The Rural Educator

Volume 45
Number 4 *Special Topics Issue on Rural Multilingual Education*

Article 3

Fall 2024

Escuchemos Las Voces Bilingües de Nuestros Educadores Rurales: Who and What Matters for the Education of Secondary English Learners in a Rural Florida School Community

Nidza V. Marichal
University of Florida, nmarichal@ufl.edu

Recommended Citation

Marichal, N. V. (2024). Escuchemos Las Voces Bilingües de Nuestros Educadores Rurales: Who and What Matters for the Education of Secondary English Learners in a Rural Florida School Community. *The Rural Educator, 45*(4), 15-36. https://doi.org/10.55533/2643-9662.1535

Research Article

Escuchemos Las Voces Bilingües de Nuestros Educadores Rurales: Who and What Matters for the Education of Secondary English Learners in a Rural Florida School Community

Nidza V. Marichal

Guided by constructive epistemology and grounded in Greenwood's place-conscious education theory and critical race theory in education, (CRT), this narrative-informed qualitative study critically examines how the lived experiences of three bilingual educators shape their work with English Learners (ELs or multilingual learners, MLs) in a Florida rural school community. Primary data consist of videorecorded interviews and photo elicitation that illuminated teachers' told life narratives. Findings from this study demonstrate that the voices of the bilingual teachers matter for improving EL education in this rural community. The teachers' reflections about their "ontological-becoming," their engagement with the rural school community, and the inequities experienced by their EL students constantly shape and dictate their professional identities and instructional decisions in their work with ELs. Promising practices that matter for the education of ELs in this rural community are discussed, such as the importance of the centrality of EL-teacher relationship building; bridging racial, cultural, and linguistic gaps in the classroom; recognizing que "uno [an EL] aquí es como un fantasma" *in the rural school community; and advocating for ELs by increasing their visibility and becoming the voice of ELs and their families.*

Escuchar las voces bilingües de nuestros educadores in rural localities matters for the education of English learners (ELs or multilingual learners, MLs[1]) in rural school communities. Teacher educators preparing teachers to work with ML students in the US often employ a one-size-fits-all approach that tends to focus on what teachers need to know and do to be effective EL educators (Genesee et al., 2006; Goldenberg, 2013; Téllez & Waxman, 2006). My experience as an EL in the US, as a Spanish teacher, and as an educator working with teachers in a rural Florida school community reveal that this type of universal approach to teaching and learning does not work. We must consider and listen carefully to the educators' voices and their lived experiences while working and playing in these rural communities. More importantly, improving EL education in rural communities requires that teachers become aware of who they are and where they come from, as well as who their students are and where they come from, to be better prepared to name and address the inequities that ELs experience every day in rural U.S. schools.

Greenwood (2019) urges us to engage in *soul work* to deepen our knowledge of and relationships with peoples and places. He argues that soul work consists of an "embodied mindfulness to place" (p. 375) that critically examines who we are, where we come from, and why and how we develop our identities in new places. This practice, he posits, is the key to supporting "our own ontological-becoming in relationship with ourselves, each other, the land, and the cosmos itself" (p. 369) and is the first step for any transformation to occur (p. 375). Similarly, Lilburn (2017) argues that "moving forward by remembering and reviving" life in our special places, we can reflect, clarify, and deepen our "dispositions in the present" (p. 14), to create awareness of the experiences that shape our relationships with each other and with place. This cultivation of the soul and places with others allows us to share our own story of being and becoming and to learn from others' histories and the diverse places they inhabit.

Although my own ontological-becoming is beyond the scope of this study, I feel it is relevant to share my relationship with place and rurality. I don't consider myself a rural educator—I grew up in the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and as is the case with many of the "cities" in the small island of Puerto Rico, access to rurality is always 20 minutes away). I have experienced the Puerto Rican sense of community, that strong, closeknit family feeling

[1] English learners (ELs) and Multilingual learners (MLs) are terms used interchangeably. The term MLs highlights the multiple languages and literacies students and families bring to rural school communities.

characteristic of rural communities (Eppley, 2015). I learned that place matters and that place is never just one place, as "When we are in a place, we are not only there, we are also often somewhere else" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 369). Even when I live as a Diasporican (a Puerto Rican in the U.S. diaspora who constantly thinks, acts, reads, speaks, and writes bilingually and biculturally) away from my *terruño* (homeland), I still feel a deep, affective connection with Puerto Rico and what it means to be Puerto Rican. Without essentializing the experiences of most ELs, I can assert that, with some nuances, most MLs in the US also live and feel this way. Oftentimes, I find myself searching for solidarity in familiar faces; reviving familiar traditions; and imagining the tropical tastes, sights, and sounds of my beautiful island of Puerto Rico (Marichal, 2023). I exist in and navigate through two places, two cultures, and two languages all the time. Hence, recognizing both the uniqueness of rural communities and the diversity of peoples living in those communities is central to understanding the work of EL educators. In fact, there are distinct geographic, sociocultural, and socioeconomic characteristics specific to places that impact the lives and the teaching and learning for educators and students in those localities. Having worked with educators and EL students in rural Florida, I learned that succeeding on behalf of ELs requires that we engage in critical conversations with educators about the daily strengths and challenges they face in their lives and in their work with ELs in a particular rural community. In doing so, we must recognize the importance of "deepening community relationships and blurring the lines between personal, professional and community identities" and humanize our pedagogy for the *bienestar* (well-being) of our EL/ML students (Reagan et al., 2019, p. 87).

Literature Review

The pandemic-era health order that used to block the entry of migrants at the southern border expired May 11, 2023. Despite warnings of a potential increase of asylum seekers to the US, the days after the expiration of Title 42 saw a much smaller influx of migrants than expected. Even as U.S. cities and rural communities are experiencing lower numbers of immigrants, they continue to prepare spaces and resources for a potential surge in the enrollment of immigrant children in public schools. Newcomer ELs likely will participate in mainstream inclusive classrooms where the primary medium of instruction is English. As U.S. school communities continue to grow in culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse ways, educators, especially in rural schools, are not well prepared to address the educational needs of ELs.

Over the last two decades, research has identified the skills and strategies that teachers need to effectively teach language and content to ELs. This research has been and continues to be focused on what all teachers need to know and be able to do (Genesee et al., 2006; Goldenberg, 2013; Téllez & Waxman, 2006) and emphasizes the linguistic and cultural dimensions of schooling (e.g., Coady et al., 2011, 2016; de Jong et al., 2013; Turkan et al., 2014). Even where states mandate teacher preparation , substantial evidence is lacking that mainstream teachers engage in differentiated instructional practices for ELs (Coady et al., 2016, 2018, 2019). For instance, in Florida, the 1990 Florida Consent Decree outlined the preparation of all Florida teachers to work with ELs. This policy mandates English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) preparation for all teachers of ELs, both pre- and in-service. However, little evidence exists that Florida state requirements result in changed teacher practices (Coady et al., 2019). Moreover, there is no evidence of the Consent Decree's impact on student learning as the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs remains stagnant (de Jong, 2021).

In fact, non-ELs continue to outperform ELs in state standardized reading and mathematics assessments, and the achievement gap increases in higher academic grades (Coady et al., 2018; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023a). At the secondary school level, the situation is more critical because the demands of academic language are more complex (Bunch, 2010; Faltis et al., 2010; Fang et al., 2006; Reeves, 2006, 2009). Even when scholars have demonstrated that teacher quality and preparation for EL students are the most important factors shaping learning (Calderón et al., 2011), the scholarship on secondary teachers of ELs, including their teacher preparation and their own voiced personal and professional experiential knowledges working with ELs, has received little attention (Reeves, 2006; Marichal, 2021a; Tandon et al., 2017). Thus, secondary teachers continue to be unprepared to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of ELs.

Rural English Learner Education

About five million K–12 U.S. public school students are identified as ELs. Florida, where this study takes place, has the third largest EL enrollment in the US—approximately 300,000 identified ELs in grades K–12 (Consent Decree, 1990)—with the majority representing Spanish speakers, the fastest growing demographic group in U.S. public schools (Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011; NCES, 2023b, 2024). Recent data suggest that about 600,000 ELs attend rural schools, and one-third of all public schools are in rural areas (Irwin et al., 2024). However, national data at the intersection of rurality and ELs is imprecise at best. Coady, Golombek, and Marichal (2023) note:

> We know little, in fact, about the kinds of language education programs that rural ML students attend, less about the languages that they speak and use at home and in the community and have no national or state-level data on how rural MLs perform on tests of English language development. It is not that the data do not exist; rather, data that lie at the intersection of rurality and ML student learning is not readily obtainable. (p. 2)

Rural mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms must facilitate teaching and learning for ELs whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds are varied. Rural educators in the US follow the general trend—they are primarily White, middle-class, and monolingual English-speaking (B. B. Flores & Claeys, 2019; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Nieto & Bode, 2012; NCES, 2023c). The documented cultural and linguistic disconnect between educators' lived experiences and those of their EL students results in teachers and students misunderstanding each other and students feeling unmotivated (Carothers et al., 2019; B. B. Flores & Claeys, 2019; Nieto & Bode, 2012). Scholars recognize the need for EL teachers to get acquainted with students' cultural backgrounds to tailor effective EL instruction (Coady et al., 2011, 2016; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Moll et al., 1992). Lucas and Grinberg (2008) argue that teachers' exposure to multilingualism, such as studying a language other than English (LOTE), would serve as the basis to develop "affirming views of linguistic diversity" and "an awareness of the sociopolitical dimension of language use and language education," both central to support ELs in the classroom (pp. 612–613).

Rurality in the US poses specific challenges for EL students and educators such as: (a) limited educational funding due to a low property tax base (Azano & Stewart, 2015; Hansen-Thomas, 2018; Johnson & Zoellner, 2016; Reynolds, 2017); (b) the lack of well-prepared teachers in ESOL methods (National Rural Education Association, 2021); (c) the lack of language-focused education, misconceptions, and deficit views about culturally and linguistically diverse students (Bunch, 2014; N. Flores & Rosa, 2015; Lee et al., 2007); (d) the influence of local, state, and national educational policies (Massey, 2020); and (e) a dearth of professional development (PD) opportunities (Coady, 2020; Good et al., 2010; Manner & Rodriguez, 2012; Marlow & Cooper, 2008).

Rural education scholars argue that teachers in rural communities must be familiar with both the strengths and challenges of rural places to develop a sense of place (Greenwood, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003; Howley & Howley, 2014; Shamah & MacTavish, 2009; White & Reid, 2008). They must be familiar with the specificity and complexities of this place and how they impact the lives of and their work with ELs. Acquiring a sense of place means recognizing the importance of developing social and cultural familiarity with oneself and other human beings in a particular rural place. Place is more than a "backdrop" (Corbett, 2016). Rather, place defines and shapes how people come to know and participate in the world and relate to others. In rural spaces, teachers must understand the sociocultural context of teaching and learning, and their attention must be directed "to social processes, to the ways in which people live, work, play, desire, and hopefully, cooperate" in particular places (John & Ford, 2017, p. 13) and the role that rurality plays in education. Bomer and Maloch (2012) observe that teaching and learning is always shaped by the unique sociocultural ways and human relationships existing in a place. Thus, the interaction among teachers' personal and professional identities, informed by one's life biographies and experiences, "contribute to the construction of an identity that is linked to a particular place" and "how a person views herself both informs and is informed by a sense of place" (Reagan et al., 2019, p. 87).

Although scholars of EL education have an emerging knowledge base on how to prepare teachers for cultural and linguistic diversity, we must further investigate the intersection of rurality and EL education as a subfield in education research.

Scholars at the intersection of rural EL education study rurality and the ways in which educators conceptualize, navigate, collaborate, and negotiate their work with EL students (Ankeny et al., 2019; Coady, 2019, 2020, 2021; Coady, Golombek, & Marichal, 2023; Coady, Marichal, et al., 2023; Golombek et al. 2022; Li, 2023; Marichal, 2021a, 2021b; Marichal et al., 2021). We also recognize the centrality of place in the work of educators and EL students (Coady, Golombek, & Marichal, 2023) and how rural ELs continue to have inequitable access to human and material resources such as highly prepared educators and paraeducators, technologies, and quality bilingual programs (Coady, 2021; Coady, Golombek, & Marichal, 2023; Glover et al., 2016; Kandel et al., 2011; Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Nugent et al., 2017). Place-based PD that supports rural EL student learning through educator preparation encourages teachers to get to know themselves and the place where they work by becoming community researchers and understanding where they are in a way that extends beyond geographic location (Marichal, 2021a). Thus, educators working with EL students in rural communities must continually support their own "ontological-becoming" by engaging in soul work (Greenwood, 2019) to recognize, embrace, and understand the diversity of rural places and recreate a more integrated sense of community and education. While *escuchando* (listening to) the voices of three bilingual secondary teachers who constantly work with ELs in a Florida rural school community, the present study addresses the following research question: Who and what matters for the education of secondary ELs in a rural Florida school community?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study consists of two components: Greenwood's (2019) place-conscious education theory and critical race theory (CRT) in education (Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The first component, place-conscious approaches to education, underscores the centrality of place and urges teachers to know and understand the specific "circumstances and specificity of rural education" (Green & Reid, 2014, p. 27). Gruenewald (2003) posits "places produce and teach particular ways of thinking about and being in the world. They tell us the way things are" in that particular locality (p.627). As noted in the introduction and extending Lilburn's (2017) emphasis on deepening our knowledge and relationship with places, Greenwood (2019) emphasizes that place-conscious approaches to education are crucial in understanding that "diverse people see through diverse windows of experience" (p. 368) and require educators "to become more reflective about their own ontological experience, and not merely better at teacher techniques" (p. 363). Heightening EL rural educators' awareness of the strengths and challenges of place influences their work with ELs by promoting educators' advocacy and equity stances on behalf of their EL students.

The second component of this theoretical framework, critical race theory (CRT) in education (Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), complements a critical and conscious place-based approach through three of the five tenets of CRT (i.e., the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, and the centrality of experiential knowledge). Guided by this bipartite framework, participants envisioned social justice for their EL students by exposing their and other educators' deficit-informed behaviors toward them. Specifically, the Hispanic participants' lived experiences, narratives, and biographies become a source of legitimate knowledges and strengths in their work with ELs in this rural community.

Methodology

This qualitative analysis draws upon data from a broader research study (Marichal, 2020, 2021a) that sought to examine secondary teacher knowledges related to the teaching and learning of EL students in a rural Florida community. The original study aimed to address shortcomings in the academic literature on ELs and rural education with the goal of improving education for rural ELs. It also sought to examine the knowledge base upon which secondary teachers draw to improve education for rural ELs. The present study includes a new analysis of the data to reveal who and what matters for the education of ELs in this rural community. Drawing from my previous study, I include a description of the place, the participants, and the procedures followed for data collection and analysis (Marichal, 2021a, 2023).

The Place

Ivy County (pseudonym) had consolidated middle-secondary schools in three main towns: Hibiscus, Calla Lily, and Alamanda. The district had

low numbers of ELs. At the time of the study, just under 200 ELs, or 4% of students across grades K–12, were identified as receiving ESOL services. The ELs were primarily Hispanic or Latinx from Central American countries and Mexico, and about 94% were Spanish speakers. Their families worked in peanut, hay bale, and equestrian industries and supported the economy through direct labor on the land. At the time of the study the percentage of persons living at or below the poverty line in Ivy County was 20.8% (Marichal, 2020). The EL students scored significantly below state averages on standardized tests and below state averages on the English language proficiency test, WIDA ACCESS 2.0. Teacher participants were identified based on prior participation in a place-based PD program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Office of English Language Acquisition, OELA).

The schools in which the study's participants worked followed state-mandated requirements for the preparation of all teachers who worked with ELs (Consent Decree, 1990). The district's chosen model for EL instruction was a "mainstream inclusive classroom" model, also known as "Structured English Immersion" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013), in which English was the medium of instruction. Following this model, teachers included ELs in all mainstream classroom activities and were required to differentiate their instruction in academic content areas for ELs based on their English language proficiency levels.

Participants

Employing purposeful sampling selection criteria (Patton, 2002), four secondary teachers in Ivy County who worked directly with ELs were recruited and selected in the original study. The selection criteria allowed me to select the teachers' school level, their personal and professional characteristics, and their experience with a rural setting and ELs. At the time of the original study, the participants' years of experience working in rural Ivy County ranged from 5 to 29 years, and they held an ESOL endorsement from the state of Florida or had earned professional points toward a state ESOL endorsement for the secondary level. In this study, I reanalyzed data from the three bilingual participants (Adela, Jacqueline, and Marisol [pseudonyms]), two of whom are Hispanic from Puerto Rico (Adela and Marisol) and one from the local community. All three are self-identified female secondary teachers. At the time of the study, Jacqueline and Adela were Spanish teachers teaching grade 9–12 students. Like most educators in rural schools, Marisol performed multiple roles (Coady et al., 2019; Eppley, 2015). While serving as an ESOL paraprofessional working with ELs during the day and assisting EL parents as requested, Marisol was also in charge of the Focus Lab classroom, teaching and supervising mainstream and EL students in grades 9–12 who were not meeting grade-level standards in regular classroom settings. Participants were provided with electronic IRB- approved consent forms, and confidentiality was assured with pseudonyms and deidentified data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data included three videorecorded interviews for each participant and photo elicitation, which guided teachers' storytelling (Harper, 2002). The interviews were conducted bilingually during the summer months, as requested by the participants. Temporal data collection techniques (past, present, future) were used to illuminate teachers' narratives of their personal, professional, and place-based experiences via stories. Secondary data consisted of archival documents such as an online survey, teachers' personal résumés, and field notes. These data sources were employed to focus "on process, understanding, and meaning" and on obtaining "richly descriptive" data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Data collection and analysis lasted 25 weeks. During the interviews, I invited participants to talk about the images they generated and to explain how the images embodied a personal, professional, or place-based experience. Microsoft Excel was used to store transcript data and a photo elicitation log. Initial open codes from across all the data sets (1,066) were grouped into 20 axial codes, which were reanalyzed and compared using an iterative approach.

Findings

Along with ontological-becoming, place consciousness (i.e., their knowledge of the strengths, resources, and demands of this Florida rural community) constantly guided participants' work with secondary ELs in this rural school community. Who these educators and ELs are matters for improving the educators' work with EL/ML students in this rural community. First, the findings demonstrate how teachers learned to construct and prioritize a mutual teacher-EL relationship-building process with students as people by leveraging their ethnicity, bilingualism, and faith. Second, the

teachers' wisdom and awareness of place dictated their instructional moves by bridging racial, cultural, and linguistic gaps in the classroom. Third, through the relationship-building process, the teachers were able to identify the educational inequities their students were experiencing and felt a deep commitment to become fierce advocates for all ELs. In other words, the educators wholeheartedly recognized that *ser la voz de los ELs y sus familias* (being the voice of ELs and their families) mattered in this rural school community.

Humanizing the Teacher-EL Relationship: Teachers and EL Students Matter

The main finding in this study demonstrated the need for teachers to know who their students are and where they come from in order to design instruction that addresses the needs of secondary ELs in this place. Participants' soul work revealed that their own constructions and understandings of who they are as people and as teachers and where they come from constantly shaped their work with secondary rural ELs in *this* rural school community.

All three participants underscored the fundamental role that bilingualism, *hispanidad* (Hispanic ethnicity), and faith played in building teacher-EL student relationships. For instance, all three teachers acknowledged that their linguistic and cultural knowledge, i.e., their background and experience, directly impacted their work with ELs. They asserted that their bilingualism and hispanidad were resources for building communication with ELs, which helped them to establish strong bonds with them, such as learning about their socioemotional and academic needs and sharing aspects of their lives with them. The three teachers also relied on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds to inform cultural and instructional activities in the classroom. Some participants acknowledged that their personal religious beliefs and their deep knowledge of place informed their work with ELs by displaying religious motifs in their classrooms (Marisol), praying for students' intentions as requested by the students themselves (Adela), and using the Spanish Bible as an instructional tool for developing L1 literacy to facilitate L2 (Jacqueline).

Marisol

A Neorican with a fusion of New York and Puerto Rican heritage, Marisol was of the first generation in her family to be born in the US, as both her parents were from Puerto Rico. Her personal background, combined with her hispanidad and bilingualism, provided the confidence to communicate with and enact instruction for EL students. She remarked,

> In order to be able to teach these kids you have to learn to communicate first. Through the communication you're going to gain their trust, you're going to gain a friendship where they're going to let you teach them.… So, confident I am and it's mostly because of my background. I think that's a very big plus.

She added,

> Meeting with them, getting to know them first it is a heart to heart thing and if they know where I come from, then they know I understand where they come from. And that makes the first connection, and it makes it easier to teach them.

Marisol underscored the importance of conceptualizing bidirectional connections with ELs in a sincere, authentic, and loving way. She explained that connecting emotionally with students facilitated teachers' work with ELs because they learned to feel the teacher's empathy. She asserted,

> I feel that in order to see a student succeed is not just all about his classes at the professional level, but it is also to let the student feel that you are actually there for them at an emotional level, you know. They know who is real and who is not and it is the way you act with them.

Her lived experiences mattered in her work with ELs because, as she underscored, "I don't want kids to feel the pain I felt, [my lived experiences teach] me how to deal with the kids … to look for certain signs." She continued, "I can spot certain signs that other teachers may not spot. That is a big influence [in my work] because if anything my [negative experiences] taught me that to be positive for these kids now."

Marisol acknowledged that her religious background was a source of comfort and has played a big role in her life, shaping the way she teaches and lives. Because she knew that most of her EL students in this rural community were deeply religious, she wanted them to know her at a more personal level and recreate the same safe community environment she experienced at church every Sunday. By decorating her *shrine* (classroom) with religious motifs as shown in Figure 1, Marisol made her ELs feel comfortable and prepared for learning. She explained,

I put things that represent me. Sometimes I won't use words. I'll have a cross; I'll have butterflies, I'll have quotes of believe, dreaming, anything positive. The kids would walk into my room, and they would have an idea of me without me even telling them about me at first.... At that moment, I started winning their trust, their respect without saying a word. Then from there on, we continued to grow together.

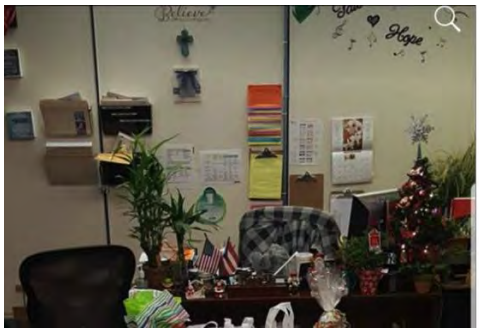

Figure 1: Marisol's Classroom

Adela

Adela, a certified Spanish teacher from Puerto Rico with 12 years of teaching experience who had been working in Ivy County since 2013, explained that being Hispanic and bilingual were important resources in her teaching. She asserted that her strong connection with EL students stemmed from her *puertorriqueñidad* (Puerto Ricanness) and her respect for all Hispanic cultures. When Adela spoke of her puertorriqueñidad, she referred to the different ethnicities and races that comprise the complex Puerto Rican ethnic and racial reality: the Taíno, Spanish, and African.

When I asked Adela to share a picture related to her personal background, Adela shared a photo of her favorite beach in our mutually beloved island of Puerto Rico (Figure 2). The picture depicted a lighthouse in the distance, and beautiful blue skies reflected on the water.

Figure 2: Adela's Beach

Adela explained that she chose this picture because it symbolized for her the openness, the heart of our Boricua (Puerto Rican) culture, and the essence of her hispanidad. Listening to Adela describe the picture, I could sense her feelings of pride and peace.

Adela knew that her puertorriqueñidad guided her to create a classroom space in which students could sense the same happiness and welcoming feeling she experienced being close to the ocean on the island. She smiled and remarked, "*La playa es mi lugar feliz, la sal, la arena. No sé, la gente lo identifica con limpieza, pureza, libertad.... Viene y va, siempre regresa*."[2] A shared puertorriqueñidad forged a strong bond between us, and I understood how Adela was able to build that same connection with her students through her bilingualism, her puertorriqueñidad (hispanidad), and her deep knowledge of place. She stated, "*Como tú eres boricua [tú me entiendes], cuando tú vas a la playa y te sientas ahí, es como que—como una limpieza, como que tú le das al mar tu dolor y ella está ahí y te escucha, no sé. Y es mi lugar feliz, es mi lugar feliz, no sé*."[3] She added that recreating these emotions in her classroom was one of her main goals as a teacher.

Adela recognizes the importance of building connections and trusting relationships with her students. Her approach to instruction was guided by important questions aimed to reveal the educational challenges facing the EL. As Adela asserted,

> *¿Cómo yo como maestra puedo ayudar … a su niño a alcanzar-- aunque me tenga que sentar*

[2] The beach is my happy place, the salt, the sand. I don't know, people identify it with cleanliness, purity, freedom...It comes and goes, it always comes back.

[3] Since you are *boricua* [you understand me], when you go to the beach and sit down there, it is as if—as a cleanse, as giving the sea your pain and she is there, listening to you, I don't know. And it is my happy place.

esa primera meeting con un translator, pero por lo menos saber cuáles son los challenges de esa familia, porque ahí tú estás haciendo una conexión que va beyond. Ya la maestra cuando el niño llega a casa con tarea ya el papá tiene una conexión con [the teacher] Yo pienso que esa conexión es bien importante, la conexión con el niño.[4]

Jacqueline

Growing up in an African American low-income family in south Florida, Jacqueline was exposed to cultural and linguistic diversity. She recalled, "Being born in West Palm Beach gave me exposure to Latinos because in our neighborhood at that time, [there were] Blacks and Latinos, not so much Whites." In her neighborhood, the Latinos were mostly Cubans who primarily spoke Spanish. She learned quickly that speaking Spanish to the Hispanic elders made them feel at ease. Jacqueline realized that her bilingualism and exposure to languages and cultures growing up bridged cultural gaps in the classroom and facilitated the connections she made as an EL teacher and teacher/mentor-leader at her school—resources for her job as a Spanish teacher and her work with rural secondary ELs. Her bilingualism and embraced hispanidad allowed her to get to know students and establish strong relationships with them. Getting to know EL families and establishing authentic connections with them allowed her to learn more about the needs of the ELs in the classroom, to see "the whole picture," and to identify the academic and socioemotional needs of ELs that often go beyond language barriers. Jacqueline explained,

> Understanding a parent, family dynamic even is important. It can be difficult, because one...thing is the language barrier for many teachers... And a lot of parents simply withdraw from dealing with this school and the system unless something happens, unless something goes wrong. And that's not because they don't care about their child... [B]ut most of them, it was because they feel they can't, they have no power. They have no power in that place, so they have no standing in that place.

Jacqueline was passionate that making bidirectional connections with ELs and families matters and is foundational to her work with ELs in this rural school community—and developing relationships with EL students is the first step to design instruction that meets their needs. She clarified,

> You don't know what you need to know about them until you actually communicate with them and learn about them.… What you need to know is how to get them to accept you at a level where you can get them to open up and help you help them.

Place Matters for Rural EL Education

As noted, spaces are localities inscribed by social processes, and they foreground spatial, social, cultural, and historical knowledge production (Gruenewald, 2003; Reagan et al., 2019). Engaging in soul work allowed the participants (a) to acknowledge the uniqueness of this rural community and align their work to the social functioning, and (b) *crear puentes culturales, lingüísticos y raciales*.

Illuminating the Challenges of "The Place"

Marisol knew that one could not assume that every rural community experiences the physical aspects of rurality in the same way. She understood that knowledge of rurality includes the space and the social processes characteristic of each community. Marisol underscored the impact of a community's way of life on EL schooling. She explained,

> This is a family community. They have their traditions, they have their customers, they got each other's back. They know who's who and what's what. You're not going to come in and scream it out. They'd be like, "I don't think so ma'am." They will let you know, "Now, this is not the way we do it." You know?

Likewise, Jacqueline emphasized the need for teachers to consider how rurality shapes their work with ELs and how it impacts their lives and their education. She noted, "Place informs what you need to know" and educators must "comprehend and internalize the place." She understood that "Your first place is your place…, our ELs' first place is their place. So, we have to teach them about this place."

[4] How can I help a child achieve—even if I have to sit down with a translator, but at least learn what this family's challenges are, because right in there you are making a connection that goes beyond. Then, the teacher already has a connection when the child gets home with homework, the dad already has that connection with the teacher. I think that connection is very important, the connection with the child.

She acknowledged that teachers and EL students alike come to Ivy County with different personal geographic backgrounds and enter their relationship together in *this* particular place. Jacqueline added, "one of the things [teachers] have to realize is that, if a child cannot navigate the place, the child cannot possibly settle down to learning. Just can't, it's too much tension to just figure out the place." Jacqueline asserted that teachers must not assume that ELs' previous knowledge and experiences are the same as their English-speaking peers in this school community. To design instruction for newcomer ELs and to help them navigate the different school and classroom rules, she insisted, teachers must get to know ELs, what they know about secondary school cultures, and what they learned in their previous school. She emphasized,

> Come to there, where they are. And sometimes they'll surprise you about where they are. Don't come to them from where you are. Because you are where you are.… And if I really want to be able to help you, that's what I would have to do.

The three educators agreed on the importance of acknowledging the impact of both the strengths and the challenges of place in their work with EL students in this rural community. They understood that even some of Ivy County's strengths could adversely affect the lives of ELs. The beautiful and peaceful farm life, the vast blueberry fields (which often represent the main source of income for EL families), tranquil and lazy Sundays, and the long geographic distances constituted barriers to EL education. For instance, Adela, Marisol, and Jacqueline explained that some administrators and teachers interpreted an EL student's absence as their not wanting to attend school. As Marisol explained, "Not every kid that's out, it's because they want to be out. There [are] certain situations that [cause] them to be out, which will affect their learning process, which will affect whatever they have to learn to pass the class."

The socioeconomic realities of most EL families directly impact EL education. Missing the school bus or having a sick sibling results in an absence for an older EL who has to stay home due to a lack of transportation or to be a caregiver while their parents work. For instance, Jacqueline observed that the lack of municipal services (e.g., transportation and local amenities) makes young people's lives difficult, as adolescent ELs tended to be isolated after school hours and during the weekends with no access to organized recreational activities. She reflected, "we don't have a movie theater. We don't have a bowling alley," and "you have to drive so far to get anywhere. You have to drive and drive." EL secondary students also have to take on the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings when a parent gets sick. Adela explained, *"Porque si mamá necesita a zutanita [the EL student] que se quede cuidando a los nenes, porque yo tengo tres casas que limpiar, zutanita [The EL] no puede ir a la escuela…, ¿me entiendes?"*[5]

Most EL families in Ivy County were in constant fear of deportation and anxious about their U.S. immigration status. As a result, they were hesitant to go to school meetings and gatherings, and in most cases, afraid to send their children to school. Marisol indicated that if an educator asked an EL student about absences from school, the student would likely conceal the real reason for their absence. They would reply instead, "It was maybe because of a doctor's appointment." Marisol elaborated,

> You know, a couple of my ELL kids were absent because they had to go to Orlando to take care of [their] immigration papers with the parents.

Marisol added that migrant raids at the local Walmart "petrifie[d] them. They don't want to leave the house, the kids, they keep the kids home, the kids don't come to school and, and those are stuff that you have to work with."

Creando Puentes Culturales, Lingüísticos y Raciales en el Salón de Clase[6]

The three participants revealed the ways in which their school served as a community center. Despite the historical segregation of Ivy County communities, Hibiscus Middle High School is the place where all gathered to attend school-related activities and town social events. No other community center or building is available for town activities. The school is the building or, as Adela said, the "glue," gathering locals in one space.

Adela remembered that when schools merged, three years before the original study was conducted, the new, unfinished building was open to the community. It was a great event, covered by the local news. Adela explained, *"La vida social de este*

[5] Because if the mother needs that, what's-her-name takes care of the children because I have to clean three houses, what's-her-name can't go to school, you understand?

[6] Building cultural, linguistic, and racial bridges in the classroom

pueblo gira en torno a las actividades deportivas de la escuela."[7] Marisol also remarked,

> School is where all the gatherings happen. The kids are not just coming in for class, but you have the extra school activities, you have the night activities, you have the conferences, you have anything, the graduations, any celebrations, it's happening in the schools. The kids are in school, the parents come to school, the announcements.… If there's the Watermelon Festival, guess what? It's a big blow out in the school. The kids participate, the kids are growing their watermelons, and so it happens in the school.

The participants described serving as language and cultural brokers in the schools as needed. They served in this way during and after school hours at school-related activities and served as mentors to other teachers in their school, providing on-site coaching and bridging the cultural and linguistic gap between EL families and schools in Ivy County. Adela attempted to bridge those cultural and racial gaps in the classroom by wearing her sombrero cultural (cultural hat). Every day, "*ves los grupos ahí, yo los tengo que mezclar.*"[8] She added,

> *A veces el niño afroamericano te dice, "No me siente con este blanco," y a veces hay un blanco donde a ti te dice, "Yo no puedo hablar con esta persona, señora, muévame del asiento." ... [a los ELs] no les gusta socializar con el blanco, prefieren socializar con el moreno a socializar con el niño caucásico.*[9]

Marisol also experienced cultural and racial divisions among her White, African American, and Hispanic students. She fought against this divide through her strategy of "communicating with them as one." She used the metaphor of "cracking the egg" to describe how she helps students to get acquainted:

> I feel that when I have them in a big group first, they all at first, see each other as different (brown egg vs the white egg) but as I continue to work, talk, dialogue with them as one group I am pushing the opportunity for students to work out loud, (speak, read) I am cracking that egg. Many students (the ones born here in the states) will see that someone from a different culture is actually the same as them, (thought, idea, life process, life experiences) inside.

Marisol also shared a picture (Figure 3) to illustrate the metaphor of cracking the egg. To Marisol, this image symbolizes all the cultures and races united, in spite of her students' diverse appearances. Marisol understood her students were more alike than they were different once they got to know each other through "communicating with them as one."

Figure 3: Marisol's Picture of "Cracking the Egg"

Jacqueline also used instructional practices that allowed students to know each other and created a welcoming atmosphere. She explained,

> One of the biggest ways for me personally to start my year in the classroom is identify the cultures that are sitting in my classroom. And I'll write them on the board, and we'll talk about practices, beliefs, and we'll make it into a conversation where they're telling each other without them realizing that they're telling each other about their backgrounds, their cultures.

Ser la Voz de los ELs Matters (To Be the Voice): *Abordando la Falta de Equidad Educativa* (Addressing Educational Inequities)

The educational inequities experienced by ELs in Ivy County, such as lack of bilingual materials, human resources, and information, underscore the need for teachers to advocate for ELs. Participants revealed that rurality impacts finances and funding for EL education. In Hibiscus Middle High School, which three years prior to the original study (Marichal, 2020, 2021a) had been consolidated from a single middle and single high school, larger class

[7] This town's social life revolves around the school athletic activities.
[8] You see the groups there, I have to mix them up.
[9] Sometimes the African American boy tells you, "Don't sit me with this White," and sometimes there is a White one that tells you, "I can't talk with this person, Mrs., move me from my seat." [...] They [ELs] don't like to socialize with the White, they prefer to socialize with the Black.

sizes resulted in less time dedicated to EL education. Jacqueline sadly observed,

> Last year I had a class of 34 kids. Now if there's one kid who's sitting there quiet, when other kids are bombarding me with questions, I could lose that child. And if it's an EL child, he or she is not going to feel able to just speak out and speak up because that may not be where they came from. That's not how you do things.

Similarly, Marisol understood that school mergers, combined with low teacher pay, resulted in a lack of bilingual teachers who could facilitate the education of Hispanic ELs. She passionately explained,

> That's why I believe we lose a lot of our teachers, you know, forget the pay. We get paid less than others. Yes, that's true. But it becomes very stressful. It becomes a physical hit. And then what happens? It affects our students. We're not there for our students. So now we have students that are below grade level that are not passing state testing. They're not being taught what they need to be taught.

Marisol and Adela, the two Hispanic participants, agreed that for changes to occur, all the stakeholders in the rural school system (i.e., school administrators, school counselors, all content-area educators and bilingual human resources) must be involved. Marisol asserted that Ivy County schools were not prepared for ELs because "[the school administrators] don't understand the language. They can't speak the language. So now they're against the wall. You can't just leave [the problem] there and assume that maybe ... things could keep moving along. It's not." Marisol recognized the consequences of ignoring the academic needs of ELs, adding,

> The administration has to start to open up and [there are] certain things that have to be changed.… [For instance,] Allow certain [bilingual] teachers, you face the facts, we've got a whole school system, and we probably only have two handfuls of Spanish speaking bilingual teachers.

While Adela agreed with Marisol in that to make significant changes, *"esa iniciativa tiene que [llegar] de arriba,"*[10] she asserted that it is the responsibility of all educators to be aware of the cruel remarks and educational inequities faced by ELs. In working with content-area educators, Adela encountered the pejorative language some colleagues used to describe EL students. She stated,

> *Te presentan al niño como con un problema, el asqueroso ese que no sabe leer ni hablar—Me refiero al maestro. Yo no puedo decir que sea la administración…, los principales están en otro mundo. Ellos están-- ellos están aquí, ellos no están aquí. Y a pesar de que vayan a tu salón y te vean diez minutos y escriben, ellos no están viendo el niño, ellos están viendo la exposición del maestro, en ningún momento se evalúa al niño. Pero hay muchos maestros que [sí] están—… es un dolor.*[11]

Adela firmly believed that what other educators display is a kind of apathy toward ELs. She declared, *"Es más fácil to desensitize y no sentir, no ver."*[12]

Creando Puentes Culturales, Lingüísticos y Raciales en la Comunidad Escolar[13]

Recognizing the educational inequities experienced by their EL students, Jacqueline and Marisol felt the responsibility to keep ELs and their families informed of school activities and important information regarding EL education. They requested that the school's administration add important announcements in Spanish on their school's marquee, visible by anyone driving by the school (Figure 4). To include ELs and their families, Jacqueline and Marisol sought to keep parents informed of their children's school events, as well as to elevate ELs' culture and language in the school.

[10] That initiative needs to come from above.

[11] They introduce the [EL] child as a problem, that disgusting kid that does not know how to read or talk. I refer to the teacher [who says these things]. I can't say it is the administration, principals are in another world. They are here and not here. Even when they go to your classroom and they see you for ten minutes, they are not seeing the child, they are looking at the teacher's performance, they are not evaluating the EL at all. But there are many teachers that are there…. It hurts.

[12] It's easier to desensitize and do not feel or see.

[13] Building cultural, linguistic, and racial bridges in the school community

Figure 4: Spanish Announcements

To bridge cultural and language barriers further, Marisol's previous paraprofessional experience and the strong bonds she developed with ELs and families led her to serve as the main liaison between them and the schools and the primary leader of EL families' Monday Nights program, for which Marisol arranged school bus transportation and provided a safe environment in which families felt at ease and unconcerned of possible deportation raids. While families enjoyed learning English in the school computer lab (using Rosetta Stone) and socialized among themselves, EL students received tutoring help. Marisol's interactions with students' families allowed her to know her students at a deeper level. At the same time Marisol was the language broker, informing families about school-related activities. She explained that parents were able to understand their children's experiences at school better, as they

> didn't have to depend on their child to come home and tell them everything that happened in the school, because a lot of the time, that does not happen, and a lot of the parents feel like they're out of whack.

EL families could rely on Marisol. She remarked, "I feel like I have every right to speak and say what they want to say. I'm their voice."

In the same way, Adela felt the responsibility to bridge cultural gaps between the school community and her ELs by creating instructional activities that valued EL students' home language and culture and empowered ELs. This approach allowed Adela to learn from and build relationships with her EL students, as well as make the ELs less invisible to school administrators, educators, and the rest of the students. Adela shared, *"Hay niños que te dicen: 'Uno aquí es como un fantasma,' están, pero no están porque nadie los ve, son invisibles."*[14] She added, *"Cuando hago mis celebraciones, ...trato de que ellos se vean representados, porque ellos no tienen esa oportunidad en otras clases."*[15]

One of Adela's most popular activities was the *día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebration, in which Mexicans honor their dead relatives. Adela would celebrate the Day of the Dead in her classroom every year during the month of November. Her students looked forward to the event. Adela decided, with the help of some of her students, to showcase a sample of Mexican culture at the school's ESOL fair by recreating an altar to honor the dead. They cooked deceased family members' favorite foods and brought pictures of them, candles, *papel picado* (tissue paper with cutout shapes), and colorful sugar skulls (Figure 5). Adela was also compelled to fight her EL students' invisibility in her rural school district by promoting their bilingualism. She implemented the Seal of Biliteracy in her school to recognize her EL students' achievement in oracy and literacy (Marichal et al., 2021). In this way, Adela became a fierce advocate of her EL students by disrupting deficit practices in her school.

Figure 5: Day of the Dead Celebration

[14] There are children that say, "Here, one is like a ghost." They are there but they are not because no one sees them, they are invisible.

[15] When I do my celebrations, I try to include those countries, so they see themselves represented because they don't have that opportunity in other classes.

Discussion

When I initiated my original study of Florida educators' personal, professional, and place-based knowledges (Marichal 2020, 2021a, 2023), I expected the participants' responses to align more closely with knowledges relevant to EL-specialized preparation to meet secondary ELs' academic, cultural, and linguistic needs. Instead, they prioritized the teacher-EL relational dimension as precursor to EL specialized instruction. In other words, by building bidirectional relationships with their students, teachers predicated their instructional work with ELs on being authentic and on emotional give-and-take. Human relationships were central to teachers' knowledge base for working with ELs and took priority over teaching skills and strategies. Thus, these educators' bilingual voices illuminate the influence of their personal cultural and linguistic backgrounds on their work with ELs in this rural community. More significantly, who these teachers are and where they come from matters in their work with ELs in this rural community. The teachers' told narratives about their life and work experiences defy majoritarian stories of deficit that distort reality. In reflecting, recalling, telling, and retelling their lived experiences, they became keenly aware that their bilingualism and hispanidad are *superpoderes* (superpowers) that, not only made them unique and valuable, but mediated teacher-EL relationship-building. Moreover, their relational wisdom humanized their pedagogy and facilitated instruction for their low-incidence EL population in this rural school community. The educators message is clear: their engagement in soul work (i.e., their own ontological-becoming and understandings of who they are, of their lived experiences in the places they have inhabited, and their deep awareness of the strengths and challenges of the rural community) constantly guided their work with ELs and unequivocally informed "how to be and become" in this rural school community (Greenwood, 2019, p. 360).

At first, I wondered why this finding seemed surprising since decades of research have demonstrated that scholars in the field of education and second language acquisition (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Crookes, 2015; Golombek, 1998; Reeves, 2009; P. J. Palmer, 1998; Pedrana, 2009) repeatedly recognized the tremendous influence that teachers' personal lives exert over what they know, think, and do in the classroom. This research indicates that understanding teachers' professional knowledge and practice could not be separated from the teacher's personal development of self and identity. For instance, P. J. Palmer (1998) observed that the way teachers see themselves as people and as teachers is "an evolving nexus" in which personal and professional identities are a "moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make who [teachers are]" (p.13). It is evident that my participants and I engaged in soul work while conducting this study resulting in our own ontological becoming of sorts. Greenwood's (2019) words make more sense now,

> We structure our lives based on our beliefs about who we are and where we come from, even when these beliefs remain unarticulated and unconscious. All this is to say that decolonization—as a political and educational project—must be concerned with the stories individuals and groups hold about themselves. (p. 371)

Conversing with my participants opened my "windows of experience" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 368) and made me aware that, as an educator, I was and still am deeply guided by who I am, my geographical background, and my legitimate and unique *experiential knowledge* as a bilingual and bicultural individual (Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). As a Spanish teacher in Florida, I engaged my students in learning by instilling in them the desire to learn Spanish. This was an arduous task, may I add, as second language proficiency (in this case, Spanish) was just a requirement for most Florida high school students. I recall introducing them to culture, language, and images and sounds of my terruño (homeland), shaping their knowledge as I learned from and about them and as they learned about el cantar del coquí (the singing of the tiny tree frog), la música de Ricky Martin and Daddy Yankee reggaetón (Bad Bunny was not born yet, I don't think). As I have recently shared in Marichal (2023), "Letting them [my students] know who I am and where I came from not only humanized me in their eyes but was crucial in building trusting relationships while facilitating instruction" (p. 16). Thus, in conducting research to examine who and what matters in the education of EL in a north Florida rural community, I am certain, from my lengthy conversations with my participants, that the importance of engaging in soul work cannot be underestimated.

Bilingualism and Hispanidad are Superpoderes for Teacher-EL Relational Pedagogy

In his remarks at the 2023 National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) 52nd Annual International Bilingual and Bicultural Education Conference, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona urges us, bilingual educators, to recognize and interpret our uniqueness, not as a deficit, but as a source of legitimate identity strength and as nuestro superpoder. The three participants' narratives in this study "*counter* deficit storytelling" by acknowledging that their cultural and linguistic backgrounds were assets in building relationships with and designing instruction for ELs (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 23). While Marisol and Adela asserted that their own bilingualism and hispanidad were resources for communication with ELs that allowed them to make connections and to establish strong bonds with students to attend to the whole child, Jacqueline recognized and leveraged her ELs' hispanidad and bilingualism by bringing them into the classroom. Participants also relied on their cultural backgrounds to inform instructional activities, elevating their students' heritage. Jacqueline's embraced hispanidad and her own bilingualism allowed her to communicate with students and families one-on-one in their home language to identify ELs' emergent needs beyond language, such as learning disabilities or emotional issues. Adela and Marisol repeatedly acknowledged that faith was a source of guidance in their work with ELs and played a significant role in building teacher-EL student relationships.

The nexus between the participants' cultural and linguistic background and their deep knowledge of the rural community guided these educators to construct *con cariño* (mutual caring) relationships with their Hispanic ELs. Valenzuela (1999) describes an authentic form of caring that "emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students" (p. 61) as necessary to educate Hispanic students. Authentic care, as described by Valenzuela, transcends the notion of supportive relationships. Valenzuela underscores the need for teachers to incorporate actions that genuinely consider the person being cared for and their capacities. In building connections with secondary EL students, Marisol, Adela, and Jacqueline showed *cariño* (affection), love, caring, and empathy *de corazón a corazón* (heart to heart) toward students' lived experiences. As Nieto (2005) explains, "caring has included not only providing cariño and support for students, but also developing strong interpersonal relationships with students and their families" (p. 32), which included respecting and affirming their linguistic and cultural backgrounds while building on those to enhance teaching and learning.

Delgado Bernal (2001) recognizes the importance of acknowledging, valuing, and further developing the cultural knowledge and lived experiences of teachers and students—what she calls "pedagogies of the home," or the informal cultural knowledges taught within the household by parents. This learning usually is not recognized or validated as formal knowledge. In the same vein, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) illuminate teachers' and students' legitimate knowledges (e.g., their language, culture, communities, and spiritualities) as sources of strength and central to the work teachers do. They challenge traditional research paradigms by exposing "deficit-informed research and methods that silence and distort" the experiences of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). The teachers in this study also defied traditional instructional methods and were guided by their *corazones* (hearts) in building strong bonds with their students.

Marisol and Adela also connected with their students through their faith. Delgado Bernal (2001) asserts that spirituality plays an important role in the development of identity, as it is part of our cultural knowledge and incorporated into our daily practices. She observes that some of the women in her study directly connected their spirituality to their educational journey, their learning, or the desire to help others. Like Marisol's description of her classroom shrine, one of Delgado Bernal's participants described her spiritual practice of keeping a picture of the Virgin and a candle in her dorm room, "Well actually *en mi* room *tengo un* picture *de La Virgen y también tengo una veladora"* [Well actually in my room I have a picture of Virgin Mary and I also have a candle] (p. 634). Okhremtchouk and González (2014) also recognize the need for bilingual and Hispanic teachers to challenge the system by "showing resistance and creating safe places for their students in the classroom environment that they can control and where they can make a difference" (p. 31). Thus, teachers and students, engaged in a more humanistic and relational pedagogy, matter for the education of ELs in this rural community.

Creating a Counterstory

This study's findings align with Gruenewald's (2003) research on place-conscious approaches to education when he remarks, places "teach us" and "make us" (p. 621) and "themselves have something to say" (p. 624). That is, places are unique and rich in human-world relationships; people make and shape places, and places shape and make people. He also contends that to study a place means to know more about people's experiences in a specific locality (Greenwood, 2013). Over the last decade, rural education research has emphasized the importance of the uniqueness of place or problematizing "place-as-identity" or "thisness," focusing on what happens in *this* school, *this* place as opposed to *that* one (Thomson, 2000, as cited in Green & Reid, 2014, p. 33). John and Ford (2017) have recognized that "the place in which one engages in the educational relationship and process impacts the educational experience" and may pose "problems, issues, possibilities, and constraints that are specific to particular places" (pp. 12–13).

This study's bilingual educators recognized the influence of rich human interactions that constantly enlighten their awareness of *this place* (i.e., the peoples, strengths, and challenges of this rural school community). For instance, Jacqueline reminded us that place constantly informs what teachers need to know to guide their work with ELs in this rural community. This finding aligns with rural scholars who argue that teachers must possess a personal and contextual knowledge of the rural community in which they work (Greenwood, 2013; Howley & Howley, 2014). Eppley (2015) emphasizes the importance of educators' familiarity with students' rural lives and relationships. She argues that teachers' relationships with their students extend into the rural community and "are not limited to the school building." The participants in her study "described teaching and learning in a pedagogical culture that values interpersonal interactions rooted in deep familiarity and trust" (Eppley, 2015, p. 75).

Aware of the inequities confronted by ELs in Ivy County (e.g., marginalization and lack of power of ELs and their families, lack of bilingual and financial resources for teachers and students, and apathy of other educators and school administrators), and feeling overworked due to the multiple roles they had to fulfill, all participants acknowledged that they felt empowered and committed to be the voice of their EL students. These educators challenged traditional deficit narratives and developed a deep commitment to social justice (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Adela, Jacqueline, and Marisol reflected on their practices, collaborated, and led other colleagues to advocate for their culturally and linguistically diverse students. The need for educators to serve as advocates for ELs in rural areas has been observed by several rural researchers (Ankeny et al., 2019; Bustamante et al., 2010; Coady, 2019; Hansen-Thomas, 2018; Marichal, 2021a, 2021b, 2023). Other scholars have found that when bilingual EL educators are reflective in their practices, they collaborate with colleagues in co-constructed ways and push for educational equity and change on behalf of their bilingual students (Coady et al., 2023; D. K. Palmer, 2018). Aligning with Freirean pedagogy in that action or performed activism is predicated upon critical reflection, this study's participants discussed their emerging activism, such as serving as mentors to other colleagues; as cultural brokers constantly creando puentes culturales, lingüísticos y raciales in the classroom and in the school community; and as leaders who created instructional activities, initiated new curriculum, and designed school presentations for EL students that had the potential to transform ELs' educational outcomes.

Conclusion and Implications

A significant finding from this study reveals that people (e.g., teachers, EL students, and their rural community) and place matter for the education of rural secondary ELs. This research underscores the need for educators to possess an integrated vision of self, rural community, and EL education--building on the complexities of particular places. As Greenwood (2013) posits, neglecting place overlooks "the historical, political, and cultural processes that work to shape what places become" (p. 2) and ignores the uniqueness, diversity, and joie de vivre of rural communities. Place, rurality in this study, has a different meaning for teachers and ELs and impacts classroom dynamics in nuanced ways.

This study's findings inform and empower EL teacher preparation and PD programs to shift their focus from professional instructional knowledge to a richer exploration of the self by engaging in place-conscious soul work—an exploration of the specificity and complexities of peoples and places. Moreover, teacher PD researchers must document EL teachers' critical thoughts about the possibilities of developing an advocacy stance for ELs, particularly

in rural school communities. Drawing on Biddle and Azano's (2016) work, to understand the complexity and vivacity of rural communities is to understand the lived realities of students, teachers, and community members within the context of a school as the "social realities of that place determine the opportunities and constraints of schooling" (p. 316).

This study adds to the limited literature on secondary EL teachers and rurality and illuminates the intricacies of EL rural secondary school settings. For instance, the findings demonstrate that building relationships for EL teachers in *this* rural community was a two-way dynamic that entailed opening their hearts in authentic dialogue with their EL students. The centrality of this relational pedagogy transcended a checklist of what to do or the existing one-way and get-to-know dynamics suggested by the EL literature (Coady et al., 2011; de Jong et al., 2013). Participants suggested that EL teachers need to conceptualize teacher-EL interactions as two-way relationships, through authentic and loving pedagogy, prior to engaging EL students in content education. The relevance of teachers' relational pedagogy is an important contribution to the field of rural EL education. Future longitudinal studies that illuminate how teachers' and students' personal lives, backgrounds, and experiences interact in a particular place while informing teachers' professional work in rural school communities are needed.

The findings from this study also reveal the prominent influence of bilingual/EL/ML educators' *experiential knowledge* as legitimate in their work with ELs. Bilingual and Hispanic educators matter for the education of ELs (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Schools must leverage the prominent role Hispanic and bilingual teachers play in the lives of ELs. Catalysts in building personal relationships of *confianza* (mutual trust) with ELs and their families, Hispanic and/or bilingual educators have unique capacities, often unrecognized, in advancing the educational trajectories of their EL students (e.g., Delgado Bernal, 2001, B. B. Flores & Claeys, 2019; Flores Carmona, 2018; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The ever-increasing linguistically diverse demographic shifts particularly in rural settings, the critical shortage of well-prepared bilingual educators (e.g., Carothers et al., 2019; B. B. Flores & Claeys, 2019) nationally, and the persistent academic achievement gap between native and nonnative speakers of English require more granular preparation and place-based education for teachers of ELs. Educators in teacher preparation and PD programs must work toward diversifying the teacher workforce and narrowing the experiential mismatch of teachers and ELs, particularly in rural communities. The educators in this study demonstrated that teachers who are invested in the well-being of their EL students become their most dedicated and committed advocates.

The limited research on rural EL/ML education indicates that we have much to explore and learn about how place and rurality shape the experiences of educators and students in rural communities. Scholars must consider conducting qualitative studies that illuminate this intersection as unique social processes are at play in rural spaces. More studies are needed that explore the interplay cultural and linguistic backgrounds and evolving identities of bilingual educators in rural communities, shaping their educational experiences and those of their EL/ML students. The educators in this study, reflecting on their ontological experiences while working with ELs in this rural community, knew to leverage their *superpoderes por el bienestar de sus estudiantes* (superpowers for the wellbeing of their students) and to elevate and advocate for their own cultural and linguistic heritage to form trustworthy relational bonds with their students to prepare them for a more humanistic pedagogy. Echoing Cardona's (2023) remarks at NABE, we must embrace the message of our bilingual educators, *escuchemos las voces de estos educadores, unamos nuestras fuerzas*,[16] and let's diversify our workforce with more *educadores bilingües para mejorar la educación rural de nuestros estudiantes*.[17]

Final Thoughts: Opening Windows of Experience

Lilburn (2017) reminds us that the importance "human innerness" work cannot be ignored (p. 7), as "knowledge and identity are mediated, extended and routed by conversation" (p. 10), and "placeless, our identity is never fully developed" (p.16). Our bilingual educators' soul work allowed them to travel back in time; to see themselves and others in this place; to see the good and the bad, opening their windows of experience to reflect on and reimagine their work while positively impacting the lives and education of their EL students.

[16] Let's listen to the voices of these educators, let's join our forces.

[17] Bilingual educators to improve rural education for our students

Drawing from Lilburn (2017), I invite you to be part of the larger conversation by traveling backward while engaging in soul work—an exercise similar to the one in which Adela, Marisol, and Jacqueline engaged during our conversations. Like Lilburn and Greenwood (2019), I believe that where we are and how we live in the present are direct responses to where we have been and what we have experienced in the past. Take a minute or two to recall a place you hold dear. Pause this scene in your mind for a moment and scan the view, valuing and treasuring the place with your heart. Reinhabiting these places in our minds is calming and reviving and allows us to engage in a decolonizing and reconciling process. An affective sense of place enriches our souls, evoking a feeling of warmth and comfort and a sense of safety, and offers us our deepest identities and contradictions, an awareness about being present in the world, "learning to live well in a place with others" and "learning to see, undo, and heal from patterns of historical injustice" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 364).

References

Ankeny, R., Marichal, N. V., & Coady, M. (2019). Emerging teacher-leaders for English learners: A professional development model in rural Florida. *School Leadership Review, 14*(2), Article 4. https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol14/iss2/4

Azano, A. P., & Stewart, T. T. (2015). Exploring place and practicing justice: Preparing pre-service teachers for success in rural schools. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 30*(9), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.18113/P8JRRE3009

Biddle, C., & Azano, A. P. (2016). Constructing and reconstructing the "rural school problem": A century of rural education research. *Review of Research in Education, 40*(1), 298–325. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16667700

Bomer, R., & Maloch, B. (2012). Diverse local literacies and standardization policies. *Language Arts, 90*(1), 44–52. https://doi.org/10.58680/la201220686

Bunch, G. C. (2010). Preparing mainstream secondary content-area teachers to facilitate English language learners' development of academic language. *Teachers College Record, 112*(14), 351–383. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811011201404

Bunch, G. C. (2014). The language of ideas and the language of display: Reconceptualizing "academic language" in linguistically diverse classrooms. *International Multilingual Research Journal, 8*(1), 70–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2014.852431

Bustamante, R. M., Brown, G., & Irby, B. J. (2010). Advocating for English language learners: U.S. teacher leadership in rural Texas schools. In K. A. Schafft & A. Youngblood Jackson (Eds.), *Rural education for the twenty-first century: Identity, place, and community in a globalizing world* (pp. 232–252). Pennsylvania State University Press.

Calderón, M., Slavin, R., & Sánchez, M. (2011). Effective instruction for English Learners. *The Future of Children, 21*(1), 103–127. https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2011.0007

Cardona, M. (2023, February 23). *Remarks by U. S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona at the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), The 52nd Annual International Bilingual and Bicultural Education Conference*. 52nd Annual International Bilingual and Bicultural Education Conference, Portland, OR, United States. https://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/remarks-us-secretary-education-miguel-cardona-national-association-bilingual-education-nabe-52nd-annual-international-bilingual-and-bicultural-education-conference

Carothers, D., Aydin, H., & Houdyshell, M. (2019). Teacher shortages and cultural mismatch: District and university collaboration for recruiting. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research, 10*(3), 39–63. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1229410

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1987). Teachers' personal knowledge: What counts as "personal" in studies of the personal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 19*(6), 487–500. https://doi.org/10.1080/0022027870190602

Coady, M. R. (2019). *Connecting school and the multilingual home: Theory and practice for rural educators.* Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788923279

Coady, M. R. (2020). Rural English learner education: A review of research and call for a national agenda. *Educational Researcher, 49*(7), 524–532. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20931505

Coady, M. R. (2021). English learners in rural schools. In A. P. Azano, K. Eppley, & C. Biddle (Eds). *The Bloomsbury handbook of rural education in the United States* (pp. 247–255). Bloomsbury Press. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350172036.0034

Coady, M. R., Golombek, P., & Marichal, N. V. (Eds.). (2023). *Educating multilingual students in rural schools: Illuminating diversity in rural communities in the United States.* Brill.

Coady, M. R., Marichal, N. V., Olszewska, A., Ankeny, R., Long, A., Shafiei, H., & Chakraborty, R. (2023). "It's like fuel": Igniting rural English learner education through place-conscious professional development. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *39*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.26209/JRRE3901

Coady, M. R., Harper, C. A., & de Jong, E. J. (2011). From preservice to practice: Mainstream elementary teacher beliefs of preparation and efficacy with English language learners in the state of Florida. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *34*(2), 223–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2011.597823

Coady, M. R., Harper, C. A., & de Jong, E. J. (2016). Aiming for equity: Preparing mainstream teachers for inclusion or inclusive classrooms? *TESOL Quarterly*, *50*(2), 340–368. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.223

Coady, M. R., Li, S., & Lopez, M. P. (2018). Twenty-five years after the Florida Consent Decree: Does preparing all teachers work? *FATE Journal*, *3*(1), 26–56. http://www.fate1.org/journals/FATE-Journal-3.1.pdf

Coady, M. R., Lopez, M. P., Marichal, N. V., & Heffington, D. V. (2019). Preparing teacher leaders for rural English language learners. *Theory and Practice in Rural Education*, *9*(1) 44–60. https://doi.org/10.3776/tpre.2019.v9n1p44-60

Consent Decree, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) et al. v. State Board of Education Consent Decree, United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, August 14, 1990, available at http://www.fldoe.org/academics/eng-language-learners/consent-decree.stml

Crookes, G. V. (2015). Redrawing the boundaries on theory, research, and practice concerning language teachers' philosophies and language teacher cognition: Toward a critical perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, *99*(3), 485–499. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12237

Corbett, M. (2016). Rural futures: Development, aspirations, mobilities, place, and education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *91*(2), 270–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2016.1151750

de Jong, E. J. (2021). Infusing ELL preparation into initial teacher preparation. In G. Li, J. Anderson, J. Hare, & M. McTavish (Eds.), *Superdiversity and teacher education: Supporting teachers in working with culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse students, families, and communities* (pp. 199–214). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003038887-13

de Jong, E. J., Harper, C. A., & Coady, M. R. (2013). Preparing mainstream teachers for CLD students: Enhancing the knowledge and skills that teachers of CLDs must have. *Theory into Practice*, *52*(2), 89–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2013.770326

Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Learning and living pedagogies of the home: The mestiza consciousness of Chicana students. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(5), 623–639. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110059838

Eppley, K. (2015). "Hey, I saw your grandparents at Walmart": Teacher education for rural schools and communities. *The Teacher Educator*, *50*(1), 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2014.975061

Faltis, C., Arias, M. B., & Ramírez-Marín, F. (2010). Identifying relevant competencies for secondary teachers of English learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *33*(3), 307–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2010.529350

Fang, Z., Schleppegrell, M. J., & Cox, B. E. (2006). Understanding the language demands of schooling: Nouns in academic registers. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *38*(3), 247–273. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15548430jlr3803_1

Flores, B. B., & Claeys, L. (2019). Bilingual teacher workforce starts with English learner students. *The Learning Professional*, *40*(2), 12–15. https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/bilingual-teacher-workforce-starts-with-english-learner-students.pdf

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard*

Educational Review, *85*(2), 149–171. https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149

Flores Carmona, J. (2018). A culturally relevant pedagogy at the core: When common teachers make a difference. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, *36*(4), 32–48.

Fránquiz, M. E., & Salinas, C. S. (2011). Newcomers to the U.S.: Developing historical thinking among Latino immigrant students in a central Texas high school. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *34*(1), 58–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2011.568831

Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., & Christian, D. (2006). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511499913

Glover, T. A., Nugent, G. C., Chumney, F. L., Ihlo, T., Shapiro, E. S., Guard, K., Koziol, N., & Bovaird, J. (2016). Investigating rural teachers' professional development, instructional knowledge, and classroom practice. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *31*(3), 1-16.

Goldenberg, C. (2013). Unlocking the research on English learners: What we know— and don't yet know—about effective instruction. *American Educator*, *37*(2), 4–11, 38. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1014021

Golombek, P. R. (1998). A study of language teachers' personal practical knowledge. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*(3), 447–464. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588117

Golombek, P., Olszewska, A. I., & Coady, M. R. (2022). The humanizing power of counter-stories: Teachers' understandings of emerging bilinguals in rural settings. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *113*, Article 103655. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103655

Green, B., & Reid, J. A. (2014). Social cartography and rural education: Researching space(s) and place(s). In S. White & M. Corbett (Eds.), *Doing educational research in rural settings: Methodological issues, international perspectives and practical solutions* (pp. 26–40). Routledge.

Good, M. E., Masewicz, S., & Vogel, L. (2010). Latino English language learners: Bridging the achievement and cultural gaps between schools and families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *9*(4), 321–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2010.491048

Greenwood, D. A. (2013). A critical theory of place-conscious education. In R. B. Stevenson, M. Brody, J. Dillon, & A. E. J. Wals (Eds.), *International handbook of research on environmental education* (pp. 93–100). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203813331.ch9

Greenwood, D. A. (2019). Place, land, and the decolonization of the settler soul. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, *50*(4–6), 358–377. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2019.1687412

Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, *40*(3), 619–654. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312040003619

Hansen-Thomas, H. (2018). Rural ESL: I only have two students! In J. I. Liontas & M. DelliCarpini (Eds.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*. Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0880

Hansen-Thomas, H., Grosso Richins, L., Kakkar, K., & Okeyo, C. (2016). I do not feel I am properly trained to help them! Rural teachers' perceptions of challenges and needs with English-language learners. *Professional Development in Education*, *42*(2), 308–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.973528

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, *17*(1), 13–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860220137345

Howley, C., & Howley, A. (2014). Making sense of rural education research: Art, transgression, and other acts of terror. In S. White & M. Corbett (Eds.), *Doing educational research in rural settings: Methodological issues, international perspectives, and practical solutions* (pp. 7–25). Routledge.

Irwin, V., Wang, K., Jung, J., Kessler, E., Tezil, T., Alhassani, S., Filbey, A., Dilig, R., and Bullock Mann, F. (2024). Report on the Condition of Education 2024 (NCES 2024-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [09, 25, 2024] from https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2024144.

John, K. D., & Ford, D. R. (2017). The rural is nowhere: Bringing indigeneity and urbanism into educational research. In W. M. Reynolds (Ed.), *Forgotten places: Critical studies in rural education* (pp. 3–14). Peter Lang.

Johnson, J. D., & Zoellner, B. P. (2016). School funding and rural districts. In S. M. Williams & A. A. Grooms (Eds.), *Educational opportunity in rural contexts: The rural politics of place* (pp. 107–122). Information Age.

Kandel, W., Henderson, J., Koball, H., & Capps, R. (2011). Moving up in rural America: Economic attainment of nonmetro Latino immigrants. *Rural Sociology*, *76*(1), 101–128. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2011.00047.x

Lee, O., Luykx, A., Buxton, C., & Shaver, A. (2007). The challenge of altering elementary school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding linguistic and cultural diversity in science instruction. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *44*(9), 1269–1291. https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.20198

Li, S. (2023). A teacher's emotional journey in rural Florida: From insider to outsider. In M. R. Coady, P. Golombek, & N. V. Marichal (Eds.), *Educating multilingual students in rural schools: Illuminating diversity in rural communities in the United States* (pp. 47–69). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004546608_003

Lilburn, T. (2017). *The larger conversation: Contemplation and place*. University of Alberta Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781772123609

Lucas, T., & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 606–636). Erlbaum.

Lucas, T., & Villegas, A. M. (2010). A framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms* (pp. 75–92). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203843239

Manner, J. C., & Rodriguez, D. (2012). Rural redesign: Delivering online professional development for rural teachers of ESL. *US-China Education Review A*, *3*(2012), 267–277. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED532907

Marichal, N. V. (2020). *Teacher knowledge and secondary English learners in a rural community* (Order No. 27834414) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Marichal, N. V. (2021a). "I feel the responsibility": The nexus of secondary teacher knowledge, rural education, and emergent bilinguals. *Theory & Practice in Rural Education*, *11*(2), 67–94. https://doi.org/10.3776/tpre.2021.v11n2p67-94

Marichal, N. V. (2021b). "I know they understand": Teacher knowledge and rural secondary English learners. *SSTESOL Journal*, *14*(1), 78. https://pub.lucidpress.com/sstesoljournalspring2021/#uIOowJ5yuyB-

Marichal, N. V. (2023). Teacher knowledge and secondary English learners in rural Florida: Reimagining place-based education through relationship building. In M. R. Coady, P. Golombek, & N. V. Marichal (Eds.), *Educating multilingual students in rural schools: Illuminating diversity in rural communities in the United States.* (pp. 14–46). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004546608_002

Marichal, N. V., Rosario Roldán, A., & Coady, M. R. (2021). "My language learners seemed like ghosts": A rural teacher's transformational journey implementing the Seal of Biliteracy. *The Rural Educator*, *42*(1), 52–56. https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v42i1.1180

Marlow, D., & Cooper, M. (2008). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Past, present, and future*. MetLife. https://eric.ed.gov/?q=ED504457

Massey, D. S. (2020). Creating the exclusionist society: From the War on Poverty to the war on immigrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *43*(1), 18–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1667504

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey Bass.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(2), 132–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023a). Reading Performance. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved September 25, 2024, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cnb

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023b). *Table 204.20. English language learner (ELL) students enrolled in public elementary and*

secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2011 through fall 2021. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23_204.20.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023c). *Characteristics of public school teachers*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved September 25, 2024, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/clr

National Rural Education Association. (2021). *Research agenda 2016–2021: 10 research priorities*. https://www.nrea.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2023/04/2016-2021-Research-Agenda.pdf

Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach*. Teachers College Press.

Nieto, S., & Bode, P., (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Nugent, G. W., Kunz, G. M., Sheridan, S. M., Glover, T. A., & Knoch, L. L. (Eds.). (2017). *Rural education research in the United States: State of the science and emerging directions*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42940-3

Okhremtchouk, I., & González, T. (2014). Meeting the needs of English language learners: Perspectives from Arizona's Latino/a teachers. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, *8*(1), 20–36. https://amaejournal.utsa.edu/index.php/AMAE/article/view/150

Palmer, D. K. (2018). Supporting bilingual teachers to be leaders for social change: "I must create advocates for biliteracy." *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *12*(3), 203–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2018.1474063

Palmer, P. J. (1998) *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Pedrana, A. L. (2009). Teachers of English language learners: Tracking personal practical knowledge, reflection, and narrative authority. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, *11*(1/2), 175–191, 313.

Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle O. F. (2013). *Reading, writing, & learning in ESL: A resource book for K–12 teachers* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Reagan, E. M., Hambacher, E., Schram, T., McCurdy, K., Lord, D., Higginbotham, T., & Fornauf, B. (2019). Place matters: Review of the literature on rural teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *80*, 83–93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.12.005

Reeves, J. R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language learners in mainstream classrooms. *Journal of Educational Research*, *99*(3), 131–143. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.99.3.131-143

Reeves, J. R. (2009). A sociocultural perspective on ESOL teachers' linguistic knowledge for teaching. *Linguistics and Education*, *20*(2), 109–125. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2008.11.001

Reynolds, W. M. (Ed.). (2017). *Forgotten places: Critical studies in rural education*. Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/b11118

Shamah, D., & MacTavish, K. A. (2009). Purpose and perceptions of family social location among rural youth. *Youth & Society*, *50*(1), 26–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X15583655

Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *24*(3) 5–19.

Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, *36*(3), 308–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085901363002

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

Tandon, M., Viesca, K. M., Hueston, C., & Milbourn, T. (2017). Perceptions of linguistically responsive teaching in teacher candidates/novice teachers. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *40*(2), 154–168. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2017.1304464

Téllez, K., & Waxman, H. C. (2006). Preparing quality teachers for English language learners: An overview of the critical issues. In K. Téllez & H. C. Waxman (Eds.), *Preparing quality educators for English language learners* (pp. 1–22). Erlbaum. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617347

Turkan, S., De Oliveira, L. C., Lee, O., & Phelps, G. (2014). Proposing a knowledge base for teaching academic content to English language learners: Disciplinary linguistic knowledge. *Teachers*

College Record, *116*(3), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811411600303

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. State University of New York Press.

Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teaching force: An examination of major arguments. *Urban Review*, *42*(3), 175–192. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0150-1

White, S., & Reid, J.-A. (2008). Placing teachers? Sustaining rural schooling through place-consciousness in teacher education. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *23*(7), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.18113/P8JRRE2307

Author:

Nidza V. Marichal is a Researcher at the University of Florida. Contact: nmarichal@ufl.edu

Suggested Citation:

Marichal, N. V. (2024). Escuchemos las voces bilingües de nuestros educadores rurales: Who and what matters for the education of secondary English learners in a rural Florida school community. *The Rural Educator, 45*(4), 15–36.