"It's Like Fuel": Igniting Rural English Learner Education Through Place-Conscious Professional Development

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Rural schools and communities across the United States are increasingly diverse—linguistically, racially, and culturally. As rural schools experience this diversity, the need for well-prepared educators (teachers, leaders, counselors, and coaches) has continued to grow. This three-year study consisted of a place-conscious educator professional development program aimed to support rural English learners (Els) and their families. Participants engaged in six hybrid graduate level courses with onsite meetings, coaching, and classroom support. Data for this study derived from participating educators' coursework, focus groups, material archives, observations, and fieldnotes. Data were analyzed following open and axial coding techniques, collapsed into categories, and merged into themes. Data indicated that the collaboration that emerged from the professional development was relational, equal, and synergistic in nature. This collaboration appeared to be pivotal in creating and implementing new supports for ELs and more equitable education for EL students and families.

Educator professional development (PD) plays a key role in the work of teachers and leaders and can have positive benefits for educators, students, and families. Some of the benefits of educator PD include healthy work and learning environments; strong networks of support for students, families, and teachers; and improved student learning outcomes (Goddard et al., 2007). For educators working in K–12 public school settings, PD has become an increasingly important aspect of educator work life (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Mizell, 2010). Not all PD, however, is alike. Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2017) suggest that one of the most important features of effective PD includes educator collaboration. Other scholars (Goulet et al., 2003) note that for PD to lead to transformed educator practices, it should be grounded in human relationships (Goulet et al., 2003).

At the same time, scholars who study the role of place in education have described how place shapes the work of educators and their professional learning. Place is more than just a backdrop in which teachers instruct and students learn (Eppley, 2015); place holds meaning and subsumes particular processes and conditions that shape human behavior and identity (Howley & Howley, 2014). We concur

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that "place" is central in the work of educators. Further, developing a *place-conscious* pedagogy requires that we constantly ask ourselves, "what needs to be transformed and what needs to be conserved" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10). Because educational contexts are demographically and geographically distinct, educator PD looks different across diverse locales. Greenwood (2019) contends that a place-focused approach to teaching and learning must be contextualized and culturally responsive to the needs of educators and all students in a particular school. As he notes in his work, Greenwood (2019) proffers that a critical pedagogy of place could be "a meeting ground for diverse people to inspire one another" (p. 358). We extend "critical pedagogy of place" by referring to *place-conscious* education, which includes the process of how educators become aware of place and how this knowledge permeates the work they do in rural schools and communities.

Over the past two decades, we have studied rurality and specifically the ways in which educators working in rural schools and communities conceptualize and negotiate their work with language minoritized students, or English learners (ELs) (Ankeny et al., 2019; Coady, 2019, 2020, 2021; Golombek et al., 2022; Marichal, 2021; Marichal et al., 2021). EL students face persistent disparities in academic learning outcomes due to the fact that all learning and assessment practices are mediated by language, and this process differs for students who speak and use multiple languages. For instance, data from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), gathered biannually since 2003, demonstrate a persistent gap in reading and mathematics achievement between EL and non-EL students (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). We also know that teacher quality and the preparation of teachers for EL students is the single most important factor to affect learning (Calderón et al., 2011). However, recent research underscores how rural EL students have inequitable access to highly prepared teachers, technologies, and quality bilingual programs (Coady, 2021; Glover et al., 2016; Kandel et al., 2011; Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Nugent et al., 2017; Provasnik et al., 2007). One promising practice to support rural EL student learning is through educator preparation (Coady, 2020).

Rural schools in the United States face significant structural inequities in access to resources, and property tax-based funding reifies an inherently inequitable system of education (Showalter et al., 2019). Soja (2009) describes this as "spatial injustice" which is "an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice and injustice.… [T]his involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them" (p. 2). Complicating education in rural communities are the realities of limited resources. For instance, the need for gasoline to transport students long distances to and from school stretches schools financially. This becomes a legal violation if students are not provided equal access to supplemental programs when they depend on school buses for transportation (Kolbe et al., 2021; Sipple & Brent, 2015). With respect to language minoritized students (here referred as English learners, ELs) and families living and working in rural communities, the inequitable distribution of socially valued resources affects their lives through limited access to specialized language teachers and leaders (Kandel et al., 2011; Nugent et al., 2017); multilingual and multicultural resources for family engagement (Coady, 2019); and bilingual education programs (Lewis & Gray, 2016). In other words, place in general and rurality in particular shape the educational experiences and learning opportunities for rural ELs.

In our work with rural educators of ELs (Coady 2019, 2020, 2021; Marichal et al., 2021), we found that structural and educational inequities inherent to rural places also shape if, how, where, and when educators collaborate. For instance, in urban or suburban districts, educators located in close physical proximity to one another can engage in shared practices, co-plan, co-teach, and observe each other's practices (Johnson & Fargo, 2010). In urban and suburban school districts, educators can cross-share educational expertise and specialized educational services, such as in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), bilingual, or special education. In contrast, in rural schools, referred to here following the National Center for Education Statistics Locale Classifications as schools geographically located 5 miles or more from an urbanized area (NCES, 2022), educators may be physically distant or too remote to share educational services or expertise (Showalter et al., 2019); distance plays a further role in how educators collaborate and learn from each other in PD. Collaboration among rural educators, then, is limited when educators lack opportunities to build trusting relationships, engage in real-time dialogue, share their professional knowledge, and support each other's work.

Our Rural Context

This three-year study took place in one rural school district that occupied about 1,000 square miles of land. According to recent U.S. Census data,[1] of the approximate 40,000 inhabitants in the county, about 78% were White, 10% African American, and 10% identified as Hispanic or Latino. The percentage of language minoritized, identified EL students was about 7%. The median household income was about $35,000, and nearly 20% of the population was

[1] Specific data for the community are not provided to protect its anonymity.

considered to be living in poverty. As a result, the school district qualified for free breakfast and lunch for all students using federal Title I funding.

Driving across the county-centric school district, which consisted of five main towns each separated by about 20 miles, one encountered farms with tall metal silos, packing houses for peanut processing, cattle grazing on lush fields, and cylindrical bales of hay that dotted the low rolling hills. In addition to peanuts, smaller farms consisted of first crop blueberries, late summer watermelons, and year-round palm trees. One of the five towns had a sizable McDonald's, which proved essential during the COVID-19 pandemic when students sat in the parking lot to access high speed internet and complete schoolwork. Other chain stores, such as Dollar General and Walmart, were located in two of the four larger towns. Two of the main towns also housed local businesses such as family-owned daycare centers, an ice cream shop, thrift stores, and several family restaurants. Flanking the north side of the county on one of the three major crossroads was a county detention center, and about 90 minutes' drive from the county was one of the four large federal deportation centers in the state.

Although migratory workers passed through the county annually and supplied seasonal labor during harvests, a number of agriculture workers remained in the area over time and provided year-round labor, while others traveled to an adjacent county that housed a large equestrian industry. Data from the school district indicated that 90% of the non-native born population in the area were Spanish speakers and represented a multitude of countries from across Latin America. However, these data do not necessarily imply that other languages, such as indigenous languages, were not also spoken or used. Visually in the county there was little to no evidence that a Spanish-speaking community existed. Few written signs, other than those located in the community health clinic and in the backs of restaurants, were in Spanish, and there was no local Spanish newspaper or radio broadcast. Several churches across the county offered religious services in Spanish during the weekend.

The main towns had consolidated middle-high schools and a separate elementary school. One of the towns, with the largest number of EL students, further divided the elementary into lower K–2, and upper 3–5 schools. To provide interpretation and translation services to the district's EL families, the district hired a limited number of bilingual paraeducators. All were women, and they took up roles as family liaisons and assisted families in communicating with teachers and school leaders if a child were sick or absent, translated key documents, and interpreted at parent-teacher conference nights. Despite the fact that the paraeducator position required a high school diploma, the bilingual paraeducators were also responsible for assisting teachers' instruction in classrooms, with one paraeducator hired for every 25 identified EL students.

Details of the Project

This project took place over a three-year period as part of a federally funded five-year rural teacher and leader PD program. The aim of the PD was to provide technical assistance and support for educators of EL students, leading to improved learning for ELs. The PD was both purposeful and collaborative. Coady worked with the district's ESOL director to conceptualize, design, and implement the PD. She had a longstanding, 15-year relationship with the ESOL coordinator and with several of the school principals, teachers, paraeducators, and families. As a collaborative effort, the project director and the district ESOL director understood the problems of educational practice that the educators in the district faced, how rurality shaped their work, the resources they could or could not access, and the sociopolitical climate toward non-English speakers. They also understood the agricultural base of the community which simultaneously attracted immigrant families to the area and provided a financial support structure for them to settle in the community. In effect, the entirety of the project was grounded in collaboration that built upon the rural community strengths and social functioning. Place, and the particulars of that rural community, were inherent in the conceptualization and design, content, and implementation of the PD and the study.

The broader study from which these data were collected was a quasi-experimental design with a three-year teacher and leader PD intervention situated in and responsive to their particular place. Thus, the PD was a place-conscious-job-embedded PD that linked learning to the real life-problems faced by these rural educators. Croft et al. (2010) suggest that job-embedded professional development "refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and is designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning" (p. 2). We designed PD content to be used immediately and directly in the work of educators. Further, we see place-conscious as content and practices that reflect the specific "place," that is, the rural community itself. For example, one component of the PD included learning about how families functioned in the community and what their livelihoods consisted of. The place-conscious nature of the PD included meeting families in their homes and work and learning from them about their work in agriculture. In addition, the PD consisted of onsite coaching and support in Phase 1, where the project director and the project staff spent time in schools and classrooms assisting educators in their work with EL students. The project also included

a family engagement component in Phase 1 and a second phase (Phase 2) where the participating educators served as coaches for other educators at their school, with the goal of building educator expertise for ELs. All educators in the district were invited to participate because in the state of Florida all educators are required under a legal settlement agreement to have preparation working with EL students.

The content of the PD was built around six hybrid graduate-level courses and delivered over two academic years. The third year aimed to extend the PD to other educators in the district (Phase 2, noted above, in a coaching model). The coursework also provided onsite coaching and support for the 22 educators who enrolled in Phase 1. The project director and researchers (two professors and three advanced doctoral students) developed course content to center on the demographics, needs, and local realities of the participants, with a focus on place, language teaching, and the learning needs of the EL students. The courses were taken in this sequence:

1. Guided Inquiry for Rural Educators of English Learners (ELs)
2. ESOL Methods
3. Teaching and Leading in Rural High Poverty Settings
4. Transforming the Curriculum
5. Teacher Leadership and Social Change
6. Instructional Coaching to Enhance English Learner (EL) Learning

We fostered participant collaboration in the design by structuring the PD in school-based teams of educators to work together. We used this approach because we knew that each rural community functioned in socially distinct ways, that the EL families engaged in various labor based on where they lived, and that each school's orientation or "context of reception" (Stepick & Stepick, 2009) to non-native English speakers varied. The PD participants included school leaders (e.g., a principal or vice principal), K–12 classroom teachers, and school counselors. School counselors played an important and specific role in the PD because they were assigned as school-based ESOL coordinators who oversaw the EL student identification, classroom-based accommodations and assessments, and exiting of EL students once their language proficiency met state guidelines.

A second way that the PD built collaboration was through planned interactions and activities among the participants. For instance, in one course participants selected nonfiction narrative books and shared connections between the content (stories) and their school-based experiences (Golombek et al., 2022). In another activity, educators participated in a "privilege walk" based on MacIntosh's (1989) concept of white privilege. This allowed them to share their backgrounds and experiences while collectively interrogating how privilege works and is reified in social structures. In sum, the PD included content and activities to foster critical collaboration among participants.

The PD was initially offered online for the first two courses delivered in semester 1 of the study. However, after receiving educator feedback on the first administered satisfaction survey in semester 1, we learned that the participants wanted to meet, learn, and gather as a group onsite to learn from each other and address the sense of isolation and distance that they experienced. We then restructured the coursework and activities. We held three annual face-to-face kickoff events in the summer at either the university or the school district center offices for team building and to deepen participants' content knowledge in ESOL. We also held quarterly onsite professional learning community (PLC) meetings at one of the schools, which rotated among three different towns. As a group, we together decided where the PLCs would take place to ensure that the driving distance was shared by everyone (described in Finding 1, below). As the data emerged from our work, we began to ask how collaboration emerged in a place-conscious PD for rural educators of EL students. Our research question was *How did rural educators collaborate in PD for their EL students?* We collected data from the PD coursework, PLCs, fieldnotes, and material artifacts and identified a powerful narrative of collaboration and relationship among the participants in the school district. This article describes how the educators in the district engaged in collaboration in the context of the project and co-constructed significant changes to their work with rural EL students.

Review of Literature: The Role of Place in Educator PD

Professional development is a mainstay in the work life of educators. Educators, including classroom teachers and school leaders, are often tasked with goal setting each academic year to deepen their knowledge and learning surrounding topics related to their work in the profession. It is not surprising, then, that the literature base on teacher and leader professional development is extensive and continues to deepen into various content areas and across different populations. To understand what works in educator PD, van Veen and colleagues (2011) conducted an extensive review of the literature on educator PD that was based on 25 years of research. The authors differentiated between traditional and innovative PD, where "traditional" is characterized as one day workshops, seminars, or conferences and during which teachers were passive receivers of knowledge. In contrast, innovative PD, in which teachers are active participants

in their learning, can address problems of educational practice that teachers face. Van Veen and associates found that innovative PD has three conditions: teachers actively construct knowledge, teachers collaborate with colleagues, and the content of the PD relates to and is situated in daily teaching practices. Evidence from their extensive review of the literature shows that effective teacher PD has these three conditions and is focused on student learning.

In a recent review of teacher PD, Sims and colleagues (2021) conducted a meta-analysis that extended the prior work of scholars who study educator PD (e.g., Desimone, 2009; Kennedy, 2016; Walter & Briggs, 2012). They analyzed teacher PD and its effect on student learning. One hundred four empirical studies met their inclusion criteria. Seventy percent of the studies derived from the United, States and 24% were from the United Kingdom, with only a small percentage (6%) included from other countries. The authors included studies that followed "structured approaches to peer collaboration or support," meaning that organized collaboration was a central element in the PD studies. They defined effective outcomes from the PD as improving "pupil achievement, as captured by scores on standardised tests" (p. 78). The researchers identified four critical elements of effective PD: insight, goal setting, techniques, and practice, and the more elements present in the PD, the stronger the effect of the PD on student learning. Across these two extensive reviews, structured PD that included collaboration and that was embedded in educators' daily practices appeared to have a positive effect on student learning outcomes. However, these cross-national analyses did not address how place shapes educator PD, their access to quality PD, nor the sustainability of PD over time.

Rural Educator PD

The important role of place is commonly absent from authors' reviews of effective educator PD. However, despite the fact that place shapes the work of teachers and student learning in schools, much of the literature on educator PD has overlooked how place relates to the work of teachers and leaders. In reference to place-conscious PD, although scholars (e.g., Glover et al., 2016) have found that rural educators were not comparatively disadvantaged in access to PD, additional findings have suggested that urban teachers participated in more hours of PD overall (Wei et al., 2010). Ullman (2010) argues for place-conscious educator PD, citing vast differences in need across diverse rural communities. Quoting Larry Rausch, the executive director of Wabash Valley Education Center, Ullman (2010) notes, "The rural teachers I've spoken with want [to work with] someone who is the only one or one of two—just like them" (Making PD Relevant for Rural Educators section).

The literature on educator PD suggests that content-specific PD is advancing for rural teachers of mathematics or special education. For example, Barrett and colleagues (2015) report on a mathematics and science PD in remote rural Kentucky. Their data showed that rural schools' investment in an intensive teacher in-service PD in mathematics and science had positive impacts on student outcomes for more than one year beyond the training. Cady and Rearden (2009) documented an online mathematics PD for rural teachers and found increased educator collaboration in communities of practice and improved pedagogical content knowledge. In the area of special education, Erickson and colleagues (2012) found that an online PD for 86 secondary special education teachers led to an increase in knowledge and developed meaningful collaboration with peers across the United States. These studies hold promise for rural content area teachers as well as for rural teachers working with special populations of students.

Some research on rural educator PD for ELs has also begun to emerge. For instance, Wille et al. (2019) interviewed 11 rural educators across three small towns in the Western and Midwestern United States and found collaboration to be one of the six key themes to participation. In Texas, Hansen-Thomas and Grosso-Richins (2015) examined how in-service teachers translated their newly acquired knowledge about English as a second language (ESL) into a mentoring experience for their rural peers. They found that working collaboratively helped to identify issues relevant to their schools and to co-create solutions for ELs. Ringler et al. (2013) examined the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework for guiding instruction for rural ELs (Echevarria et al., 2006). They reported that collaboration with the school administration was necessary in order to implement the SIOP PD program. These studies demonstrate the potential power of collaboration in PD that can lead to improved learning and education for rural EL students. This study answers the research question of how rural educators collaborated in PD for their EL students.

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework aligns place-conscious education (Greenwood, 2019) and educator collaboration (Goulet et al., 2003) as integral and essential aspects of PD. We see these two frames as in symbiotic relationship to each other in ways that can lead to effective and transformational educator PD. We describe these frames below.

Place-Conscious Education

Greenwood's (2019) work on place-conscious education informs our framework and the role of place in

teaching as place-conscious pedagogy. Using examples of situated learning and his own process of unlearning colonizing practices that emerged in his own teaching, Greenwood suggests that place-conscious education is a "way of being and knowing" through which educators become "more deeply reflective about their own ontological experience" (p. 363). His reflection on place-conscious education challenges educators (that is, himself and us) to unpack histories of land and human oppression through critical self-reflection. For Greenwood, this act initiates the process of building humanizing relationships and the opportunity to re-inhabit place.

For Greenwood (2019), the metaphor of the window, which provides a boundary between a viewer and the object being examined (in this case, place), is helpful to move from theorizing place-conscious education to practicing it. Greenwood challenges us to not only "get into our relationship with place" but to also use multiple positions and orientations on place to focus "beyond our own seeing" (p. 365). The practice of place-conscious education, which, he argues, is an ongoing process of reflection, unlearning, and reinhabitation, involves interrogating learned colonial practices and mindsets.

The practice of place-conscious education involves three actions or movements (Greenwood, 2019). The first is a critique of existing educational practices, similar to the work of Freire and "praxis," through the processes of reflection and action. The second includes engaging in practices that support situated and ongoing learning about people and places, that is, gaining a complex understanding of how people learn and change, and under what conditions, as well as its corollary—how learning and change do not happen—particularly for colonized and minoritized groups. Third is "soul work" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 371). Here he suggests that educators embrace the "traditions—often radical, suppressed, and counter-cultural traditions—that can guide our own being and becoming" (p. 371). He suggests that curiosity about who people are and where they come from can enable our own stories of being and becoming. Complex reflection and re-inhabitation allow for the creation of a new narrative that can "reweave settler culture back into the fabric of the more-than-human lifeworld" (p. 373).

Collaboration as Phenomenon and Process

A second aspect of our theoretical framework involves educator collaboration, especially where educators can support each other in soul work and place-conscious education. We argue that this work can be facilitated by shared collaboration when educators form relationships with each other. Morris and Miller-Stevens (2015) define collaboration as "a group activity involving two or more people" and "an interaction that takes place between people, or organizations, or both" (p. 7). Theorizing collaboration further, McNamara (2015) notes differences between mandated and voluntary collaboration, associating collaborative activities along a "continuum of interaction" (p. 67) rather than as a discrete activity. On one end of the continuum lies cooperation, a less formal structure where individuals voluntarily work together "within existing structures" to accomplish goals (p. 67). Centered at the middle of the continuum is the idea of coordination. For McNamara, coordination builds in organizational structures that assist individuals in accomplishing their individual goals. Government models offer an example of coordination, based on their hierarchical structure and need to link infrastructure to the work of grouped individuals. Finally, at the opposite end of the continuum lies collaboration. McNamara (2015) describes collaboration as "an interaction between participants who work together to pursue complex goals based on shared interests and a collective responsibility for interconnected tasks which cannot be accomplished individually" (p. 68).

Other scholars have developed a model of educator collaboration where collaboration is both a phenomenon and a process—interdependent, recurrent, evolving, and constantly shaping each other (Goulet et al., 2003). Three dimensions of the model of educator collaboration include *ways of being*, *ways of doing*, and *ways of becoming*.

Ways of Being

Ways of being emphasize the importance of building and sustaining relationships in cultivating collaboration through which reflection, action, and transformation may be fueled. Those relationships intend to ensure power symmetry rooted in mutual recognition of and leveraging of all members' resources. Goulet et al. (2003) delineate these elements of this dimension: *caring and respect*, *openness*, and *voluntary participation.* First, it is through *care and respect* for all community members and their work that power may be shared, and as result, dialogue can be held and trustworthy relationships through collaboration can be fostered in pursuit of accomplishing a common goal. Second, participants' *openness*, another crucial factor in collaborative efforts, focuses on creating a democratic space ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard, affirmed, and seen as a resource. Collaboration cannot be truly realized without radical listening, self-reflection, and self-criticism, anchored in trust and honesty. Third, *voluntary participation* refers to a formal consent, seen as an initial agreement to collaborate on a project, and an informal consent which reflects "an ongoing process of negotiating participation" (McAlpine & Crago, 1997, as cited in Goulet et al., 2003, p. 109). This approach suggests

that collaborative participation is an agreement that requires compromises, readjustments, and continual responsiveness.

Ways of Doing

Goulet et al. (2003) define *ways of doing* as ways in which "participants in collaboration engage in activity with others to achieve project goals" (p. 333). This dimension consists of these factors: *collaborative mentoring*, *the work of talk*, and *meaning-making. Collaborative mentoring* among participants is explained as an organic and dynamic approach to leadership, rooted in deep understanding and trustworthy relationship with each other, where all take responsibility for supporting and guiding others in response to a given circumstance. Accentuating the critical role of language and communication in collaboration is *the work of talk*, which includes activities such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Goulet et al. (2003) argue that participants who engage in conversations establish interpersonal bonds which are integral to building trust. This "informed talk" in collaboration also facilitates participants' "reflective thinking process" and brings meaning to individuals' experiences as they understand and care for each other (Goulet et al., 2003, p. 334). Building on *collaborative mentoring* and *the work of talk*, the third element, *meaning-making*, illuminates the significance of narrating and interpreting participants' lived experiences and shared understandings in collaboration.

Ways of Becoming

Goulet and colleagues (2003) describe *ways of becoming* as ways in which participants are transformed by the collaborative process of change through consistent "negotiation and working together," creating "a climate of caring and mutual respect," and the development of trust and openness in relationships with collaborative partners (p. 335). The components of this dimension are *the social mind*, *equity*, and *transformation.* As noted, Goulet et al. (2003) posit that transformation as a community cannot be realized without undergoing a process of change fueled by the other two dimensions: *ways of being* and *ways of doing.* The authors posit that through dialogue, sharing, and collective self-reflection, the *social mind* of a group emerges. These shared understandings and thought processes "are externalized in talk for all to use" (Goulet et al., 2003, p. 336). The emergence of a *social mind* enables community members to support each other's thinking in a way that transcends what one individual could have achieved alone.

According to Goulet et al. (2003), equity in collaboration refers to creating a space where participants can "become a community of self-reflexive learners in equitable" and democratic "relationships with others" (p. 337). Equity in collaboration values individuals—educators in this study—as equal collaborative participants, facilitates the sharing of power and the creation of knowledge, and leads to changes in educators' practices in their classrooms and schools. Finally, *transformation* results from collaborative conversations that lead to an increased awareness of the realities of others. As people make meaning of their experiences, they become empowered to make changes in their individual lives and practices. The notion of *transformation* conveys that, through collaboration, school educators can reimagine their educational roles and transform them. Goulet et al.'s (2003) framework helps to recognize that collaboration in education can empower educators to create a democratic and trustworthy platform, ultimately leading them to reimagining their engagement in the world.

Methodology

Data from this study were collected over a three-year period, from 2017 through 2019. During that period, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Qualitative data obtained during the PD included participants' online course postings and papers from each of the six courses in which they enrolled, notes from meetings held onsite in the professional learning communities (PLCs) and three annual kickoff events, and three years of annual satisfaction surveys with 22 educators' feedback on their courses and program. Within the six educator PD courses, we separated assignments from discussion posts and assigned them to each participant as a "case" in our NVivo R.1 software for analysis. The written data from the coursework consisted of approximately 15 pages of data from each participant per course, or about 2,000 pages of data. We also collected photographs (over 250 in total) and material artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, shared materials such as "student profile" templates created by participants to support their PD, and "Where I'm From" poems created by participants in the PD).

Participants

Twenty-two educators participated in the PD. Of the 22 participants, five were middle or high school teachers, and 17 worked at the elementary level. The middle-high schools were consolidated throughout the school district, so those educators worked in one building with shared resources such as bilingual paraeducators and student counselors.

The participants completed six graduate-level courses that emphasized educator inquiry, rural EL students, ESOL methods, and educator coaching for EL students' success. Educators self-selected and volunteered to participate in the PD. Each received a $500 stipend for every successful semester of completion of the PD. We initially aimed to

recruit the district's bilingual paraeducators in the project, but because they did not hold bachelor's degrees at the time of the study, they could not enroll in the graduate-level PD certificate program per university regulations. This situation was unfortunate, because we know that bilingual paraeducators frequently play essential and undervalued roles that support rural EL student learning (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 2006). At the start of the project, the rural ESOL district director and the project director recruited participants by sending electronic and paper flyers and emails to approximately 250 teachers, leaders, coaches, and guidance counselors in the district. As we noted earlier, the rationale for including a variety of educational professionals was informed by our prior work in rural communities in which we learned the multifaceted roles that rural educators take on (Barley & Brigham, 2008). This was especially true for EL students, and we understood the need for multiple educators across a variety of roles to collaborate for rural ELs.

Data Collection

We collected data using online methods from the university learning systems platform (Canvas) and annual online satisfaction surveys (Qualtrics). We collected real-time data from onsite professional learning community (PLC) meetings that functioned as focus groups and were captured in field notes and/or audio recorded; material artifacts and resources from annual kickoff events; photographs; and observation field notes collected by the project director, program coordinator, and the research team. A total of eight researchers participated in data collection and analysis over the three-year period, including the project director, a program coordinator, two adjunct faculty members, and four rotating graduate research assistants. All data were uploaded onto a secure server at the university.

Data Analysis

Data were entered into NVivo R.1 software for analysis. We analyzed data continuously, from the inception of the project until the end of the grant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data for this project were analyzed by uploading each participant's discussion posts and papers from the six courses, images, and other material artifacts such as lesson plans or materials created to support their work with ELs. Each member of the research team was assigned to code data across three or four different participants. We open coded the data independently and then shared initial codes across the research team, constructing categories of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). We discussed each code and the relationships between the codes to ensure that there was cohesion across the various data. We then established axial codes and created a shared codebook, ensuring that new associations between codes were added or removed as we advanced through the data. Data were shared again and discussed in bi-monthly team meetings. We merged the coded data into a master file through NVivo Team Collaboration software.

As a team we shared initial findings from individual cases and across cases. For example, in the open coding process, the research team may have initially coded participants' papers, discussion posts, and material artifacts broadly as "teacher" or "teaching." Upon discussing the codes, we differentiated "teacher" from the "process of teaching," and then further narrowed down to EL teaching strategies, again separating that from general teaching. We then cross-referenced that with data coded as collaboration, where our participants shared (in discussion posts) challenges and solutions to EL student learning in classrooms. Hence, we created a category of teacher collaboration. See Figure 1 for a sample of the study codebook.

Figure 1
Codebook on Code "Teacher and Teaching"

Teacher and teaching

- Teacher professional knowledge
  - Teaching strategies – instruction
  - El strategies – instruction
  - Lesson planning – planning
  - Teacher collaboration
- Teacher personal knowledge
- Teacher passion
- "Cultural coaching" (brokering)
  - Reflection (self-reflection)

As we analyzed the data further, the theme of "collaboration" readily emerged across varied categories of data, that is, in the Teacher and Teaching category as well as across other categories, such as Understanding ELs, and Rural Context. In the data, we noted the qualities of collaboration that educators demonstrated in the PD: their collaboration was relational, "equal" or democratic, and synergistic. We built trustworthiness in the data through the use of multiple data sources and by sharing our findings with participants. As a team, we also discussed our own positionalities with respect to the participants and the data. For instance, all of the study team members were bilingual and biliterate, and we shared our personal language learning experiences to better understand how we, then, understood

educators' views of the languages of their students. Throughout our work and engagement with educators, we uplifted the minoritized languaging and literacy skills of families and students by acknowledging and prioritizing their voices. We underscored the linguistic, familial, and aspirational capitals of EL students and their families (Yosso, 2005). We aimed to create understanding, empathy, and compassion when there was confusion among educators surrounding why and how families came to inhabit the community, and how their work and contributions were often invisible in some areas of the community. When we held PD meetings onsite, we purchased local foods prepared from EL families and ensured that materials created from the local community were identified and valued. In sum, we aimed to be purposeful in the decisions we made surrounding the PD content, process, and findings and to reinforce community linguistic and cultural capital (Crumb et al., 2022; Yosso, 2005).

One limitation of this study is that it is not generalizable to other rural communities or necessarily to educator PD projects because this work addressed the way this particular rural community functioned. At the same time, we believe that findings from this study can inform other scholars' work in designing and implementing PD for rural educators with EL students by identifying the strengths in other communities and the histories and backgrounds of the students, families, and educators who live and work in those places. Thus, one outcome from this work is the creation of virtual and in-person spaces in which educators can collaborate and that center rural needs and realities, including providing a structure of school-based teams of educators with varied roles, skills, and backgrounds who worked together for their EL students and families.

Findings

This study answered the question, *How did rural educators collaborate in PD for their EL students?* Our data demonstrate that rural educator collaboration for ELs can be structured and fostered but that it also evolves over time. This process began with establishing flexible virtual and lived or physical spaces that responded to rural educators' needs, building relationships with each other that were democratic and that led to a sense of synergy. As a result of creating those spaces, what emerged was collaboration in which educators co-constructed solutions that aimed to address the learning and social-emotional needs of their ELs. We describe these solutions below.

Participant Collaboration Onsite: Relationship Building

When the initial PD project was conceptualized in conjunction with the ESOL district coordinator as early as 2015–2016, the challenges of physical distance between educators' schools in the rural district was an important consideration. The six PD courses were initially designed to be job-embedded and delivered online, and onsite support and coaching was to be provided by the project director and research team. However, within the first four months of the PD, educators expressed the need to engage with each other in real time and at the same onsite location. Their desire to learn about and from each other was evident in the first course, Guided Inquiry. The course allowed educators to get to know each other online and to identify shared wonderings and passions. Beth, a third-grade classroom teacher, reflected on the importance of sharing her background with a new colleague who was also working with EL students:

> As we both began to discuss our classroom practices, we immediately discovered that we needed to know more about each other's experiences in a classroom before we could successfully discover what we both had in common, let alone, were both interested in. To begin learning about each other we started with what we already knew about each other. The two of us attended [university] and had received our reading and ESOL endorsements. (Beth and Rebecca, Guided Inquiry paper, 2017)

One of the secondary educators, Adela, felt similarly—that the opportunity to share experiences with colleagues could foster relationship-building among her peers. She imagined how rural educators could assist each other by

> Providing the space and time to be heard and tend to their needs.... I can also collaborate with other teachers to form a club, a facilitating group where we share learning techniques. A solid platform where we [teachers] could share, collaborate, and learn. (Adela, Guided Inquiry post, 2017)

Adela added that "sometimes administrators and leadership forget that teachers also have different learning needs" and that relationship-building and collaboration among rural teachers who felt isolated would allow them to learn both with and from each other.

Satisfaction surveys gathered from year 1 of the PD asked participants to evaluate the early PD coursework and provide areas of improvement. The survey included a rating scale for the first two courses and two open ended questions for improvement areas. Sixteen of the 22 educators completed the survey in year 1. Overall, educators were extremely satisfied (69%) or somewhat satisfied (19%) with the Guided Inquiry course and extremely satisfied (87%) or somewhat satisfied (13%) with the ESOL Methods course.

In the open-ended feedback, two participants stated, "I personally would like more face-to-face meetings" with a request to "make things as convenient as possible for us." Additional feedback after year 1 regarding the most useful components of the project included, "opportunities to work with others from my school and other schools. We need those times to collaborate, vent, share, etc., and they are usually so few and far between." Another participant noted the developing "camaraderie and atmosphere it [the PD] creates.… [T]he team tended to have a way of turning it [negativity] into a problem in which we should think about and discuss possible solutions." An additional educator appreciated "the collaboration with others throughout the district, the presentation from the attorney on immigration, and the collaboration with [the university] overall."

As a result of the survey data and feedback, the project director, with support from the adjunct faculty instructors, made modifications to the delivery of the remaining courses to include onsite meetings. The meetings were held on select Saturday mornings at various locations (e.g., at schools, a local immigrant family farm, a local restaurant) and after school on specific dates. The participating educators agreed to drive to the agreed-upon meeting point and to rotate the meeting point to ensure that the driving was "fair"—that is, that no one person or group of educators had excessively more driving to do than another. The flexible virtual and lived spaces were a key component to the way the participants built relationships and collaborated during the PD.

Educator Collaboration and Synergy: "No ONE Person Knows Everything"

In contrast to the metro-centric programs offered to rural educators, this PD provided a platform for educators to build relationships with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and to collaborate around a common area: EL students. As noted earlier, we responded to educators' requests for onsite meetings and events. The educators described how collaborative spaces and reflective coursework helped them to address the isolation they felt as rural educators and how they felt heard in a mutually supportive and respectful environment. As one music teacher, Elizabeth, remarked, "As a teacher, oftentimes we feel so isolated in our classrooms … like working on an island." One of her colleagues responded to her online post,

> I feel [that] collaboration and change go together. You need to collaborate to make a change in education. I like the way you said "working on an island." I feel many teachers feel like they are on their own, treading water, as I put it. If they would collaborate, so much change could be made. I also feel a collaborative exchange where teachers can work together, reflect on what they did, what worked, what didn't, and why would be much more beneficial.

Elizabeth later agreed with her, stating, "When teachers are able to collaborate on a regular basis, the results of growth for both teachers and students is incredible. It truly takes a village to make teachers and students the best they can possibly be."

One dimension of collaboration identified by the participants was that the collaboration was "equal." The participants used this terminology to describe their relationship and work with other colleagues in the PD. Data revealed that the participants collaborated in ways that were more democratic in nature and less reflective of social hierarchies in schools. That is, although the participants held distinct roles as principal, counselor, coach, or teacher, they valued each other's contribution as a peer colleague. Data showed that the participants acknowledged the value of their varied experiences and expertise in order to support their ELs' learning. This view was captured in Grace's discussion post, "No ONE person knows everything; collaboration is integral to any business or workplace. Bringing ideas together you can work at putting all the pieces together to increase the knowledge base and share ideas." This perspective was bolstered by another participant's assertion: "No one person knows it all, I fully believe that. Everyone has different experiences and different expertise." Tanya added that "[c]ollaboration is … important because we think differently from one another. It brings in different perspectives."

Data showed that the nature of this collaboration was inclusive and rooted in a democratic stance. For instance, Cathy noted that "[n]othing is more empowering than an organization where everyone is energized to create a successful environment.… Leadership needs to create an entrepreneurial feeling where everyone takes responsibility for making the organization better, stronger." Trisha underscored this sentiment and stated that she believed that in order to

> create a successful professional learning community that works collaboratively to solve problems ... it is important to create an environment for learning and collaboration and not competition. We as educators have to be willing to collaborate and learn together in order to make change for the greater good of our students.

As the PD progressed into years 2 and 3, the collaboration developed a sense of synergy that arose when educators reflected on their EL students, the challenges the

students faced, and ways that they could work together in their rural community to identify local solutions to those challenges. Participants described the synergistic effect of collaboration, whereby their combined efforts generated greater motivation to take on new and often unforeseen challenges. This synergy replaced the passivity and sense of being "powerless" that one participant described when isolated teachers "wait for administration to make decisions" and "do our best to follow their wishes." This connection was especially important in the rural district where there had been few initiatives to support EL students, and educators' ability to network was constrained by time and distance. In contrast, another participant described this synergy as "working collaboratively generates energy." This feeling of synergy was echoed poignantly by Adela:

> It is like fuel. [The] time I get to spend with a colleague is revitalizing. Understanding that it is not to get together to gossip. But when you have a buddy that shares or is willing to share your vision, you know that whatever you put [your] mind on to will get done. One will support the other.

Although the collaboration that Adela described above underscored informal interactions among educators, the structure of the PD allowed for educators to share ideas and build internal (place-conscious, rural) expertise for their EL students, who lacked access to ESL specialist teachers. They recognized that as rural educators they needed to have a broad range of specialized skills for their ELs, such as making curricular modifications, differentiating instruction, and bridging language differences in family communications. By cultivating a shared sense of purpose, a new paradigm of rural educators as problem solvers resulted from the PD.

Drawing educators' attention to the power of collaboration in the context of their coursework amplified this effect and proved especially meaningful for one participant who was a beginning teacher and a new arrival to the rural district. She suggested that otherwise under-resourced rural districts could deploy purposeful collaboration as an attractive "soft benefit" to prospective teachers:

> I wish there were more teachers from my school taking this [PD] because there would be an abundance of positive energy, as well as something in common that we shared. I would also benefit from their collaboration and as we swap ideas, get or give advice, share stories, etc! Sharing with each other creates a sense of satisfaction and support at work.

Data showed that the synergy of collaboration was grounded in a shared passion that teachers experienced when in the act of collaboration. Such passion motivated and emboldened participants to take on larger systemic challenges faced by rural EL students. For instance, another teacher observed,

> Collaboration generates excitement and passion. Educators who are passionate about the job are always excited to talk about the "job" with those who understand it firsthand. Working collaboratively engages the mind and brings forth new ideas or solutions to solve problems. As we begin to think and work together, we are more apt to see the possibilities rather than the barriers.

Co-Constructing Solutions: Advocating for and Supporting Rural ELs

Participants' desire to work together onsite, coupled with educator collaboration that was democratic and synergistic, appeared to contribute to significant changes in the school district for and on behalf of the EL students. As expressed above, the PD fostered a growing sense of collaboration or "camaraderie" among the participants, which led educators to work together to identify shared problems of educational practice and to co-construct solutions that would address their rural EL students' learning. Throughout the PD coursework and in shared learning spaces, participants had space to reflect on their own work and their EL students. They described their schools using terms such as "community" and "like a family" and wanted ELs to have the same opportunities and sense of community in school.

Over time, participants shared problems that they encountered and identified solutions for their rural ELs. For instance, Julie, a secondary science teacher, found that she did not know enough about her EL students' prior education and language backgrounds to differentiate academic content. However, she learned in the PD that knowing students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, home literacy practices, learning styles, and what they liked to do made a difference in the assignments she created and how to connect students' strengths to learning academic content. To address this issue, Julie created a "student profile template" during year 2 of the PD, submitted it as part of her coursework (Figure 2), and later shared it to the group during an onsite PLC meeting (Figure 3).

Figure 2
EL Student Profile Template

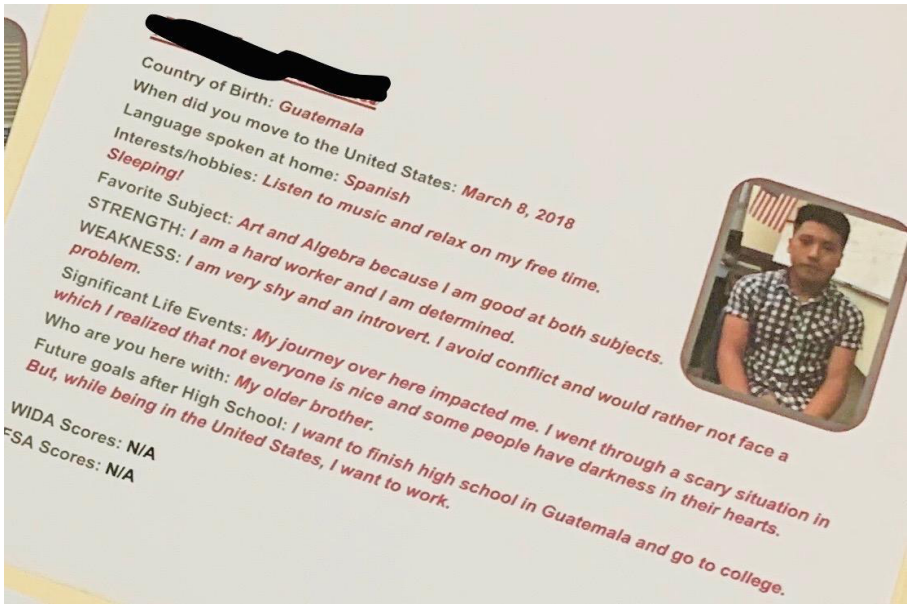

Figure 3
Onsite Rural Educator PD

The profiles contained essential background information about their EL students, such as their home languages, home literacies, and personal likes and dislikes. They were created through "tiny talks" and conversations that Julie had one-on-one with her EL students. The profile template was shared electronically in the PD, and educators then created their own profiles for their ELs. The profiles were later used in the district to promote continuity between grade levels and ensured smoother transitions for EL students between school years, for example, when EL students transitioned from the elementary school to the middle-high school.

A bold solution toward addressing EL students' academic achievement was enacted by the elementary school principal, Jessica, who in her administrative role changed the traditional instructional model for ELs at her school from "mainstream inclusion" to a "community classroom" model. The community classroom was designed to provide EL students with varying English language proficiency levels a space where their home language, bilingualism, and cultural backgrounds were valued and where their language skills could be leveraged for learning English. Jessica ensured that a highly skilled teacher, Barbara, who had won awards for her teaching, instructed the classroom. Barbara, who also participated in the PD, was given the autonomy to modify curriculum and instruction in ways that supported the EL students' emerging bilingualism. The community classroom required extensive collaboration between parents, administrators, and bilingual paraeducators. With Jessica's support, Barbara led the community classroom for two years after the PD's conclusion and reported significant learning gains for the participating ELs in the school (Coady & Sorel, 2019). At about this time, the elementary schools began to put bilingual signage on their school marquees, with one side in Spanish and the other side in English. This action was a positive step toward affirming the bilingual students and families in their community and making languages more visible.

As the coursework neared its conclusion, some participants began reporting how they had proactively reimagined their roles as educators. For Julie and Jack, secondary teachers, that meant advocating for ELs to have specialized class time to target English language proficiency development while learning academic content. The teachers collaborated with the school's leadership team to take on an additional class period for the upcoming school year. In that class, they purposefully grouped the EL students to create a bilingual space where students used their first language to learn academic content in language arts and science while simultaneously building English language skills.

Finally, at the secondary level, Adela led a plan outside the classroom to organize the school's first bilingual College and Career Night, where she collaborated with other participants and students to bring valuable information to parents in their languages. Adela, the school's Latinx Spanish teacher, was compelled to promote her students' bilingualism when she recognized her own bilingualism as a strength. She did so by researching and implementing the Seal of Biliteracy in her school (Marichal et al., 2021). The goal of the Seal is to recognize and reward achievement in oracy and literacy for students in English and a second language ("Steps to Implement," 2021). Reflecting on her personal and professional journey in the context of the PD, Adela recognized how rurality shaped her work and the lives of her EL students. As a result of the PD, Adela transformed her own deficit views about bilingualism and disrupted deficit practices for ELs in her school.

Discussion

Greenwood's (2019) place-conscious learning emphasizes the importance of place as "the meeting ground for diverse people to inspire one another" (p. 358) because in order to know and care for a place "and become part of its community, we must know and care for ourselves in our own complexity and contradictions" (p. 360). As data from this study reveal, when rural educators get acquainted with each other and come together in purposeful ways to improve learning for EL students, collaboration can be transformative for participating educators as well as for students, families, and the community. Data from our study demonstrated that the PD project was situated in educators' rural community and realities, built on collaboration that was democratic and synergistic, and prompted educators to co-construct unique local solutions that met needs of the ELs in their school district.

Aligning with Greenwood's (2019) place-conscious education as a "way of being and knowing" through which educators become deeply self-reflective about their own ontological experiences (p. 363), Goulet and colleagues' (2003) research describes the collaborative work of educators in ways of being, doing, and becoming. Important in their model is the sense of equality among participants who defy the various hierarchical roles of educators and their associated status. In this regard, we underscore that equality does not indicate that educators were the same or that they brought the same knowledges and strengths to the PD. Rather, equality in this regard underscores the equally valued contributions of the educators. For instance, the school counselors in this rural district were also decision makers for EL students and assessed students for EL services. In this study, that knowledge was highly valued, but the two counselors acknowledged their own limitations in pedagogy and deferred to teachers' expertise. In Goulet et al.'s model, as in our findings, the participants engaged in open discussion, focus group interactions, and kickoff events as peers. They showed *care*, *openness*, and *respect* by acknowledging the importance of voice and participation

in the discussions they held, where each other's views were equally valued.

As the PD evolved over time, educators reflected, shared, planned, and implemented new practices to support EL student learning that were situated in their local rural schools. These practices were strategized as specific ways in which they—educators—could change the school environment so that EL students could move from being silent in classrooms to being active participants in their learning. As Goulet et al. (2003) describe, "ways of doing" involve collaboration with others or *collaborative mentoring* to achieve project goals. Our data demonstrate the active work of educators who collaborated to achieve their goals through Goulet et al.'s *work of talk* and *meaning-making*. The participants imagined new and informed ways of working with EL students, such as creating and sharing EL student profile templates. They also critiqued the district-wide model of instruction for EL students and created the community classroom. Changes that they made were only possible through the coursework and discussions held over a three-year period and the subsequent long-term collaborations in which they engaged. It was only after two years of PD and working together in collaboration that their ideas emerged to the point of "doing." Experiencing, working, and reflecting on place together elevated the educators' awareness of what Greenwood (2019) calls "our imagined place" or new ways of doing (p. 368). Our data showed that educators understood the essence of "no place is ever just one place" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 363) and that problematizing place allowed them to develop new practices that supported their culturally and linguistically diverse EL students.

Finally, in the third related dimension of collaboration of Goulet et al.'s (2003) model, educators in this study not only reimagined their roles, they also enacted new roles. Our data demonstrate the emergence of a *social mind* that enabled educators to support each other's thinking in a way that exceeded what one individual could have achieved alone. One powerful example was establishing the community classroom, seeking out new spaces for secondary ELs to develop bilingual and biliteracy skills toward the Seal of Biliteracy, and holding high expectations for EL students' active participation. These actions were radical shifts from prior classroom, school, and district practices where only English was valued and used for learning and where ELs remained invisible. In other words, ways of becoming in this study evolved as a result of extended ways of being and ways of doing. Importantly, this work, like any change to educational practice or reform, took significant time to emerge, and the changes that occurred reflected the unique context of the rural district.

Returning to place-conscious education, Greenwood (2019) encourages educators to be in relationship with place and to extend their vision beyond their own experiences and realities. Although Greenwood's context is in decolonization practices and indigenous people, the work of the educators in this PD centered on language minoritized students whose families provided essential labor for the functioning of the community. In their coursework and PLCs, the participants demonstrated reflection on their existing practices with ELs, followed by collaboration and discussion that led to changes in practice. In essence, the PD offered a structure or space for reflection through coursework and onsite meetings, then provided a supportive space for educators to unlearn fossilized "English only" practices in classroom instruction and family engagement. Similar to the work of Moll et al. (1992) and funds of knowledge research, as educators unlearned those practices, they replaced them with practices that affirmed who their EL students were, the languages and cultures that they brought, where they came from, and how they got to the district. Arriving to that point, however, took years of professional learning, collaboration and relationship building, and co-constructing solutions that met the needs of ELs in their rural schools (Lucas et al., 2018; Lucas & Villegas, 2011).

At the organizational level, participants referenced the adage "it takes a village" for change to occur. Through this perspective, they addressed the deep-seated inequities that the rural EL students faced in their community and recognized that they needed each other to begin to change. Some of the organizational-level relationships that fostered those changes were cross-school collaboration, i.e., ensuring a transition process for EL students who were advancing from the elementary to the middle high school; sharing resources such as a template of an EL student profile between elementary and middle schools; and addressing cross-district concerns surrounding the role of bilingual paraeducators, who were undervalued. Ultimately, however, we found that the work of our participants and the effect it had on changes to the education for rural ELs was centered on the school and classroom levels, and changes at the district level have not (yet) occurred. We hypothesize that had senior district personnel participated in the PD and were similarly willing to work alongside junior teachers, support staff, and school leaders, more district-wide changes could have occurred. At the time of this writing, one school principal, Jessica, who participated in the PD became the district-wide director of curriculum. Her knowledge and experiences are likely to inform new curricular decisions at the district level on behalf of the growing number of ELs.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the realities of our partner rural school district along the way. Issues of rural teacher attrition, frequently due to the low pay scale of teachers and low financial resources that derive from rural communities, negatively affected teachers' attitudes and forced them to make personal and professional decisions

that were difficult, such as to leave the students that they loved. The district educators also frequently faced role changes of leadership and had difficulty sustaining the collaboration beyond Phase 1 of the work in the first three years of the grant.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated how educators who participated in a three-year, place-conscious rural EL professional development program made changes to their practices for EL students. Data from this study showed that place mattered in the PD project, as educators asked to work together onsite to share knowledge and expertise. They built professional collaboration that demonstrated three components: relational, equal, and synergistic. Purposeful collaboration and establishing a structure for discussion, interaction, and challenging prior norms early in the PD facilitated collaboration and led to changes that took place for ELs. They co-constructed new spaces for their rural EL students. What changes will continue to take place beyond this project are left to be learned, but we are hopeful that future place-conscious PD programs will include a place-informed structure that supports educator collaboration as an essential and ongoing component.

Limitations and Implications

We acknowledge that this study has limitations and implications for practice. Findings from this work are limited to the unique nature of the rural schools and communities with which we worked. The community's storied past, how language minoritized families lived and participated in it, and families' relationships to schools and educators mattered in the study. While unique in its context, underlying themes from the findings can inform the future work of educators and scholars in rural communities with EL students. For instance, planning for collaboration, both physical and virtual, and fostering equity spaces among participants should inform future PD. This PD also took place over a significant period of time, during which relationships were deepened both among the participants and teacher-educators. We learned to recognize, too, limitations during this time, such as the absence of paraeducators, who did not participate because of the university's prerequisite requirement of having completed a bachelor's degree. Future PD work in rural communities with EL students should remain localized in its conceptualization, flexible in its implementation, and grounded in equity.

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