

# **“More Mindful of ESL Students”: Teacher Participation and Learning in ESL and Content Teachers’ Collaboration in a Science Middle School Classroom<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Teacher collaboration has received international research attention and has emerged as an effective way for teachers to engage in professional growth opportunities (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Rao & Chen, 2020). An examination of teacher collaboration can shed light on the process by which teachers work together and illuminate further possibilities for professional learning and growth across all English teaching contexts (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Giles & Yazan, 2019). Building on a sociocultural theory of learning, this study examined ESL and science teachers’ participation in a collaborative partnership to enhance ESL students’ education. It investigated how both teachers learned to co-plan and co-teach ESL students in a seventh-grade science classroom in the Southeastern U.S. This study relied on qualitative data methods and employed grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2006). The findings showed that limited collaborative planning time and the ESL and science teachers’ disparate notions of collaborative teaching contributed to the teachers’ unequal collaborative planning and teaching roles. Consequently, different learning outcomes were realized for both teachers.

## **Resumen**

La colaboración entre maestros ha sido objeto de investigación internacional y ha surgido como una forma efectiva para que los maestros se involucren en oportunidades de crecimiento profesional (Dove y Honigsfeld, 2018; Rao y Chen, 2020). Una revisión de la colaboración entre profesores puede arrojar luz sobre el proceso mediante el cual los profesores trabajan juntos e iluminar nuevas posibilidades de aprendizaje y crecimiento profesional en todos los contextos de enseñanza del inglés (Dove y Honigsfeld, 2018; Giles y Yazan, 2019). Sobre la base de una teoría sociocultural del aprendizaje, este estudio examinó la participación de los profesores de ESL y de ciencias en una asociación de colaboración para mejorar la educación de los estudiantes de ESL. Investigó cómo ambos maestros aprendieron a co-planificar y co-enseñar a estudiantes de ESL en un aula de ciencias de séptimo grado en el sureste de los Estados Unidos. Este estudio se basó en métodos cualitativos y empleó técnicas de teoría fundamentada (Charmaz, 2006). Los hallazgos mostraron que tiempo limitado para la planificación colaborativa así como nociones dispares sobre enseñanza colaborativa entre profesores de ESL y de ciencias contribuyeron a la desigualdad en la planificación colaborativa y los roles de enseñanza de los profesores. En consecuencia, se obtuvieron diferentes resultados de aprendizaje para ambos profesores.

## **Introduction**

Teacher collaboration has received international attention and has emerged as an effective approach to teaching English in EFL and ESL contexts (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Rao & Chen, 2020). Despite the growing popularity of teacher collaborative partnerships, such collaboration is still an underexplored research area in both EFL and ESL settings (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018). EFL students most likely receive English instruction in a setting where English may not be the dominant language spoken, while ESL students receive English instruction often in contexts where the English language is dominant (Longcope, 2009; Storch & Sato, 2020). Previous studies point out how such contextual differences can influence English language teaching and learning (Longcope, 2009; Storch & Sato, 2020). Notwithstanding this difference, researchers and teachers alike aim to improve their instructional practices to teach English more effectively regardless of the context (Khaled et al., 2020). In this way, research affirms that teacher collaboration can engage teachers and researchers in opportunities for professional growth as they work together for the shared purpose of teaching English (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Giles, 2019; Giles & Yazan, 2020). An examination of teacher collaboration can shed light on the process by which teachers work together and further illuminate possibilities for professional learning and growth across all English teaching contexts (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

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<sup>1</sup>This is a refereed article. Received: 20 November, 2020. Accepted: 10 March, 2021.

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With this aim, the current study investigates how a new ESL teacher initiates, participates, and sustains a collaborative partnership with a seventh-grade science teacher in a content area classroom in the Southeastern U.S. Drawing on sociocultural learning theories and earlier studies on ESL and content teachers' collaboration, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do ESL and science teachers participate in an emerging collaborative partnership to co-plan for and co-teach ESL students in a seventh-grade science classroom in the Southeastern U.S.? (2) How does the ESL and science teachers' participation in this collaborative partnership relate to how the teachers learned to co-plan for and co-teach ESL students? This paper begins with a discussion of sociocultural learning theories and a literature review of ESL and content teachers' collaboration. Then, it describes the data collection and analytic procedures, which is followed by the presentation and discussion of the findings.

### Sociocultural Lens for Teacher Learning

This paper draws on sociocultural learning theory to argue that teacher learning is a social process that occurs through human interactions in authentic and relevant contexts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). From this perspective, teacher learning occurs when teachers rely on other people and tools to mediate their participation in the act of teaching so that they appropriate the resources for their own future use (Johnson & Golombek, 2003). In this way, collegial interactions can mediate teachers' participation and influence the ways that teachers transform their teaching practices. Thus, teacher learning is a dynamic, life-long process where teachers reconceptualize "understandings of themselves as teachers, of their students, and of the activities of teaching" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 735). This means that shifts in teachers' perspectives of who they are (e.g., professional identity development) and what they do (e.g., the teaching act) and/or observable changes in their teaching practices evince teachers' learning processes.

We conceive ESL and content teachers' collaboration as a mediational space (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014) where teachers rethink how to best serve ESL students and act on these renewed understandings to transform their teaching practices and influence positively ESL students' learning outcomes (Giles & Yazan, 2020). More specifically, as the ESL and science teachers engage in collaboration, they draw on their past experiences and expertise to "co-construct knowledge" to plan for and teach ESL students in the science classroom (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014, p. 5). In this collaborative space, ESL and science teachers learn by reimagining their professional identities, changing their views on ESL students, and/or experimenting with different instructional approaches.

### ESL and Content Teachers' Collaboration

Previous research on ESL and content teachers' collaboration examines how teachers' pedagogical beliefs (Arkoudis, 2006; Creese, 2002), interpersonal relationships (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011), and division of responsibilities (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Giles, 2018; Peercy, Ditter, & DeStefano, 2017) influence ESL and content teachers' participation in collaborative partnerships. As this earlier work demonstrates, when collaborating teachers espouse divergent epistemological beliefs (Arkoudis, 2003) and fail to establish clear planning and teaching roles (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016), they find it difficult to initiate sustainable collaborative efforts. Sustainable collaborative partnerships are also hindered by the ESL teacher's unequal status (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Arkoudis, 2006; Creese, 2002; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010), which means that the ESL teacher assumes an auxiliary role in the content area classroom most often as a classroom assistant. Lastly, additional challenges emerge because of the forced directives to collaborate (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Hargreaves, 1994) and inconsistent administrative support (DelliCarpini, 2018; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011) that make participation in collaborative partnerships more difficult.

Despite its potential challenges, ESL and content teachers' collaboration offers possibilities for teacher learning (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy, Martin Beltran, et al., 2017), increased ESL students' learning outcomes (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Spezzini & Becker, 2012), and strengthened professional relationships among teachers (Baecher et al., 2012; Peercy et al., 2016). Furthermore, collaboration can be a site where teachers challenge unequal teaching roles to serve ESL students in the content area classroom (Giles & Yazan, 2019). The benefits are realized when teachers perceive a collaborative effort (Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012), use tools (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014), and share student-centered instructional goals (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Peercy, Ditter, & DeStefano, 2017). In this way, collaboration moves beyond initiation to generate opportunities for sustainable and fruitful participation in collaborative partnerships.

Even though collaboration can be a pathway for equitable learning opportunities for ESL students (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Peercy, Martin Beltran, et al., 2017), it is still an underexplored research area (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Peercy, 2018). Few research studies examine collaborative partnerships in secondary schools (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Glazier et al., 2017). As such, collaboration between secondary ESL and content teachers warrants further investigation (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018). Undertaking this exploration, the current study seeks to examine the development of an emerging collaborative partnership between ESL and science teachers in a secondary school.

## **Methodology**

### The School Context

Situated within a large suburban district in the Southeastern U.S., Starcreek Middle School<sup>4</sup> contained about 800 students during the 2016-2017 school year. There were 26 students classified as ESL students, which meant that students identified an additional language on a home language survey at registration and made a qualifying score on the World Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) Screener and/or ACCESS for English Language Learners 2.0. This study's state requires that students who identify an additional language on a home language survey to take the WIDA screener. If students make a qualifying score (i.e., 4.9 or lower), then they qualify for English language services. Students are also placed in four content area classrooms at registration, and if students make a qualifying score on the WIDA screener, they were placed in a 55-minute ESL class period taught by the school's ESL teacher. The study's state also requires students to take the ACCESS for English Language Learners 2.0 language proficiency assessment annually until a score (e.g., 4.8 or above) is reached to exit the English language program. The majority of English language instruction took place in content area classrooms since ESL students only spent a small portion of time in the ESL classroom daily.

### Co-participants

The collaborative team in this study consisted of a science and ESL teacher, Candace and Amanda respectively. Candace taught four 55-minute science class periods daily and spoke English only. She had 15 years of total teaching experience when the study began, all of which were at Starcreek, and taught five ESL students in that semester. Even though she reported that she had experience teaching diverse students that included ESL students throughout her professional career, she stated that she had no previous training related to ESL instruction and/or collaborating with any ESL teacher prior to engaging in this collaborative process with Amanda. On four different occasions, Candace described herself professionally unqualified and unequipped to make decisions for ESL students in the science classroom, which most likely is a consequence of her inadequate training related to ESL students and instruction. When asked why she wanted to participate in this collaborative experience, she lauded the ESL teacher's (Amanda's) willingness to work with content teachers and her own desire to engage in professional growth opportunities that were relevant and practical to the science curriculum (Interview #1, March 16, 2017). She also wanted to emphasize her willingness to collaborate, stating, "I'm not someone who is not willing. It's more the fact that I'm not always as qualified" (Interview #3, May 25, 2017). Her words speak not only to her willingness to collaborate with the ESL teacher, but they also echo earlier studies that report the content teachers' limited training and experiences working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Brooks & Adams, 2015).

Amanda is the study's first author and ESL teacher. She was in her second year as an ESL teacher when the study began. Majoring in English and Spanish in college, she frequently taught many ESL students in her eighth-grade language arts classroom, translated for Spanish-speaking parents at school meetings, and began conversations with the principal early in her teaching career about transitioning to her current role as the ESL teacher at Starcreek. When she had the opportunity to retain full-time employment at Starcreek, she began teaching Spanish and ESL during the 2015-2016 academic school year. Realizing she wanted to continue to grow as an ESL teacher, she began a doctoral program with a specialization in second language teaching and learning that same year. Drawing on her own experiences as a content teacher and training related to ESL instruction, she began to solidify her belief that ESL instruction necessitated a collaborative partnership where all educational stakeholders work to provide equitable learning outcomes for ESL students. Amanda chose Candace as the collaborating science teacher because Candace taught the most ESL students in the seventh grade. Candace also agreed to participate in the study by signing the informed

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4 All names of people and places are pseudonyms except for Amanda, the manuscript's first author and the study's ESL teacher.

consent form. In addition, Amanda's goals were twofold. First, she sought to promote a shared responsibility for ESL instruction, and she envisioned collaboration as the most effective way to teach content and language to ESL students since students received the majority of language instruction in content area classrooms. Such collaborative practice might work to change the school culture at Starcreek Middle School where ESL and content teachers regularly work to collaborate for ESL students' educational outcomes. She also aimed to explore a topic at the intersection of research and practice. This exploration would examine the processes and experiences involved in collaboration, and thus contribute to the research on teacher collaboration in secondary schools where there is still a gap in the literature. In this way, this study was a pilot study in preparation for her dissertation (See Giles, 2019) that reported on one of her earliest attempts to initiate and sustain collaboration with content teachers.

### Data Collection

Data collection included two cycles of collaboration between Candace and Amanda during the 2016-2017 school year. Each cycle aimed to produce one collaboratively planned and taught lesson based on the content and language standards. The first cycle began with an interview where Amanda asked Candace to share her previous experiences working with ESL students and/or the ESL teacher. The collaborating teachers then met to plan a content lesson that included language objectives. After Candace and Amanda planned the lesson together, they engaged in collaborative teaching, and both reflected on their experiences in a reflective journal separately. The second collaborative cycle began with the second interview, which sought to clarify statements in the reflective journal and expound on ongoing learning opportunities for both teachers. Like the first cycle, Candace and Amanda planned a second lesson together based on the content and language standards, collaboratively taught the lesson, and reflected on their planning, teaching, and learning in reflective journals authored by both teachers separately. The third interview concluded the collaborative process and served to elicit refined understandings about working with ESL students and collaborating with the ESL teacher.

More specifically, data collection used qualitative methods, which included three audio recorded semi-structured interviews, two video recorded collaborative planning sessions (CPS), two reflective journals (RJ) authored by the science and ESL teachers separately, on-going e-mail correspondence (EC) between the collaborating teachers, and field notes throughout the study's duration. We used these data methods to ascertain how a new ESL teacher's participation in collaboration with a science teacher influenced how both teachers learned to co-plan for and co-teach ESL students in the science classroom.

### Data Analysis

We employed grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) coding techniques to analyze the ESL and science teachers' participation and learning opportunities in collaboration. The analytical process spanned three coding cycles (see Appendix 1 for the coding table). During the initial coding cycle, we used in vivo and line by line coding (Charmaz, 2006) to emphasize teachers' exact words and construct codes developed in and through the data. This process uncovered 107 initial codes. During the focused coding cycle, we divided the initial codes into six categories that explained the smaller data segments. During the final cycle, we reflected on how these categories fit together to explain how the ESL and science teachers' participation related to both teachers' learning outcomes. To this aim, this coding cycle turned the data into theme statements, which will be explained in the next section.

### **Findings**

The findings showed that insufficient time for collaborative lesson planning and the science and ESL teachers' disparate notions of collaborative teaching contributed to the ESL and science teachers' unequal collaborative planning and teaching roles, thereby constraining opportunities for the ESL teacher's participation. As such, these challenges led to the ESL teacher's role as a classroom assistant during both collaborative cycles. Consequently, teachers' unequal collaborative participatory roles related to the teachers' different learning outcomes to co-plan for and co-teach ESL students.

### Insufficient Time for Collaborative Lesson Planning

The ESL and science teachers' limited collaborative planning time constrained opportunities for the ESL teacher's participation during both collaborative cycles. After many scheduling attempts, Candace and Amanda met for the first planning session and agreed to co-teach a lab on the length of the digestive system (CPS #1, April 27, 2017). This session lasted less than five minutes, because due to personal commitments,

Candace arrived late to the meeting (EC, April 27, 2017). Despite the time constraints, the collaborating teachers established the lesson objectives and agreed to meet at a later date after Candace shared the original lesson activity so that Amanda could make suggestions. However, this future planning session never occurred because Candace was ready to teach the lab before she and Amanda could meet a second time (Field notes, May 1, 2017).

In an effort to sustain the first collaborative cycle, Amanda agreed to “definitely be there” during the first collaborative teaching session even though she doubted she contributed to planning the lesson, and consequently, had unclear expectations of her own teaching role (Email correspondence, May 1, 2017). In reflection, Amanda explained her (non)contribution to the planning session:

*We didn't design the lesson together. There was not a collaborative planning session where we actually planned and designed the lesson. There were many scheduling conflicts which prevented this from happening. There was just not a lot I could contribute to an already designed lesson activity. (RJ #1, May 11, 2017)*

Amanda's reflection showed the unequal planning responsibilities during the first session where Candace assumed primary responsibility for planning the lesson. Amanda attributed this unequal division of labor to “many scheduling conflicts” and ultimately stated her struggle to contribute to “an already designed lesson activity.” Candace concurred that limited planning opportunities constrained both teachers' participation in collaboration. In the second interview, Candace identified planning time as a major challenge in the following:

*Candace: If we had common planning time, you know, we could actually look at the standards and look at what we're trying to do and then use each other's expertise with what we do to come up with an ideal situation would be great.*

*Amanda: You mentioned common planning time or the lack of common planning time as a challenge, will you explain a little bit more about what you mean?*

*Candace: Well, I mean I just think all of us have—you know we're all doing the best we can for what we have. We don't have common meeting times. I meet with my team, but not even with administrators now. You know, I don't meet with our special ed teacher, we don't meet with our ESL teacher. We don't meet with our counselor very often. It's just very difficult to find time to meet those challenges. I don't know. (Interview #2, May 11, 2017)*

In this exchange, Candace focused on the “lack of common planning time,” which meant that she attributed the limited planning time to not having a shared planning period with the ESL teacher. Instead of discussing her collaboration with the ESL teacher, she shifted the topic to emphasize the fact that she only collaborated with her academic “team” and did not meet with administrators, the counselor, the special education teacher, and/or or the ESL teacher regularly. She pinpointed scheduling conflicts as the major obstacle to collaboration but did not conceptualize a different schedule so that all administrators and teachers could meet. Her words (e.g., “we're all doing the best we can for what we have”) indicate that, while she wanted additional time, she resigned herself to believe that the schedule might not change to create space for more planning time between all stakeholders.

The second collaborative cycle paralleled the first cycle and did little to create additional opportunities for both teachers' participation. Candace stated that the challenges were “similar to before in finding the time to work and plan together” (RJ #2, May 23, 2017). Like the first cycle, the second cycle included only one planning session that lasted less than five minutes in duration. During the first session, Candace stated the lesson objective as dissecting a frog as a culminating activity to the human body unit (CPS #2, May 18, 2017). Attempting to share planning responsibilities during this session, Amanda asked how she could assist Candace planning and teaching the lesson. Candace responded:

*It'd be great as we kind of go through to make sure the kids are following instructions because I'll be using a PowerPoint and kind of showing them where they should be making cuts and what they should be seeing, and they have a really hard time sometimes knowing what they are seeing. So I guess that's the biggest part, just going group to group and actually knowing what they see. (CPS #2, May 18, 2017)*

Candace did not offer to share planning responsibilities with Amanda. Instead, she still assumed primary responsibility, which is made clear through her use of the first-person singular pronoun (e.g., “I'll be using the PowerPoint”). While she did not ask Amanda to help her plan, she wanted assistance “going group to group” to help students “[know] what they see.” Without adequate content knowledge about the body parts of a frog, Amanda struggled to offer language strategies to help ESL students who could potentially have a “really hard time sometimes knowing what they are seeing.” Consequently, without opportunities to share

planning responsibilities and without an additional planning session, Amanda was unable to fully participate in the second collaborative cycle. Amanda admitted that she did not contribute, commenting, "I didn't have input during the planning session. She already designed the lesson activity, and I helped her implement it in class" (RJ #2, May 24, 2017). Therefore, during both collaborative cycles, Amanda did not share planning responsibilities, which constrained her opportunities for planning for and teaching ESL students in the science classroom.

As a consequence of Amanda's inability to assume planning responsibilities, Amanda's role resembled that of a classroom assistant during both collaborative teaching sessions. During the first teaching session, she helped students measure various items as they worked to complete the lab on digestion. In commenting on her own role during the first teaching session, Amanda commented, "She [Candace] would have taught the lesson the same way with or without my assistance. I assisted students in class, of course, I'm happy to help whoever needs assistance, but I wouldn't say my assistance was crucial" (RJ #1, May 11, 2017). Based on Amanda's perceptions, she did not think her teaching role "was crucial" in helping the ESL students because Candace could have "taught the lesson the same way with or without [her]." She also stated that she assisted "students" and stressed that she was "happy to help whoever needs assistance;" yet, she did not believe she had a teaching role that helped the ESL students access and master the content objectives. Amanda's teaching role of a classroom assistant continued in the second cycle in which she assisted students with the frog dissection. To Amanda, the teaching sessions were not collaborative. In this way, insufficient planning time constrained Amanda's opportunities to participate and relegated her teaching role to that of a classroom assistant.

### Teachers' Disparate Collaborative Teaching Notions

The ESL and science teachers' disparate collaborative teaching notions prevented both teachers' full participation in the collaborative process. Candace had no previous experience engaging in collaborative planning and teaching with an ESL teacher (Interview #1, March 16, 2017). As a consequence, she did not have a collaborative experience in which to compare to this one with Amanda. When asked how she envisioned ideal professional learning opportunities, Candace responded that she desired "actual practical application that we could apply directly back to the classroom" (Interview #1, March 16, 2017). Since both collaborative cycles reflected Candace's expectation of "practical application," she did not express a desire for Amanda's increased contribution in the science classroom. Moreover, Amanda exceeded her expectations of the role of an ESL teacher within the school community. In commenting on Amanda's role, Candace stated:

*It's been very successful with you, honestly, because I feel like you're very quick to either come into the classroom or help develop something that we can do, like a strategy, or work directly with the kids on assignments from my class, if it's make up a test or work on a project or a paper, whatever. And it's always pretty immediate, which is great. Before you, sometimes there was nothing, I mean honestly except maybe to get some forms in my box, telling me what level they were on or if they've been dismissed or not. (Interview #1, March 16, 2017)*

Candace remarked that Amanda's assistance was "quick" and "immediate," believing that Amanda made herself available in content area classrooms and beyond to help ESL students with content area assignments. In doing so, Candace juxtaposed Amanda's role to that of previous ESL teachers at Starcreek by stating that former ESL teachers provided little to no support except for managerial tasks related to the student's language plan. Since the collaborative process related to her own goals for professional development and aligned with her notions about the ESL teacher's role, Candace did not express concerns about their unequal responsibilities in collaborative planning and teaching. When asked to explain how this collaborative process reflected her ideal, she exclaimed:

*I think it was great. It was perfect. We talked over everything and kind of had a plan and then you know you did a great job kind of checking on the kids with what they were understanding and doing and keeping them on task and that kind of thing. I think it was perfect and great. (Interview #2, May 11, 2017)*

Candace stated that she believed this collaborative experience was "great" and "perfect" because both she and Amanda discussed the lesson "plan" and ensured that the students understood how to access and eventually meet the content objectives by "checking on the kids." Therefore, in her mind, she praised the collaborative effort because it aligned with her notions for collaborative planning and teaching.

Although this collaborative process reflected Candace's ideal, Amanda reflected that her collaboration with Candace contradicted her ideal notions. In a reflective journal, Amanda expressed her frustration, stating:

*I do try to make myself available as much as possible. I'll also do whatever is needed; however, I need to know what is needed. Here, I'm not sure if Candace just didn't know what she didn't know due to her lack of training, or if she had never conceptualized collaboration in a different way. But, this wasn't collaborative. If it was collaboration, it was collaboration at the most BASIC level. (RJ #2, May 24, 2017)*

Amanda wrestled with the fact that her ideal notions clashed with Candace's notions to the point where she was unsure whether to pinpoint the cause to Candace's inexperience or conceptualization of collaboration. Amanda emphatically stated that the process "wasn't collaborative" because she did not actually help Candace plan or teach the lessons. She stressed that this experience met at best her most "BASIC" expectations for collaboration. Even though the collaborative process did not meet Amanda's ideals, Amanda never shared her concerns with Candace during either collaborative cycle. Had Amanda expressed her frustrations, she may have created additional space for her own participation, especially given the fact that Candace stated Amanda's willingness to offer assistance in the content area classroom. Amanda's unwillingness to express her feelings is most likely attributed to the fact that she constantly worried that she and Candace would not sustain the collaborative process after many failed scheduling attempts because the school year was drawing to an end (Field notes, May 27, 2017). The collaborative cycles concluded with a final interview, which took place on May, 25, 2017, the last day of school for students and teachers. Thus, had there been additional school days, Amanda may have shared her concerns and assumed an increased participatory role during the second collaborative cycle. Nonetheless, Candace and Amanda's different notions of collaborative planning and teaching constrained both teacher's participation in collaboration and did not make both teachers feel as if their contribution was valuable or significant, especially for Amanda who stated her desire for an increased role in collaboration.

#### Teachers' Different Learning Outcomes

The ESL and science teachers' unequal planning and teaching roles contributed to the teachers' different learning outcomes to co-plan for and co-teach ESL students. In working with collaboration with Amanda, Candace stated that she learned to be "more mindful to think about providing accommodations for ESL students" (RJ #2, May 23, 2017). When asked how she adapted instruction to meet the ESL students' content and language needs prior to collaboration, she responded, "I do a lot of just regular accommodations that I would do for any student that needed help. I'm not sure I've done as many things that are actually targeted to their needs as they're learning the language" (Interview #1, March 16, 2017). Candace admitted that she did not plan lessons with ESL students in mind before collaboration, even though she recognized that ESL students were not always "successful" in the science classroom. She "[felt] bad "when they [bombed] a test or [bombed] an assignment" (Interview #1, March 16, 2017). As a consequence of collaborating with Amanda, she now realized she needed to be "more mindful" of ESL students, thereby changing her mindset to include ESL students when designing lessons.

There was no evidence to suggest that Candace's learning progressed beyond her stated realization to be "more mindful of ESL students." When asked how she might be "more mindful of ESL students" in the future, she commented, "It would be ideal to have more time working collaboratively with the ESL teacher" (Interview #3, May 25, 2017). Candace's words suggest that she would think about adapting her instruction for ESL students if she had more time to collaborate with Amanda. She used the conditional tense (e.g., "it would be ideal"), which further suggests that she did not think such collaboration would take place in actuality due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts. Nonetheless, if Candace continues to collaborate with Amanda, she might further reflect and refine her understandings about how to accommodate for ESL students in the science classroom. Candace's shift in thinking is a potential worthwhile first step in the learning process if she has continued interactions with Amanda and other colleagues to plan for and teach ESL students.

Amanda, however, moved beyond an initial realization and stated how this experience would change her approach to collaborating with content teachers. In learning how to initiate and sustain collaboration, Amanda explained:

*I would make sure we had a second planning session during each cycle. Moving forward, we have to have two at least. I also have to start the collaborative process earlier to create leeway for scheduling conflicts. In future collaborative efforts with content teachers, I need to be more assertive in voicing my expectations for collaboration. This begins with explicitly stating my desire for a stronger planning and teaching role in the content area classroom. Without attempting to assume a stronger role, I will always be a classroom assistant. (RJ #2, May 24, 2017)*

Amanda now understood the importance of additional planning sessions with adequate planning time to define and clarify collaborative planning and teaching responsibilities. It was also clear that she recognized that she needed to “be more assertive” and take greater risks in “voicing [her] expectations” for collaboration. Without clear expectations for collaborative planning and teaching, she thought that she would “always be a classroom assistant,” which contradicted her own notions of collaboration. Moreover, she refined and appropriated a different collaborative approach when she realized that articulating her expectation for collaboration to content teachers might be an important entry point in future collaborative efforts. In moving forward, she learned to create additional sessions for collaborative planning and directly state to content teachers her desire for an increased planning and teaching role.

### Conclusion and Future Directions

This study affirms earlier work that discusses how teachers’ different expectations for collaboration can lead to unequal participatory roles in collaboration (Arkoudis, 2003). Moreover, unequal planning responsibilities constrained opportunities for the ESL teacher’s participation in the content area classroom and led to the ESL teacher’s role as a classroom assistant (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Arkoudis, 2006; Creese, 2002; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). This study is distinct from earlier studies that report on the ESL teacher’s relegation because the content teacher did not perceive the ESL teacher’s role as less than the content teacher. That is, both Candace and Amanda assisted students with the labs, and in Candace’s opinion, Amanda distinguished herself from previous ESL teachers at Starcreek who offered little to no support. In this way, Candace might have created opportunities for Amanda’s increased participation had Amanda voiced her expectations and desire for an increased role in collaboration.

This study also attests to the fact that collaboration can yield learning outcomes for teachers despite the challenges experienced in collaboration (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy, Martin Beltran, et al., 2017). Candace and Amanda fulfilled different learning outcomes. Candace stated her desire to be “more mindful” of ESL students in the science classroom, but this shift in thinking was not enough to change her teaching practices to focus on ESL students nor change how she engages in collaboration with Amanda (Interview #3, May 25, 2019). From a sociocultural learning perspective, Candace’s learning to plan for and teach ESL students is still in the early stages of the process where she will need to rely on tools and people to mediate how to best plan for and teach ESL students. In this regard, continued interactions with Amanda might eventually lead her to appropriate these resources for her own future use. On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that collaboration was a mediational space for Amanda to refine her understandings about how she engages in collaboration with content teachers, which she regulated and appropriated for her own future use. She explicitly stated how she would participate differently in future collaborative endeavors. While her future collaborative actions extend beyond this study, other studies (see for example Giles, 2018, 2019) attest to the fact that she changed her collaborative approach with content teachers by taking an increased agentive role in planning for and teaching ESL students in content area classrooms.

This study calls for future studies on ESL and content teachers’ collaboration in secondary schools where teachers voluntarily agree to engage in a collaborative partnership to impact ESL students’ learning outcomes. Future studies might investigate collaboration with additional content teachers (e.g., English/language arts, mathematics, and social studies) and explore how such collaborative partnerships influence ESL students’ outcomes in the content area classrooms. This study is limited by time and one collaborative effort with a science teacher, so an additional study might explore the ESL teacher’s collaboration with additional subject areas. Research on the impact of collaboration on ESL students in the content area classroom would illuminate how collaboration works to actualize equitable educational outcomes for ESL students.

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## Appendix 1

### Coding Table

Relevant Categories with Selected Initial Codes	Emerging Themes	Data Exemplars
<p><u>Unequipped science teacher</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No preparation for working with ESL students</li> <li>• No targeted instruction to meet the language and content needs of ESL students</li> <li>• Not sure what the ideal role of the content teacher or ESL teacher is</li> <li>• No previous interactions with ESL teacher</li> <li>• Willing to collaborate</li> <li>• Having an extra set of hands is her ideal collaboration</li> </ul>	<p>Unequal planning responsibilities</p> <p>Willing to collaborate</p> <p>Having assistance is ideal</p>	<p>"I would generally because it's hands on, and because they're all kind of working together, and we'll look at a part and say, "What it is?" And what I like to do just to make sure that [the ESL students have] all participated" (CPS #2, May 18, 2018).</p>
<p><u>The ESL teacher's multiple responsibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different ESL teachers with different approaches</li> <li>• Ask the ESL teacher for help</li> <li>• ESL teacher's multiple hats</li> <li>• ESL teacher is having to save ESL students</li> <li>• Helps the content teacher</li> <li>• Focus is what is right for kids</li> </ul>	<p>Distinct from previous ESL teachers</p> <p>Offers assistance</p> <p>Limited Participation</p>	<p>"Amanda was open to helping in any way to plan the lesson, assist in the classroom and then to reflect after the lesson. She helped students during the lesson to make sure they were on task and that they understood the concepts being taught" (Candace, RJ #1, May 10, 2017).</p> <p>"I was a classroom assistant" (Amanda, RJ #1, May 11, 2017).</p>
<p><u>Micro/macro challenges to/in collaboration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESL students are not always successful in the science classroom</li> <li>• Thinking/planning in the moment</li> <li>• Lacking a common planning time</li> <li>• Finding time is a challenge</li> <li>• Wrestling with how to make more time</li> </ul>	<p>Scheduling conflicts</p> <p>Limited planning time</p> <p>Wrestles with time constraints</p>	<p>"I've never had to take a subject in another language you know I think it's hard to be completely fair in the situation, and I think with our system even it's hard to be completely fair. I mean I think we do the best we can, but you know, because I am responsible for making sure that they've learned the content and the concepts and the standards, but at the same time I mean you know when you're at a disadvantage with not speaking that language first. Sometimes that's hard" (Interview #2, May 11, 2017).</p>
<p><u>Teachers' learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning ahead of time is important</li> <li>• Helpful to have assistance of ESL teacher</li> <li>• More mindful of ESL students</li> <li>• Make a contribution</li> </ul>	<p>Increased focus on ESL students</p> <p>More assertive voice</p>	<p>I would say definitely planning is important, paying attention to vocabulary, minimizing work by focusing only on the standard, and trying to streamline as much as possible (Interview #3, May 25, 2017).</p>