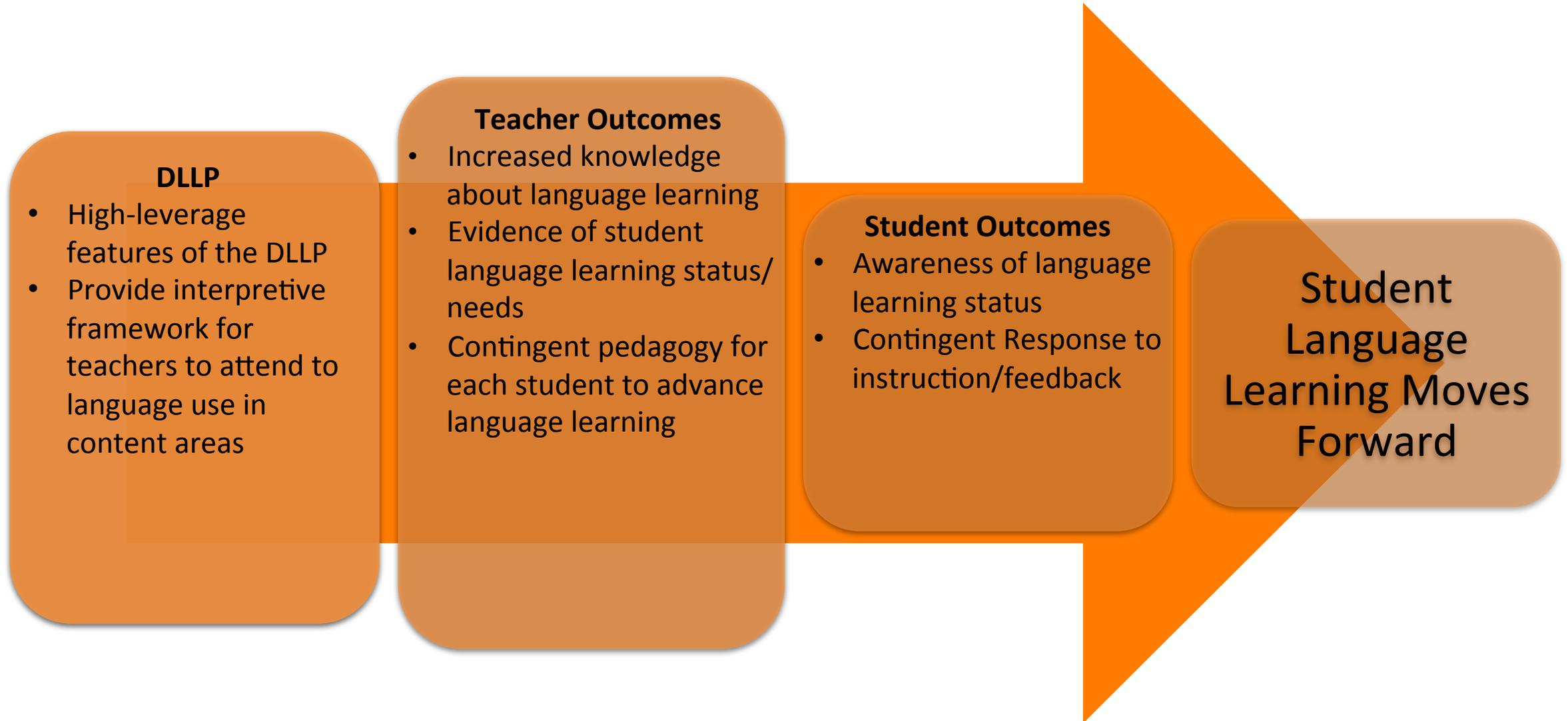
# Contingent Teaching and Learning

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(Heritage, Walqui & Linqunti, 2013; in press)

# Theory of Action



# **Developing a Dynamic Language Learning Progression for Explanation**

# Generation of K-6 Explanation Data

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- K-6 grade students (n=325):
  - English as a new/additional language (n=130)
  - English-only/proficient students (n=195)
- 5 schools in So. California selected for student diversity in:
  - Ethnicity,
  - Family income,
  - L1 (English, Spanish, Mandarin),
  - L1 literacy,
  - ELL status/proficiency,
  - Language of instruction (incl. dual-language),
  - Engagement in classroom explanations,
  - Degree of extroversion,
  - Academic performance

# Generation of K-6 Explanation Data

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- Students averaged 6 oral & 2 written explanations at 2 time points (3 time points n=100); 4-6 month intervals
- Prompted for procedural and justification explanations:
  - A personal daily routine (teeth cleaning)



- An academic task (mathematics problem-solving)



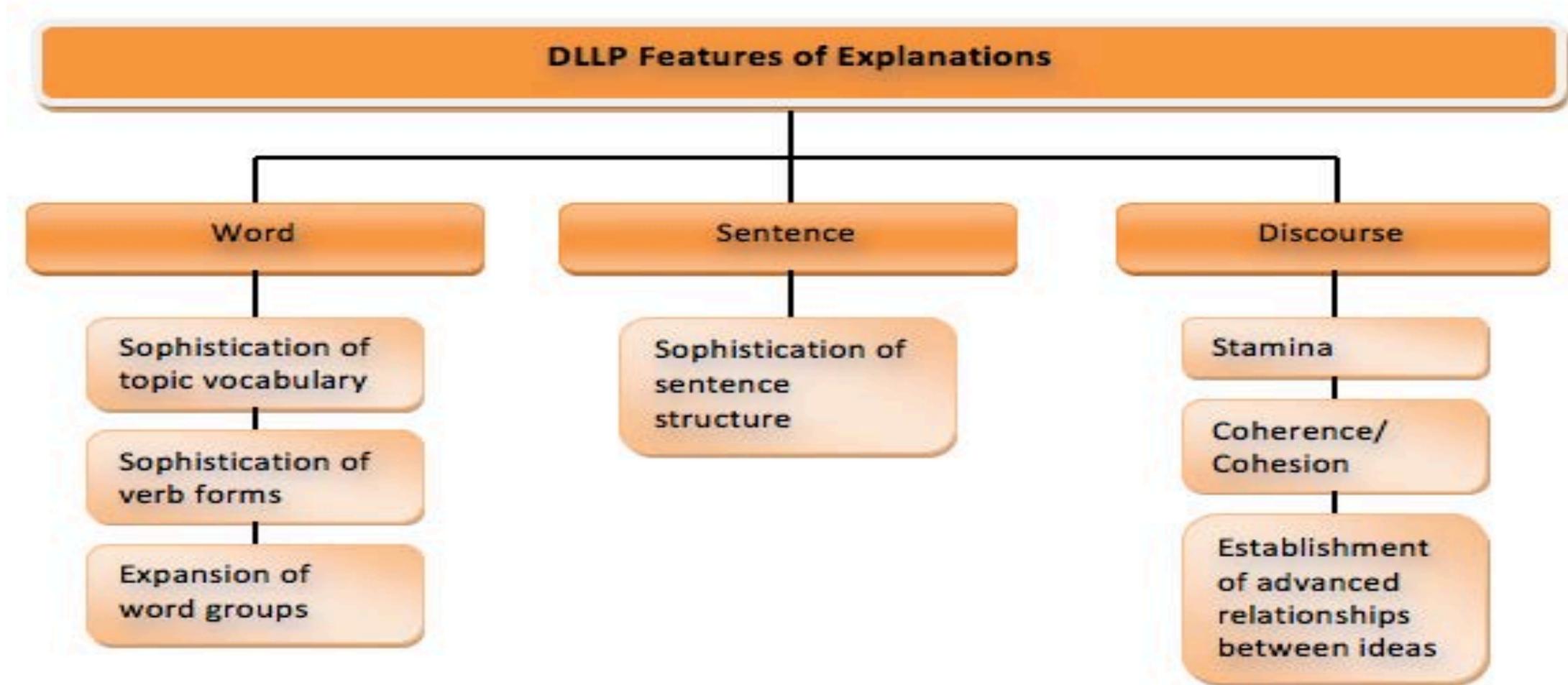
# Analysis

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- Audio-recorded oral language explanations transcribed
- Independently parsed by second researcher
- Entered into a searchable database
- Extensive human analyses conducted and entered into the searchable database
- Rank ordered batches of explanation
- IRT – treating ratings of DLLP features as “partial credit items”

# Components of a Language Progression for Explanation

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# Development of Coherence/Cohesion

Child A – Time 1

Child A – Time 2

Child B – Time 1

Child B – Time 2

Child C – Time 2

No Evidence of (Coherence Cohesion):

*He has to count **and** touch the so that he don't get confused.*

Emerging Coherence/Co

*You supposed do it for a rea*

Emerging Coherence/C

*You count each cube **and** together.*

[Can you tell him why using cubes this way helps him? Because you're counting th

Developing Coher

*You need to join the they have four over four over here. Four two over here, you r **this and then** you n how much there are [And tell him why us helps him.]*

**When** you use the c don't you know how

Controlled Coherence/Cohesion:

*First you start with one block. **And** you put it up. **Then** you put another one **and then** another one on top. But **as** you're putting them on, you have to count. So like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

[And can you tell her why this way helps?] *This way helps because if they're scattered all over and if you count them in a pile, you think that you counted one already. Or maybe you counted some, but you skipped some because you think that you counted some. So it's easier to put in a block way or straight way like this, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, like that or you could put it sideways.*

Not (yet) Evident

Emerging

Developing

Controlled

# Development of Coherence/Cohesion

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Child A – Time 1

No Evidence of  
(Coherence)Cohesion:

*He has to count **and** touch  
the cubes so that he don't  
get confused.*

Child A – Time 2

Emerging Coherence/  
Cohesion:

*You count each cube **and** put  
them together.  
[Can you tell him why using the  
cubes this way helps him?]  
*Because you're counting them.**

Not (yet) Evident

Emerging

Developing

Controlled

# Development of Coherence/Cohesion

Child B – Time 1

## Emerging Coherence/Cohesion:

*You supposed do it for a reason that if you count in your head, you start learn it **and** learn it and learn it more how to count. **And then** you even farther. You will even farther you will start learning how to count. **And** you start learning how to count. You maybe you will start reading. You will know how much words you have count. How about words you have count. How about where you read.*

Child B – Time 2

## Developing Coherence/Cohesion:

*You need to join them. You do it like if they have four over here **and** you have four over here. Four over here, actually two over here, you need to join them like **this and then** you need to count **and** see how much there are, like six.  
[And tell him why using the cubes this way helps him.]  
**When** you use the cubes this way, you don't you know how many they are.*

Not (yet) Evident

**Emerging**

**Developing**

Controlled

# Development of Coherence/Cohesion

Child C – Time 1

## Developing Coherence/Cohesion:

*You can count by tens. You can count by threes. You can count by twos. You can count by ones, but that would kind of be a little bit more slower.*

*[Can you tell her why this way helps her?]  
Because **then** you don't have to just wait **and** wait **and** wait, **and** it would take so much time. It would just be so slow and so silent. And **when** you do that, it makes you rush and make it be faster.*

Child C – Time 2

## Controlled Coherence/Cohesion:

***First** you start with one block. **And** you put it up. **Then** you put another one **and then** another one on top. But **as** you're putting them on, you have to count. So like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

*[And can you tell her why this way helps?]  
This way helps because if they're scattered all over and if you count them in a pile, you think that you counted one already. Or maybe you counted some, but you skipped some because you think that you counted some. So it's easier to put in a block way or straight way like this, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, like that or you could put it sideways.*

Not (yet) Evident

Emerging

Developing

Controlled

**Trying out the DLLP**

# Usability, Feasibility, Context?

## Participants

- 6 elementary teachers from a university demonstration school

## Procedures

- Focus group meetings
- About once a month since Sept. 2013

## Analysis

- Qualitative analysis of meeting transcripts
- Coding of transcripts based on usability, feasibility, and context

# Feasibility

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*I found it challenging to be transcribing, writing what they were saying, listening too, and being able to give them feedback, all on the spot. Even in recording them, I felt I was recording and trying to listen to what they were saying to see if there was any evidence, so that was a bit of a challenge.*

*I stuck to the same...temporal connectors...because since the first time I was just kind of wrapping my head around trying to gather [the temporal connectors]. It was just easier that I already knew it, and I knew what I was listening for.*

*It just made me more aware of the process. What's interesting is I used to feel like I used be more intentional....And having this [DLLP high-leverage features] to look at again made me more cautious to the [instructional] decisions I previously made, to make sure that it's not just focusing on the content but also their oral language development. So I was able to bring that alignment back together, which was nice.*

# Usability

## Making Claims and Providing Evidence

### Beginning

First, \_\_\_\_\_.  
One reason is \_\_\_\_\_.  
On one hand \_\_\_\_\_.

### Middle

Next, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Another example is \_\_\_\_\_.  
In fact \_\_\_\_\_.  
In the same way \_\_\_\_\_.  
Equally important is \_\_\_\_\_.  
For instance, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Specifically, \_\_\_\_\_.

### End

Lastly, \_\_\_\_\_.  
In other words, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Above all, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Most importantly, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Furthermore, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Consequently, \_\_\_\_\_.  
In summary, \_\_\_\_\_.

*We've [the teaching team] been thinking about doing that [attending to language] in several different areas. Especially in math because their explanations are very important in the work that we do. And we're seeing varied levels of explanation [in math]. So we were talking about doing more work around that.*

# Context

*Because a lot of it was collaborative work it was also delegating and dividing—and a lot of predicting about the building, so “might” came out a lot and “could” and “should.”*

*I really think it’s what your lesson consists of and what the language is that can be connected with that lesson. Because if I go back to the lesson that I observed a couple of weeks ago there wasn't enough for them to use causal connectors that were more sophisticated. Like it didn't lend itself to that. So of course I was getting very basic use of “so,” “then,” “and,” you know. And now, because they had to use what was there to then justify or make connections to any patterns and sequences, it really pushed for them to have to use the language.*

# Try-Out

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- Teachers were able to use high-leverage features for formative assessment of language in content areas
- Each high-leverage feature informed and supported others
- Findings provide additional evidence of the validity of the DLLP for formative assessment
- Resource for professional development

# Summary

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- Standards lack the detail needed for daily instruction and formative assessment
- DLLP is a description of expected tendencies in how students' explanations become more sophisticated over an extended period of time
- Initial work with teachers suggests its use increases language knowledge and supports instruction and formative assessment



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