

Utilizing Home Visiting to Support Differentiated Instruction in an Elementary Classroom

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Abstract

To differentiate effectively, we need to know children. Through home visiting, teachers spend time learning more about students' lives, interests, and cultures. Research has begun to provide insight regarding the benefits of home visits in the elementary years, particularly in terms of family engagement in schools. We know less about the nature of home visits themselves or about what teachers learn from the visits that they can use to support individual learners. We studied how one teacher's learning about children's homes and families supported her differentiated literacy instruction with four focal students. This work has implications for practitioners conducting home visits and employing differentiated classroom instruction. Furthermore, our work adds to the literature on how teachers' knowledge of place can inform differentiated classroom instruction. Future research should continue to examine the intersection of differentiated instruction and place-based education (PBE).

Key Words: elementary education, place-based education (PBE), home visits, differentiation, literacy instruction

Introduction

“My relationships with the families and the kids were astronomically greater than any year before” (Ms. Sanchez, Interview, 12/11/17)

For U.S. teachers to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students, researchers have consistently highlighted the importance of differentiating instruction (e.g., Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011; Tomlinson, 1999; Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Tomlinson (1999) defines differentiated instruction as “an organized yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning to meet kids where they are and help them achieve maximum growth as learners” (p. 14). Essential to differentiated instruction is that teachers *know* their students (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010), which poses a challenge to teachers (typically White, female, middle class) who may come from differing backgrounds than their learners and, for a variety of reasons, may not possess an in-depth understanding of the students and families that they serve (Joshi et al., 2005). To increase their knowledge of students and families, teachers must learn about children’s multiple, complex contexts. For decades, early childhood education has used home visits to learn about families and build connections. This has allowed teachers to connect with the place where much of family life occurs. Like Schafft and Jackson (2010), our conception of place is complex and dynamic—“an articulation of social relations [as well as] cultural and political practices that are paradoxical, provisional, and constantly in the process of becoming” (p. 11).

Home visiting is just beginning to take hold in elementary education (e.g., Parent Teacher Home Visits, 2016; National Education Association Foundation, 2012). Within the small body of research on elementary and secondary home visiting, researchers have identified several benefits associated with home visits. Those benefits generally center on outcomes like improved student attendance (Sheldon & Jung, 2015), academic achievement (Wright et al., 2018), parental involvement (Acosta et al., 1997) and parent–teacher as well as student–teacher relationships (Cowan et al., 2002). However, there is a dearth of research exploring the potential of home visits to support elementary teachers’ instruction. Specifically, home visits have the potential to provide elementary teachers with a deeper awareness of their students’ assets and challenges (Stetson et al., 2012), which affords teachers ways to adjust their curricula to their students’ lives (Ginsberg, 2007). Thus, this study examines an elementary teacher’s use of home visits to gather knowledge about her students’ lives, interests, and cultures and the interaction among those elements (i.e., students’ place) in order to inform her differentiated literacy instruction and ultimately her students’ learning experiences. The questions that guided us were: In what ways can teachers draw upon their knowledge of students’ primary place—home—to increase the relevance of their curriculum and instruction? How does one teacher utilize home visits to inform her differentiated instruction during a literacy block within the elementary classroom?

Literature Review

Elementary Teachers' Use of Differentiated Instruction in Literacy

Some nonnegotiables associated with teachers' differentiated instruction include the following: "respecting individuals, owning student success, building community, providing high-quality curriculum, assessing to inform instruction, implementing flexible classroom routines, creating varied avenues to learning, and sharing responsibility for teaching and learning" (Tomlinson et al., 2008, p. 3). Teachers can differentiate through four classroom elements in response to students' readiness, interest, and learning profile:

- (1) *content* (what students will learn or how they will gain access to what they are asked to learn);
- (2) *process* (activities through which students make sense of or "come to own" essential content);
- (3) *product* (how students demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do after extended periods of learning); and
- (4) *affect* (attention to students' feelings and emotional needs). (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, pp. 12–13)

Researchers have extolled the academic gains associated with elementary teachers' differentiated literacy instruction (e.g., Baumgartner et al., 2003; Connor et al., 2011; Rock et al., 2008; Valiandes, 2015; Watts-Taffe et al., 2013). For example, primary and middle school students showed more positive attitudes towards reading as well as increased use of comprehension strategies, greater mastery of phonemic awareness and decoding skills, and higher instructional reading levels when their teachers utilized differentiated instructional strategies (e.g., flexible grouping and student choice; Baumgartner et al., 2003). Rock et al. (2008) found that when elementary teachers practiced differentiated instruction, including but not limited to varying instructional formats and establishing a positive classroom environment, their students with disabilities experienced increased work completion and scores on state-mandated testing as well as fewer behavioral challenges and less absenteeism. Looking specifically at reading comprehension and literacy test scores for mixed-ability fourth grade students, Valiandes (2015) noted that differentiated instruction had only minor effects.

In order to differentiate effectively in literacy (as well as in mathematics, science, and social studies), teachers need to know their students just as well if not better than their content (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). When teachers get to know the culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse children that they serve, they can better tailor their instruction to meet students' needs (e.g., Shaw, 2015; Watts-Taffe et al., 2013). One way to get to know children is to spend time in the places that are most important to them; teachers can do this through home visiting.

Home Visits as a Practice in Schools

While home visits are commonly practiced in the medical field (Campbell et al., 2015) and with social work (McMillin, 2016), they have traditionally been used in education only with the youngest students. Compensatory pre-school programs such as Head Start (Manz et al., 2013) have used home visits as a way to familiarize families with the expectations of schools. In a seminal study on home visits, Binford and Newell (1991) examined how teachers and parents used home learning activities to teach relevant and developmentally appropriate skills to children. That type of home visit encouraged the home to resemble the school; furthermore, it disregarded the wealth of social and intellectual resources that families possess and students bring to school as funds of knowledge (e.g., Gonzalez & Moll, 1995; Moll, 2015). The purpose of some home visiting has shifted over the years to focus more on teachers learning about their students and students' families (e.g., Goldin et al., 2018; Kyle, 2011). Ideally, teachers then bring assets and insights discovered during those visits into the elementary classroom (Kyle et al., 2005). While there have been some concerns that home visiting might be perceived by families as intrusive (e.g., Edwards et al., 2019), organizations like Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV, 2016) are quick to point out that a visit at a neutral location can also be effective in meeting the goals of learning about families and developing relationships to support children's success.

The PTHV model (2016) has been developed around the vital goal of building relationships, moving beyond models that suggest solely learning about families' cultures as ethnographic observers (Moll et al., 1990). Cowan et al. (2002) reported that PTHV elementary and middle school teachers perceived that they crossed cultural boundaries while building trust with families and getting to know students better. Similarly, through multiple studies, researchers found that elementary teachers who conducted home visits learned more about students' home lives and ways in which they could successfully support students' learning (Meyer & Mann, 2006; Meyer et al., 2011). Utilizing information obtained from home visiting to inform teachers' instruction aligns with the use of place-based education (PBE), which has the potential to enhance this localized focus in the elementary classroom.

Place-Based Education With Elementary Students and Teachers

Sobel (2005) describes PBE as "the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts...across the curriculum" (p. 7). In classrooms and schools where PBE is utilized, students recognize the value in their local communities, which increases students' commitment to

place (Smith, 2007). While PBE's roots are grounded in the scientific realm with studies exploring topics such as elementary students' experiences with environmental literacy (Shume, 2016) and outdoor learning programs (Lloyd et al., 2018), PBE has more recently been associated with a wider range of elementary content areas including, but not limited to literacy (Donovan, 2016), social studies (Morris, 2016), and art (Neves & Graham, 2018). Typically, PBE is linked with students learning about, from, or in a particular place. Relatedly, in what ways can teachers learn about a particular place in order to inform their curriculum, management, and classroom community?

Recently, PBE has been utilized to restructure teacher preparation ("preparation") programs in order to adjust the ways in which preservice teachers think about teaching and learning in particular communities (Lowenstein et al., 2018). Largely, preparation programs in rural areas have implemented place-based teacher education models (Ajayi, 2014; Schulte, 2018; Vinlove, 2017; Wiseman, 2014); however, urban preparation programs have begun to engage in this work as well (Marx & Pecina, 2016). The place-based preparation program in Ajayi's study (2014) provided opportunities for elementary preservice teachers to connect English Language Arts (ELA) education and a local community. The researcher found that preservice teachers related ELA instruction to the local economic context as well as to the people, culture, and social practices in the community; additionally, the preservice teachers valued students' local knowledge and the community's literacy resources. In another place-based ELA study, Wiseman (2014) had preservice teachers examine literacy practices used in a diverse community and subsequently consider classroom implications. Findings indicated that when preservice teachers learn about race, class, culture, and community outside of the classroom, they develop more nuanced understandings of the students they are teaching and the communities they are serving.

Although PBE has traditionally focused more on communities than on homes and more on student learning than on teacher learning, we think that a potentially fruitful application of PBE is teachers learning about children's primary places (i.e., their homes) in order to inform instruction. As we will describe in the next section, adding homes and a focus on teacher learning to PBE extends current conceptual understandings of place to include a richer sense of the local influences that inform teachers' instruction and students' classroom experiences.

Conceptual Framework

Place serves as a "lens through which young people begin to make sense of themselves and their surroundings. It is where they form relationships and

social networks, develop a sense of community, and learn to live with others” (McInerney et al., 2011, p. 5). In other words, places are where children learn to process social relationships and practice their families’ cultures. We argue that by conducting home visits, elementary teachers gain access to the primary places in which students spend the majority of their time outside of school. Teachers need to understand how students’ lives at home influence their lives at school. With this understanding, teachers will be able to more easily work place into their curriculum and instruction (Nespor, 2008). With this study, we intend to focus on students’ primary place—home—and illuminate how that place informs differentiated instruction in an elementary classroom. We hypothesized that this intersection of PBE and differentiated instruction would occur in three ways: (1) dynamics, (2) positionality, and (3) connections. We believed that the home visits would help the elementary teacher see the way a family works (i.e., dynamics), give her a better grasp of the kind of role she needed to play in school (i.e., positionality), and support her development of deeper, more trusting relationships with families (i.e., connections).

Methods

Study Design

We employed a single-case holistic design (Yin, 2017) to study a teacher who was conducting home visits, focusing in particular on how one elementary teacher used knowledge obtained through students’ primary place to impact her differentiated instruction. We explored the following research questions: In what ways can teachers draw upon their knowledge of students’ primary place—home—to increase the relevance of their curriculum and instruction? How does one teacher utilize home visits to inform her differentiated instruction during a literacy block within the elementary classroom?

Setting and Participants

Setting

Piney Ridge Elementary School (pseudonym) is nestled in a rural community in Virginia. Presently, the school has roughly 50 staff members who serve approximately 250 students, kindergarten through fifth, in Allenton County Public Schools (pseudonym). The school’s student population is comprised of 65.7% White, 13.1% Hispanic, and 12.7% Black students. Students who receive free and reduced-priced meals comprise 33.5% of the student population. There are about 5.6% of students classified as English Language Learners, 9.2% of students with disabilities, and 7.7% of identified gifted students. These demographics are representative of Ms. Sanchez’s first grade class as well.

Participants

Our teacher participant, Sarah Sanchez (pseudonym) has been a teacher at Piney Ridge for five years and has taught third and first grade. She identifies as Hispanic and White. Our research team, already studying home visiting elsewhere in the region, learned of Ms. Sanchez's practice and got permission to observe home visits and her classroom as well as to interview her. One of the research team members attended each of the focal students' home visits with Ms. Sanchez. In total, Ms. Sanchez had 13 home visits scheduled during the fall of 2017. With 21 families, she had roughly 62% participation in the fall semester. We had four focal students in the present study: Sebastian, Jarred, Fisher, and Talyah (pseudonyms; see Table 1). These focal students were selected because they represented a range of student needs and behaviors, their home visits aligned with the researchers' schedules, and their parents consented to the researchers' presence.

Table 1. Focal Student Demographic Information

Student Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Additional Academic Support
Sebastian	Male	White	Gifted (Math)
Jarred	Male	African American and Hispanic	Special Education (Math)
Fisher	Male	White	Intervention (Reading)
Talyah	Female	Hispanic	N/A

Teacher

As a Diversity Resource Teacher, Ms. Sanchez was responsible for providing school building-based culturally responsive teaching workshops for her colleagues. In her role as a Diversity Resource Teacher, Ms. Sanchez gained a greater awareness of her connections with students, realizing the following:

I would find out critical pieces of information about my students in April. Okay, well, we have a month and a half left. What am I going to do with this information? I wish I had that at the beginning of the year.

Through this type of reflection, Ms. Sanchez started meeting with students and families outside of school to attend various activities (e.g., soccer games, dance recitals, etc.) at neutral community locations. Ms. Sanchez recollected that she “learned a good amount from that but then wanted to take it a step further in first grade and really make that home connection.” For the past two years, Ms. Sanchez has been the only teacher in her school to conduct home visits. Within a districtwide goal-setting program, Ms. Sanchez articulated the following professional goal for the 2017–18 school year:

I will conduct home visits with all of my students to spend quality time with each student and their family. During these visits, I will interact with each child and their family in an informal way that builds a strong relationship between school and home. Students will have a chance to share toys, games, rituals, meals, and other pieces of their culture that are important to them. Knowing who my students are as individuals, where they come from, and learning about their family values will strengthen my understanding and ability to teach each student to the best of my ability.

Ms. Sanchez stressed that her primary objective for doing home visits with students and families “is to get to know each other and to build the relationship early on and then to be able to continue that throughout the year.” Ms. Sanchez does not have any formal home visit training and mentioned that she “just went for it.” It is important to note that home visiting was intended to further supplement Ms. Sanchez’s already rich differentiation practice.

Focal Students

Sebastian. Ms. Sanchez portrays Sebastian as a future “lawyer because he wants it his way or no way, and I have found that to be a challenge, but also a great asset for him.” Building upon that rendering, Ms. Sanchez mentions, “he likes to be a leader and sort of in charge of things...and have that power.” Regarding academics, Ms. Sanchez works with Sebastian to individually plan his day (i.e., incorporating his interests, giving him choices). Sebastian is on grade level in reading and writing, but he is two grade levels above his peers in math; thus, he receives gifted supports, but cannot be officially identified as gifted until second grade. Ms. Sanchez is in contact with Sebastian’s family roughly two to three times throughout the week, and she notes that they are “very trusting of me and my decisions...they’re very supportive and want what’s best for him.”

Jarred. Ms. Sanchez describes Jarred as very helpful and mentions that he “wants to please.” During this school year, Jarred was identified as a special education student, with a specific focus on math. Ms. Sanchez mentions that Jarred is a good reader, but writing is a challenge for him because he doesn’t enjoy it; thus, she works closely with him during writing. Behaviorally, Jarred “has a hard time with friends,” and Ms. Sanchez has to use purposeful grouping in order to decrease his difficulties experienced with peers. These social and emotional issues seep into Jarred’s writing in the form of “violent pictures,” so Ms. Sanchez has been conferencing with him on adding words that productively describe his feelings. Ms. Sanchez communicates with Jarred’s family on a daily basis through a behavioral chart that she reflectively fills out with Jarred.

Fisher. Ms. Sanchez labels Fisher as “an outside-the-box thinker” and says his “communication with others is advanced.” However, Ms. Sanchez notes that Fisher “is not the greatest reader yet, [and] he lacks a lot of confidence.” Fisher receives reading support with an interventionist; prior to this school year, Ms. Sanchez mentions how Fisher would “blend in a lot,” which led to him “flying under the radar in kindergarten” and not realizing he was below grade level in reading. As an only child, “he gets a lot of attention at home...so it’s sort of like ‘The Fisher Show,’” Ms. Sanchez notices that need for attention at school, too. She and her teaching assistant show Fisher that they are interested in and listening to him.

Talyah. Ms. Sanchez calls Talyah “sweet,” “quiet,” and a “natural writer.” However, when writing, Talyah takes “a lot of time to draw a really beautiful, detailed picture” and then she has difficulty verbalizing “what it was or why it was important to her.” Thus, Ms. Sanchez has to prompt Talyah with questioning in order for her to explain it, and then she comes back with three or four sentences. Ms. Sanchez elaborates that she connects with Talyah because their “backgrounds are similar” (i.e., coming from large families). At home, Talyah’s mom calls her a hoarder; however, Ms. Sanchez describes her as a collector.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

Observations

Classroom. For the four classroom observations, we developed a protocol (see Appendix A) with the following foci: (1) context, (2) instructional approaches, (3) participants’ behaviors, (4) participants’ interactions, and (5) materials. We used a three-column organizer for field notes. The first column served as a time stamp for observed classroom activities, the second column detailed the observational protocol foci, and the third column held in-the-moment and post-observation researcher inferences and questions. Observational field notes were uploaded to a password-protected, online qualitative software platform, Dedoose.

We conducted four classroom observations over the course of four months. Each classroom observation took place during Ms. Sanchez’s literacy block. This literacy block comprised two hours of the seven-hour school day. During the literacy block, Ms. Sanchez led a language arts mini-lesson (a 10-minute lesson that typically involved a read-aloud and whole-group skill development) and then transitioned into her Daily Five rotations, when students worked in small groups with a teacher or independently on tasks (see Table 2). Daily Five (Boushey & Mosher, 2014) is a workshop-based literacy framework that simultaneously develops independence as well as reading and writing skills. The Daily Five tasks are “Work on Writing,” “Read to Self,” “Read to Someone,” “Listen to Reading,” and “Word Work.”

Table 2. Observation Picturebooks and Corresponding Writing Activities

Observation	Picturebook	Daily Five “Work on Writing” Activity
December	The Wish Tree (Maclear, 2016)	Respond to the following question: What do you wish for?
January	N/A*	N/A
February	What Do You Do with an Idea? (Yamada, 2014)	Write about an invention you want to make to change the world.
March	The Three Little Pigs (Unknown; Traditional Version)	Design a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Note. *No picturebook that day as time was shortened due to a schoolwide event.

We had one stationary camera focused on Ms. Sanchez’s small group table, where she primarily taught during literacy block, and a second camera which a researcher carried around the classroom to capture focal student interactions with peers and teachers. During classroom observations, focal students were not identified to school support staff (e.g., teaching assistant, interventionist), and both researchers assumed the role of complete observers (Creswell, 2014).

Home visits. The four home visits we observed (see Table 3) averaged about 90 minutes; Talyah’s home visit was an outlier because her family hosted Ms. Sanchez and the researcher for dinner. For the four home visits, we developed a protocol (see Appendix B) which documented the following constructs: (1) relationships; (2) environment, ambiance, and context; (3) content of the visit; (4) physical artifacts; and (5) researcher questions, comments, and concerns. For each of those constructs, we had suggested foci (e.g., apparent goals of the visit) as well as guiding questions (e.g., What does the teacher bring into the home?). As observers, we participated only to avoid being rude (e.g., taking a snack if offered). Aligning with the PTHV view that home visits should not include note-taking, we did not take any notes during the visit. Rather, immediately after the home visit, we would write bulleted notes on paper copies of the home visit observation protocol. Then, no more than a day after the home visit, we would write a home visit narrative and upload to Dedoose.

Teacher Interviews

Based on prior literature, the home visits, and unfolding observed classroom interactions, we developed four teacher interview protocols. The first interview asked Ms. Sanchez about her personal and professional background as well as her general thoughts and context-specific insights regarding home visits (see Appendix C). The second interview asked Ms. Sanchez to elaborate on her context-specific insights regarding home visits (see Appendix D). The third interview asked Ms. Sanchez to describe the four focal students and what

she does to meet their individual needs (see Appendix E). The fourth interview asked Ms. Sanchez to expand upon her role as the school's Diversity Resource Teacher, her prior home visiting experiences, and her future use of home visits (see Appendix F).

Each of the four teacher interviews occurred during lunchtime, directly after Ms. Sanchez's literacy block. The interviews occurred in Ms. Sanchez's classroom; with ethical considerations in mind, the setting became private when we closed the classroom door. Each of the teacher interviews lasted between 20–25 minutes. These interviews solidified abstract relationships, patterns, and concepts through teacher language and served to “conceptualize events” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 99) from observational data collection. During the teacher interviews, we used an audiorecorder to capture Ms. Sanchez's responses. All teacher interviews were transcribed and uploaded to Dedoose.

Table 3. Home Visit Observations

Student Pseudonym	Home Visit Date	Length of Home Visit	Activities
Sebastian	10/23/17	1 hour and 5 minutes	House Tour Assorted Snacks Board Games Bicycle Riding
Jarred	10/31/17	1 hour and 10 minutes	House Tour Video Games Board Games Muffins and Candy
Fisher	10/18/17	1 hour and 30 minutes	Cardboard Creations House Tour Casual Dinner Card Games
Talyah	10/12/17	2 hours and 30 minutes	Assorted Snacks House Tour Board Games Sit-down Dinner

Researcher Reflexivity

The authors recognize the need to address our personal backgrounds in relation to this study. Through this researcher reflexivity, we hope to acknowledge our bias around the topic of study. The first author is a White, rural, middle-class woman. Throughout her K–12 educational experience, she attended schools that largely mirrored the demographics of Piney Ridge Elementary

School. Second, she taught in an elementary school (i.e., kindergarten, first grade, and third grade) in the same county where we conducted this research. Thus, she has “insider” knowledge (Lofland et al., 2005) about the school district. Similar to Ms. Sanchez, she utilized the Daily Five framework to structure her literacy block. Therefore, she is familiar with elementary students’ academic, social, and emotional needs as they interact with their teacher, teaching assistant, and peers during Daily Five. The second author is a White, suburban, middle-class woman. She grew up in a largely White, suburban school district and taught in a majority minority school district that utilized a balanced literacy curriculum. As a faculty member at the nearby university, she was new to the school district in the study. She teaches literacy methods courses and courses on engaging with families and communities, so she is attuned to the nuances of literacy instruction and interactions between teachers and families. The third author is a White, suburban, middle-class woman. She also grew up in a largely White, suburban school district, and she taught middle school social studies in a majority minority school district. She is also a faculty member at the nearby university and has lived in the region for all of her adult life.

During the present study, the first and second author collected the data (i.e., home visit and classroom observations as well as teacher interviews). Then, the first author generated preliminary themes from analytic memoing (Miles et al., 2014) and developed codes for data analysis. Next, the first and second author engaged in consensus coding. The third author, having not been involved with the data collection, served as a critical reviewer of the findings and of the completed manuscript.

Analytic Techniques

We utilized deductive descriptive coding (Miles et al., 2014) at the beginning of our data analysis. Sousa and Tomlinson’s (2011) four classroom elements—content, process, product, and affect—which can be modified in response to students’ needs, informed our initial descriptive codes (see Table 4). Then, we used InVivo coding to highlight instances where dynamics, positionality, and connections emerged, which stem from Ms. Sanchez’s use of home visits (i.e., students’ place) to inform her differentiated instruction. For example, Ms. Sanchez defined her positionality with each student, metaphorically wearing a different hat with each child (Chapman & King, 2014), based on the knowledge she obtained about students and families from the home visits (see Table 5). Additionally, a round of inductive descriptive coding led to codes describing the school, focal students, and teacher. Subcodes and simultaneous coding were utilized to capture further nuance in the data. Some of the subcodes were process codes “to connote observable and conceptual action”

(e.g., redirecting; Miles et al., 2014, p. 75). Lastly, we examined the coded observation field notes and watched the videorecordings in order to transcribe portions of each class session that illustrated our findings.

Table 4. Descriptive Codes (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011)

Modified Elements to Meet Students' Needs	Definition of Each Classroom Element	Example from Data Analysis
Content	What students will learn or how they will gain access to what they are asked to learn	Jarred "struggles in math [...]" But also, I work a lot closer with him during that time in particular" (Interview, 2/20/18).
Process	Activities through which students make sense of or 'come to own' essential content	"I think giving them freedom to write about things that are important to them or things that affect them has been helpful" (Interview, 1/26/18).
Product	How students demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do after extended periods of learning	"Like at Fisher's house, he builds everything, right? So giving him the freedom to build and make, or do comics or things like that" (Interview, 1/26/18).
Affect	Attention to students' feelings and emotional needs	The timer beeps and Ms. Sanchez tells Sebastian that his time is up. Sebastian says that he is really enjoying his reading time and that he wasn't focused the whole time. He wants to read more. Ms. Sanchez says, "Good honesty." (Classroom Observation, 1/26/18)

Table 5. Teacher Positionality

Student Name	Teacher Positionality	Evidence From Data
Jarred	Mediator	“I notice the friends that are really good for him and so I pair him up with friends that are good” (Interview, 2/20/18).
Sebastian	Manager	“For him, he has a list of things that he needs to accomplish during Daily Five and he’s able to sometimes make those choices independently, and sometimes he needs a little bit of prompting. Also I find myself intervening at times when he’s not making a good choice or, ‘You’ve been working on this for a really long time now, and you still don’t have any writing on your page. Do you want to take a break and do something else?’ He’ll either say yes or no, and we’ll go from there. That’s a redirection to get him back on track. I’m pretty aware of how often I do that. He’s finicky when it comes to timers, because he either loves timers or he hates them. He doesn’t like me counting down so I don’t do that often, but sometimes I don’t know” (Interview, 2/20/18).
Talyah	Prompter	“It takes a lot of prompting to get those ideas onto paper. She’s slower academically but she’s got good ideas. With talking with her a lot, that’s something I like to work with her on is verbalizing her ideas in concrete ways. Then she can put them onto paper herself” (Interview, 2/20/18).
Fisher	Encourager	“We’ve worked a lot on writing this year to build that confidence, and that’s something that he and I work a lot with to make mini books and little stories where he can do all of the illustrations that he loves, and tell all of those creative ideas. Then we worked together to work on his spelling and his writing and actually ideas to paper, that translation there” (Interview, 2/20/18).

Findings

In the sections that follow, we organize our findings around Sousa and Tomlinson’s (2011) four classroom elements: content, process, product, and affect (defined above in the Literature Review). However, some exemplars feature more than one classroom element. We will indicate where what Ms. Sanchez learned from the home visits seemed to manifest in her differentiated literacy instruction in terms of those four classroom elements. We return to our hypothesized elements of dynamics, positionality, and connections to frame our Discussion.

Ms. Sanchez was self-aware regarding how home visits had impacted her teaching. First, Ms. Sanchez understood the need to understand her own identity in relation to her students and their families, and she saw this knowledge as vital to her ability to support her students' growth (Interview, 1/26/18). She also noted that home visits

opened my eyes to know there is a reason for everything, in the way kids react to things...their verbal and nonverbal cues, the way they are taking in knowledge and retaining knowledge, the way they work with others. Every single piece of that, that impacts our day and their learning and their achievement. (Interview 3/13/18)

In other words, the home visits had made Ms. Sanchez more aware of the children's whole selves and more open to interpreting children's actions through a wider and more compassionate lens. Undoubtedly, Ms. Sanchez already had deep insight into her students based on her experiences with them in class and on school-based interactions with their families. She was also already differentiating instruction in her classroom based on her knowledge of her students.

Content

Talyah thoroughly enjoys drawing and writing (i.e., content), but tends to be shy when it comes to getting all of her ideas down into an independent, finalized product. At Talyah's home visit (10/12/17), she showed Ms. Sanchez her closet, which was full of toys, art materials, and clothing. Her mother said, "It's a mess." Talyah closed the door and blushed. Recounting this moment later with the researchers, Ms. Sanchez recast Talyah's collection as an asset (Interview, 2/20/18): "She's a collector...She recycles everything and then wants to reuse it...I think she does so much of that quietly...and is able to imagine different things." During Talyah's "Work on Writing" time (Classroom Observation, 2/20/18), the class's assignment was to write about a creative invention; Talyah decided to design a claw machine with toys. She drew it but did not write about her invention. Ms. Sanchez asked Talyah a series of prompting questions about how the invention intersected with her interests, which allowed Talyah to gain access to the content she was asked to learn. Ultimately, Talyah completed her story (i.e., product), which was about winning and collecting toys (much like the ones found in her closet) from her imaginary invention. Ms. Sanchez's writing activity and effective prompting (i.e., content) allowed Talyah to explore this particular interest (which Ms. Sanchez reported having learned about during the home visit) and showcase essential literacy content and skills through a product.

Process

Jarred is a student with special needs who experiences social and emotional difficulties, leading to Ms. Sanchez's use of a daily behavioral chart. During Jarred's home visit (10/31/17), he wanted to play a particular video game with Ms. Sanchez, but his father remarked that the game was prohibited. However, Jarred whispered to Ms. Sanchez, "I played it once." The father chuckled and said that Jarred was being clever (i.e., attempting to use the home visit to do out-of-the-ordinary things). Ms. Sanchez commented:

The parents are very strict at home...and they keep on top of him a lot so I find myself doing that....They've shared with me that he doesn't get a lot of choice at home....While my class in general has a lot of choice, his is a lot more limited. (Interview, 2/20/18)

During the visit, Ms. Sanchez observed firsthand how Jarred responded to structure and a limited range of choices. During a subsequent literacy block (Classroom Observation, 2/20/18), Ms. Sanchez noticed Jarred's off-task behavior (i.e., drumming with pencils) during a writing station. Normally, Ms. Sanchez would refocus a student exhibiting behavior such as this and then leave them to work independently; however, with Jarred she removed the choice of working by himself. She suggested that he switch to "Read with Someone" with an on-task student, and he followed those directions. By differentiating the process in which Jarred engaged with literacy skills and content, Jarred remained on-task for the rest of the Daily Five rotation. Remarkably, Jarred was more responsive to Ms. Sanchez's attempts to help him self-regulate with redirections, which mirrored his home experiences, than he was to any of his other teachers (i.e., teaching assistant, special education teacher). For example, to get his peers to laugh, Jarred pretended to slip on a piece of paper with his iPad in his hands (Classroom Observation, 1/26/18). The teaching assistant redirected him to his task, "Listen to Reading," and asked him to sit down. Jarred followed the redirection; however, shortly afterwards, he repeated the pretend slipping action and garnered additional laughter. Ms. Sanchez hypothesized that Jarred's responsiveness to her (i.e., through redirections and adjustments to process) was a combination of him trusting her and her close relationship with his family, which was further strengthened with Ms. Sanchez's growing knowledge of Jarred's place as it relates to his home.

Fisher is an "ultra-creative" student (Interview, 2/20/18), who uses his charming personality to get others' attention. During Fisher's home visit (10/18/17), his father recounted that Fisher knocked out his front tooth on the monkey bars in preschool leading to an emergency room visit where he was "going around charming everyone." Another instance of Fisher's charming

demeanor (supporting his attention-seeking side) arose when his father mentioned that Fisher regularly reenacts a scene from a Bond movie, where the villain is sitting in a swivel chair, stroking a cat. Fisher then used his most villainous voice to say, “Welcome to my lair, Mr. Bond. I’ve been expecting you.” Fisher’s father looked proud, and Ms. Sanchez exclaimed that he should be a performer. As previously mentioned, Fisher tended to “blend in” and be “under the radar” in the past; thus, his desire to perform and gain attention from others was not something Ms. Sanchez knew about from her interactions with him at school. Through the home visit, Ms. Sanchez learned about these particular personality traits. With this desire for attention in mind, Ms. Sanchez frequently differentiated based on process with Fisher due to his needs during the literacy block: “He’ll come up to me often, and I’ll try to be very engaged with him.” While completing his “Word Work” (Classroom Observation, 2/20/18), Fisher went through the header sounds (i.e., “T,” “H,” “TH”) several times in different voices with Ms. Sanchez. Then he colored his words to match the corresponding headers (e.g., colored “tooth” orange to match the orange “TH” header). Ms. Sanchez commented on Fisher’s neatness and then invited him to recount the tooth story from the home visit. By using different voices with the header sounds (i.e., process), Ms. Sanchez allowed Fisher to draw upon his creative side to make sense of the literacy content, and then she was able to provide him with time to share his story.

Product

At Sebastian’s home visit (10/23/17), he wanted to showcase his bike-riding skills. When he could not find his helmet, Sebastian repeatedly yelled at his mother that it was missing, and he looked like he was going to cry. His mother walked with him and preceded to ask him where he thought the helmet was located. During this process, his mother got him to manage his emotions and calm down. When he was calm, they were able to find his helmet. Sebastian needed Ms. Sanchez to serve as a manager, too, as illustrated in this interaction (Classroom Observation, 3/13/18):

Sebastian: “I’m going to draw and then write.”

Ms. Sanchez: “You’ve used five minutes, and I don’t see anything on that page.”

Sebastian: “I’ve wasted over two minutes?”

Then, Ms. Sanchez held up five fingers and walked away. Sebastian immediately started drawing. With Sebastian, Ms. Sanchez (Interview, 2/20/18) stressed the importance of making work plans and setting timers to accomplish his tasks. Like his mother with the helmet, Ms. Sanchez scaffolded the management (i.e.,

attention to Sebastian's affect); she helped him to name his struggle and set a goal, and then she left him to complete the task (i.e., product). Ms. Sanchez differentiated her instruction in order to align her classroom response with Sebastian's mother's response at home. The alignment of these responses showed Ms. Sanchez's attention towards recognizing and utilizing Sebastian's sense of place (i.e., typical behavioral strategies used at home) to modify a classroom element (i.e., affect), which ultimately influenced his final product (i.e., how much of and the quality of the task that he was able to complete within a specific amount of time).

Fisher has "an engineering maker mind" (Interview, 2/20/18), but lacks confidence in reading. When discussing Fisher's reading skills at the home visit (10/18/17), his mother was concerned that his difficulties would persist, while his father was not worried. Ms. Sanchez remarked that Fisher receives extra support and that he is within the developmentally appropriate range; they were working on his reading confidence. Fisher did not comment during the reading conversation; instead, he left and brought out several of his cardboard creations (e.g., guitar, doghouse, cat), which received high praise from his parents and Ms. Sanchez. Fisher soaked up that praise and immediately began working on his next creation. Drawing on that experience in the home, Ms. Sanchez later commented on Fisher's creations, "that is a passion for him.... He's a kid that needs the confidence, because when he's confident, he will go so far." When writing his own mini-book about the Three Little Pigs (Classroom Observation, 3/13/18), Fisher grabbed the mentor text and showed a page to Ms. Sanchez. Fisher asked, "What does that say?" Ms. Sanchez read a section and stopped several times to let Fisher read sight words (e.g., like, as, there). Fisher exclaimed, "Wow, I'm getting really good at reading." Ms. Sanchez smiled, "You are." Ms. Sanchez utilized her knowledge about Fisher's need for assurance (i.e., affect) to give him processing opportunities to illuminate his reading skills (i.e., product) much like he highlighted his maker skills at home. Knowing about Fisher's desire for praise (which at home had been in relation to his cardboard creations), Ms. Sanchez adjusted her instruction to connect with him about his reading in school.

Affect

Sebastian is gifted in math, but has difficulty focusing during language arts, which influences his affect. Regarding Sebastian's behavior at home and school, Ms. Sanchez remarked (Interview, 2/20/18):

Mom ignores it, doesn't argue about it. It is the way it is, but if you want to do that, okay sure. No big deal. She says yes a lot. I try to do that with him, but with the boundaries of what is appropriate and acceptable.... It's a little bit of a negotiation.

For example, at the end of Sebastian's home visit (10/23/17), his mom wanted him to put his bike away because they needed to take his older sister to her soccer game. Sebastian refused to get in the car because he wanted to take his bike. Avoiding the conflict, his mom popped the trunk of her car and told him to throw the bike in the back. During one round of Daily Five (Classroom Observation, 2/20/18), Sebastian interrupted Ms. Sanchez's work with a small group to ask, "Where are my sight phrases? I want to read them to you." Ms. Sanchez kept working with the group, but Sebastian repeatedly asked the same question in differing tones of his voice. Finally, Ms. Sanchez stopped working and pulled Sebastian aside:

Ms. Sanchez: "You were distracting five different people. Is that what you were trying to do?"

Sebastian: "No, I was trying to be funny."

Ms. Sanchez: "I think you are very funny, but now is not the time. What should you be doing?"

Sebastian said that he didn't know what to write; again, he stressed that he wanted to read his sight phrases to her. Ms. Sanchez asked Sebastian what her expectations are, and he reluctantly walked away to write. Once Ms. Sanchez was finished with the group, she checked on Sebastian, and he had been productive; thus, she let him read his sight phrases. Through this instructional moment, Ms. Sanchez was able to use negotiation with Sebastian in order to diffuse the situation and still positively respond to his requests. Because there were other children's needs to consider, rather than saying yes instantaneously, Ms. Sanchez communicated high expectations that needed to be fulfilled before she would grant the request. This instance highlighted Ms. Sanchez's efforts towards educating the whole child because she was able to use knowledge obtained from Sebastian's home visit to differentiate based on affect to address both his socioemotional and literacy needs.

Talyah is a quiet, creative student; she is the type of student that can easily get overlooked if a teacher is not attuned to the students' feelings and emotional needs. After dinner during Talyah's home visit (10/12/17), many of her brothers and sisters were very active. The youngest brother was standing on a table, the older brother was singing a violent version of the alphabet song, and the older sister tried to get the visitors (i.e., Ms. Sanchez and the researcher) to play an invented game called "Coco." Ms. Sanchez remembered (Interview, 1/26/18) from Talyah's home visit, "The house is so loud. There are four children, and they're running all over the place....It makes a lot of sense for me to see that and know...why she's so quiet." While finishing a writing assignment (Classroom Observation, 2/20/18), Talyah worked quietly at a table with another

female student. Then a male student walked over, started talking, and blew colored pencils across the table with the female student, as if racing them from one side to the other. Talyah continued to work, occasionally looking up and watching. Ms. Sanchez walked over to the table and told the male student to go somewhere else, asked the female student to focus on her work, and smiled at Talyah. With that smile, Ms. Sanchez acknowledged Talyah's desire for a quiet working space (i.e., affect). Knowing the way the family works in Talyah's home, she surmised that Talyah's experiences at school needed to be markedly different than what she experienced at home in order for Talyah to thrive in the classroom. Ms. Sanchez modified affect in order to differentiate her instruction and respond in a personalized manner, informed by Talyah's home.

As she intended with her primary home visiting objective (Interview, 12/11/17), Ms. Sanchez forged stronger, continuous relationships with families and focal students that bridged home and school. The connections that Ms. Sanchez made with the focal students influenced the way she approached and executed literacy instruction; adjusting her regular classroom dynamics as well as her positionality towards focal students allowed her to differentiate by content, process, product, and affect.

Discussion

When elementary teachers are able to “see the environments in which families live, [they] gain a better understanding of the families’ needs” (Gomby et al., 1999, p. 5) and can better adjust their classroom instructional practices to meet students’ needs. We found that Ms. Sanchez translated what she learned from her home visits (Stetson et al., 2012) into the classroom context (Ginsberg, 2007) in a few specific ways to support each focal student so the child could learn as deeply and quickly as possible. Ms. Sanchez did not assume that “one student’s roadmap for learning [was] identical to anyone else’s” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2) in her elementary classroom. With literacy instruction, Watts-Taffe et al. (2013) posited that effective differentiation:

is found in the decisions teachers make based on their understanding of the reading process, in-depth knowledge of their students, consideration of an array of effective instructional practices supported by research, and ability to select models, materials, and methods to suit particular students as they engage in particular literacy acts. (p. 306)

Our study demonstrates how information and strategies (i.e., knowledge about students), obtained from home visits, can be used to inform an elementary teacher's decisions regarding differentiated instruction in the classroom. While home is not the only source where teachers can obtain knowledge about

students, home visits do provide a more nuanced (sometimes complexified) view of children and families. Differentiation can occur without home visits; however, home visits positively support differentiation in a way that draws upon a student's place.

Dynamics, Positionality, and Connections

With Jarred and Sebastian, both of whom struggled with self-regulation, Ms. Sanchez learned specific, different strategies (i.e., drawing on home dynamics and adjusting her positionality) for helping each boy manage his body and emotions. In the case of Talyah and Fisher, Ms. Sanchez learned about their interests as well as their strengths and challenges (i.e., connecting with the students) in order to support them with writing and reading, respectively. Furthermore, and notably, Ms. Sanchez's differentiated instruction appeared to increase the relevance of the focal students' learning experiences during Daily Five literacy instruction. With differentiation, relevance for students (i.e., "what turns a learner on to new information and stimulates a desire to investigate a topic further," Cash, 2011, p. 80) is directly tied to the following classroom elements: content, process, product, and affect (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). During her literacy block, Ms. Sanchez modified each of these classroom elements to varying extents due to her increased connections with the focal students, awareness about family–focal student dynamics, and attention to positionality in relation to focal students. For example, these observed adjustments were associated with Fisher's reading confidence, Talyah's elaborative writing, Sebastian's task completion, and Jarred's adjusted choices. While we cannot directly link home visits to specific learning outcomes (i.e., because we do not have assessment data; Kroholz, 2016), we can link home visits to elementary students' learning experiences during a literacy block. Ms. Sanchez's knowledge (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010) about dynamics, positionality, and connections stemmed from her time in the focal students' homes, where she learned more about their sense of place. That knowledge of place informed Ms. Sanchez's differentiated instruction, which positively altered focal students' learning experiences with literacy content and skills in the classroom.

Strengthening the Home–School Relationship with Place in Mind

As illustrated in our conceptual framework, students' lives at home influence their lives at school. Like Smith and Sobel (2010b) assert, we believe that schools should be "integrated with rather than segregated from the lives of the human[s]...that surround them" (p. 115). Thus, in the case of elementary schools, the home is the primary place—situated within cultures and broader social and political contexts—where children's lives are lived. Ms. Sanchez hinted at this concept during one of her interviews (12/11/17):

I think in reality, if I'm expecting these parents to come into this school, which is a place that they probably may not have felt comfortable, I want to be able to do the same to them and make that first move, because I want them at school, and I want them involved. I wanted to take the first step and show them that...I can do it, and you can do it, too.

Ms. Sanchez highlighted that "schools and communities clearly do not have to remain separated in the way they often are" (Clark, 2010, p. 102); in fact, when teachers familiarize themselves with and immerse themselves in students' sense of place (McInerney et al., 2011), particularly with students' homes (Donovan, 2016), it increases mutual understanding as well as families' comfort level in reciprocally entering teachers' professional place, school.

Intersection of PBE and Differentiated Instruction in the Elementary Classroom

By visiting children's homes and families, teachers have a window into students' whole selves, which allows them to more effectively tailor their curriculum and instruction with a place-based lens (Nespor, 2008) and students' funds of knowledge (e.g., Gonzalez & Moll, 1995; Moll, 2015) in mind. However, differentiating curriculum and instruction based on students' place (i.e., their homes) is a challenging and time-consuming process because curriculum, instruction, and assessments are mostly impacted by broader influences (e.g., nation, region, state, standards; Comber, 2013). Nevertheless, with knowledge about students, teachers are provided with access to additional information and strategies to support them in a more specific manner to meet the students' diverse and individualized needs in various content areas such as literacy (e.g., Shaw, 2015; Watts-Taffe et al., 2013). Through home visiting, Ms. Sanchez was able to plan for "the fact that learners bring many commonalities to school, but that learners also bring the essential differences that make them individuals" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2). In Ms. Sanchez's differentiated classroom, this was crucial to her success in reaching focal students where they were (e.g., socially, emotionally, cognitively) in literacy.

Lastly, this study builds on recent restructuring efforts of preparation programs to implement place-based teacher education models (Ajayi, 2014; Lowenstein et al., 2018; Marx & Pecina, 2016; Schulte, 2018; Vinlove, 2017; Wiseman, 2014). When preservice and inservice teachers, like Ms. Sanchez, have immersive opportunities through home visiting to learn about their students' place, they can work to understand, appreciate, and validate families' cultural (Ajayi, 2014) and literacy (Wiseman, 2014) practices. Additionally, teachers' heightened awareness of students' place illuminates assets that families and communities possess (Marx & Pecina, 2016; Schulte, 2018), which

can be incorporated into the curriculum and utilized during instructional experiences. Next, we will outline limitations associated with our work as well as suggestions for future research.

Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on one teacher who used what she learned during home visits to differentiate instruction in one public elementary school in Virginia. Future studies should engage in cross-site comparisons (Herriott & Firestone, 1983), looking at multiple schools or districts that engage in home visiting. With future home visit studies, having the ability to record audio or video of the interactions would be beneficial to support the researchers' narrative construction. Additionally, being able to attend an increasing number of home visits would support the development of a more defined composite portrait (Ragin, 1999) of a teacher's home visit practice. Moreover, we do not have any interviews with families or students to gain insight on their thoughts about home visits or differentiated instruction. Family and student interviews would strengthen our assertions presented in the findings as well as our implications for future research, policy, and practice.

Conclusion and Implications

From this study, we learned about one elementary teacher's use of home visits to gain knowledge about focal students' sense of place, which informed her differentiated instruction in her first-grade classroom. While learning about her focal students' commonalities and differences, Ms. Sanchez was better able to address each child's learning needs by drawing on the ways in which her students' families worked, determining the roles she needed to play in each student's life, and developing deeper, more trusting relationships with students and families. As a Diversity Resource Teacher, Ms. Sanchez had a heightened awareness about and tended to notice differences across students; however, not all elementary teachers are predisposed in this manner. Readings and professional development on culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Gay, 2010) and assets-framed family engagement would be beneficial before engaging in a home visit practice. Home visiting that is purposefully set up to inform teachers' cultural competence may be useful because it can provide a starting point for learning about individual children.

Before entering a home, a teacher has a specific mental image of what a home should look, smell, and feel like based on his or her own established understandings; however, those associations may be divergent from those of his or her students and families. Resor (2010) encourages teachers to disregard their

own conceptions of home as the norm and reminds teachers, “our individual concepts of place are influenced by those around us and the culture in which we live” (p. 187). Therefore, preservice and inservice teachers should work to avoid assumptions (i.e., stemming from their own notions of home), which can result in comparisons that lead to deficit-based thinking about students and families. As illustrated in our study, teachers should enter home visits with an assets-based mindset in order to learn more about a student’s primary place, home (Donovan, 2016).

While Ms. Sanchez walked away from her home visits with concrete behavioral strategies and an increased understanding of students’ interests, culture, personalities, and skills, she did not have a formal way of documenting information garnered from the home visits. For preservice or inservice teachers with less experience or skill, a system for recording crucial emotional, social, cognitive, and linguistic information learned during the visit might be useful for the sake of organization and reflection. The lack of a documentation system stems from Ms. Sanchez’s “[I] just went for it” (Interview, 12/11/17) mentality with home visits; she did not partake in a formal home visits training experience. At the very least, exposure to the concept of home visits is a necessity for both preservice and inservice teachers. Teachers need to understand that home visits can increase family and community engagement with their schools and especially their classrooms (Meyer & Mann, 2006). Ideally, inservice and preservice teachers should experience formal home visit training (Meyer et al., 2011), during which teachers learn how to effectively conduct home visits and bring information learned back into their classrooms to inform their curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Future research should explore the format of and benefits associated with home visit training, which includes translating knowledge obtained from students’ homes into the elementary classroom. Additionally, the PTHV model (2016) strongly recommends that teachers go in pairs for their visits, both in the interest of safety and so the teachers will have someone to reflect with after the visit. Ms. Sanchez’s choice to visit on her own meant that she did not have a partner with whom to reflect on the visit.

Finally, future research should continue to examine the intersection of differentiated instruction and PBE. PBE pushes teachers to think about how places can be thoughtfully incorporated into the organization and design of curriculum and instruction (Gruenewald, 2008), which has the potential to increasingly infuse relevance into the school experience for students (Smith & Sobel, 2010a). Home visits illuminate crucial information about students’ and families’ funds of knowledge (e.g., Gonzalez & Moll, 1995; Moll, 2015) that teachers need to know in order to understand how to work *with* the families and students that they serve (Ladson-Billings, 2009). By exploring the

children's primary places (i.e., their homes), teachers have opportunities to learn how to better foster students' strengths, support them with their challenges, and teach in effective ways (Smith & Sobel, 2010a).

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Appendix A. Classroom Observational Protocol

Context

- (i.e., individual, partner, small group, whole group, etc.)

Instructional approaches

- (i.e., content integration, direct instruction, indirect instruction, experiential learning, etc.)

Participants' behaviors [teacher and students]

- (i.e., listening, reading, talking, writing, etc.)

Participants' interactions

- (i.e., teacher with one student, teacher with small group, teacher with whole group)
- (i.e., student with one student, student with small group, student with whole group)

Materials

- (i.e., PowerPoint, textbooks, worksheets, graphic organizers, etc.)

Appendix B. Home Visit Protocol

Construct	Home Visit Observations
Relationships	Body language (eye contact, smiling, touching/hugging) Power dynamics (Who determines where the talking will happen? Who appears to be in charge?) Evidence of cultural responsiveness Tone (of teacher, in particular)
Environment, Ambiance, Context	Neighborhood, noticings outside of home Type and condition of home Participants, demographics as far as you can tell Additional people present Physical arrangement of the home or meeting space Sights, smells, sounds
Content	Length of visit, time of day Apparent goals of the visit Language(s) used How conversation unfolds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing academic information (past, present, future) • Social information (past, present) • Goals for child (hopes/dreams) • Upcoming event • Expectations from teacher • Expectations from family • Sharing info from classroom • Family's experiences with schooling

Physical Artifacts	What does the teacher bring into the home? What does the teacher leave with?
Researcher Questions, Comments, Concerns	

Appendix C. Teacher Interview 1

Background Questions

1. Describe how you became an elementary school teacher.
2. Describe your teaching history.
3. How did you choose Piney Ridge?
4. What are your student demographics?
5. How similar/different to the elementary school you attended in terms of cultural diversity?
6. How similar/different to the elementary school you attended in terms of SES?

General Home Visit Questions

1. Why did you decide to implement home visits?
2. What do you see as the benefits of home visits? Can you give some specific examples?
3. What are the drawbacks of home visits?
4. How did you learn to conduct a home visit? Is there a model you used?
5. A lot of student teachers have expressed concern or fear around entering unfamiliar communities and new or different homes. How did you become comfortable entering the communities in which your students live?

Context-Specific Home Visit Questions

1. What did you communicate to families to prepare them for home visits?
2. In what ways do you communicate with families in addition to the home visits?
3. Can you describe one home visit that felt particularly effective? One home visit that didn't go as you'd intended?
4. How do you know if a home visit was effective?
5. What do you enjoy most about going on home visits?
6. What are some of the most interesting things that you've learned about students through home visits?
7. What do you tend to discuss most during home visits?
8. When families ask about academics, how you discuss them during your time in the home?
9. How do you use the information that you learn on home visits to inform your teaching? To inform your classroom community?

Appendix D. Teacher Interview 2

Context-Specific Home Visit Questions

1. What did you communicate to families to prepare them for home visits?
2. In what ways do you communicate with families in addition to the home visits?

3. Can you describe one home visit that felt particularly effective? One home visit that didn't go as you'd intended?
4. How do you know if a home visit was effective?
5. What do you enjoy most about going on home visits?
6. What are some of the most interesting things that you've learned about students through home visits?
7. What do you tend to discuss most during home visits?
8. When families ask about academics, how you discuss them during your time in the home?
9. How do you use the information that you learn on home visits to inform your teaching? To inform your classroom community?

Appendix E. Teacher Interview 3

Focal Student Interview

1. What are the things about [student's name] that stand out to you as unique and what are the things that you do to meet [student's name] needs?

Follow-up Prompts

1. What pieces of [student's name] home culture have you been able to incorporate into what you do in the classroom?
2. How is [student's name] academically?
3. How often are you in contact with [student's name] family?

Appendix F. Teacher Interview 4

Diversity Resource Teacher

1. How did you become a diversity resource teacher?
2. As the diversity resource teacher for your school, what are some of your typical tasks associated with that position?
3. How has your work as a diversity resource teacher informed how you conduct home visits?
4. How has your work as a diversity resource teacher informed your teaching?

Prior Home Visit Questions

1. How has your home visiting changed over time?
2. What community activities have you participated in with families in the past?

Future Home Visit Questions

1. Will you continue to do home visits in the future? Why or why not?
2. What else should we know?

